

**Round Dancing the Rotunda:
Decolonizing the University of Ottawa**

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Abstract

As the number of Indigenous people/s in Canadian cities is increasing, more research in the field of decolonization is needed to advance conceptual and empirical understanding of how to decolonize urban settler space. This thesis takes a critical qualitative and decolonization approach to investigate how Indigenous people/s experience urban settler space by using a case study of Indigenous students at the University of Ottawa. Through sharing circles, personal interviews, and reflexive journaling, I centre my participants' experiences and perceptions of the University of Ottawa campus as space.

In the first results chapter (Chapter 3), I present my participants' perceptions of the built environment of the campus and in turn identify the contours of a settler space. In the next chapter (Chapter 4), I examine the participants' experiences of the campus as a social space. Their responses reveal that settler spaces are imbued with settler norms – what I call settlernormativity – that often reproduce unequal settler-Indigenous relations in and through space. Drawing from my participants' views on how to decolonize campus space, in Chapter 5, I propose *acts* of decolonization in space-time as a strategy to decolonize settler urban spaces.

Résumé

La croissance du nombre de personnes autochtones résidant dans les villes canadiennes démontre le besoin d'entreprendre plus de recherches dans le domaine de la décolonisation afin de permettre une meilleure compréhension conceptuelle et empirique de la décolonisation des espaces urbains. En employant une approche décolonisatrice ainsi que qualitative critique, cette thèse se voue à une étude des expériences de personnes autochtones dans l'espace urbain en examinant le cas d'étudiants autochtones à l'Université d'Ottawa. Par l'intermédiaire de cercles de partage, d'entrevues personnelles et de rédaction de journaux de réflexion, j'examine le campus de l'Université d'Ottawa en tant qu'espace construit et social selon les expériences et perceptions de mes participants. Dans mon premier chapitre de résultats (Chapitre 3), je présente la perception de mes participants vis à vis l'environnement construit du campus tout en identifiant cet espace comme un espace colonisé. Dans mon prochain chapitre (Chapitre 4), j'examine le campus en tant qu'espace social, comme il est vécu par mes participants. Leurs réponses révèlent que les espaces colonisés sont dictés par les normes des colons – ce que je nomme '*settlernormativity*' – qui sont souvent responsables de la reproduction inégale des relations de pouvoir entre autochtones et colons à travers le campus. En m'inspirant des points de vue de mes participants sur des façons de décolonisation le campus, je suggère des *actes* de décolonisation dans l'espace-temps comme stratégies pour décoloniser l'espace urbain colonisé.

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Thank you to the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Students Association (ICSSA), my collaborative research partner, for not only encouraging me to do this research, but also making it possible through your counsel and support. Thank you also to the Indigenous Students Association (ISA) who further facilitated this project.

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Preface

During the winter of 2011, as I was trying to figure out my next life steps (Do I become an artist? Do I become an academic?), I sat in on a lecture at the University of Ottawa about the “ethnogenesis” of Métis identity. The professor linked ethnogenesis of Métis identity to the political and kinship relationships between Indigenous (often Cree and Ojibwa) and European (Scottish and French) trappers and fur traders formed around the Red River Settlement. This unique situation that produced a territorially and historically specific culture and identity sparked my interest in land and identity politics in a settler colonial context. During this time, I was new again to Ottawa and was feeling isolated. The members of ICSSA were the first people to make me feel welcome. They were working on re-writing their constitution through consensus-based decision-making, something that I had not yet experienced. By working on this project, I not only learned about Indigenous decision-making protocol as interpreted by the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Students Association (ICSSA), I also developed friendships with individuals who articulated and voiced provocative, unsettling, and exciting visions around decolonization. Though this was not my first encounter with Indigenous perspectives, this was the first time I had heard the term “settler” and “decolonization” used. While I think I could trace my interests in this research back to many points in my life, my social justice inclinations and my critical perspective on settler colonialism was solidified during that first lecture, and my subsequent time with ICSSA. These experiences set the tone for the project presented here.

Introduction

On January 9th, 2013, approximately 250 Indigenous students and their allies flooded all three levels of the central rotunda of Tabaret Hall, the main administrative building of the University of Ottawa. This building, and the circular rotunda space inside, is built in grand neo-classical style, creating an imposing and authoritative space for the university's administration. It is designed to be the nucleus of a school that proclaims itself "the meeting place of two great Western traditions," as a plaque on campus reads.



Figure 1: Round dance at the Rotunda
Source: Fraser, A. (2013).

The potent symbolism of this location was not lost on the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Students Association (ICSSA) and the Indigenous Students Association (ISA) of the University of Ottawa, who led the protesters in a traditional round dance that wrapped its way around all three levels of the rotunda. Indigenous drummers and singers filled the air with round dance songs, and for almost an hour, the rotunda was transformed. The round dance was inspired by, and performed in relation to the larger

Indigenous grassroots Idle No More movement,¹ which had begun the month before in December 2012. In this symbolic space members of the ICSSA and ISA read out their “Five Demands” (see Appendix A) to the administration for the decolonization of the University of Ottawa. The fourth of these demands reads “A commitment to the recognition of the Algonquin nation in the physical landscape of our campus,” a demand for the assertion of Indigenoussness in the built environment of the university (see Appendix B). The ICSSA and ISA not only announced this demand at that time and in that space, but they also manifested and embodied decolonization in their momentary act of indigenization of a Eurocentric non-Indigenous space with the performance of a traditional round dance in the settler space of the Tabaret rotunda.

I take ICSSA’s round dance demonstration and their fourth demand as the starting point of my research and ask:

- How do Indigenous students experience urban settler spaces such as the University of Ottawa, and how and to what extent do they feel oppressed, marginalized or excluded?
- In what ways does the built environment of the University of Ottawa campus represent settler colonial traditions, norms and worldviews?
- What ideas do Indigenous students have for the decolonization of the University of Ottawa campus space?

By critically examining the material spaces of the University of Ottawa campus from the perspective of Indigenous students, my objective is to better understand how settler norms are spatialized and how settler spaces can be decolonized.

Objectives

Using the results of semi-structured sharing circles, interviews, and reflexive journals conducted with Indigenous students at the University of Ottawa, this thesis contributes theoretical reflections and empirical evidence to two bodies of research. First, this study aims to make more visible within the growing field of decolonization studies,

¹ I provide more detail on Idle No More in Chapter 3.

the lack of attention that scholars have paid to the decolonization of space. While there is significant work discussing the decolonizing of the law, education, and the child welfare system, among others, there remains a significant need to advance understanding of the role of concrete, material space in reproducing settler colonialism in Canada. Geographers Adam J. Barker and Jenny Pickerill (2012, 1706) argue that because “colonization [is] a highly spatial process,” then it follows that “decolonization is a place-based process.” As such, my research engages this need to further the empirical and theoretical examination of the decolonization of space in the broader decolonization literature. Second, feminist geographers have made radical contributions to geographical and social (including feminist, queer, anti-oppressive, and post-colonial) conceptualizations of the co-constitutive relationship between space and identity. They have forged an important body of work that accounts for the intersectionality of identities and the structures of oppression as being projected in and through space. However, as some Indigenous and Indigenist² scholars have highlighted, significantly more engagement is needed to understand how the land, that is, the politically charged terrain upon which identities and spaces interact, impacts the relationship between space and identity in settler colonial societies, particularly to the exclusion and oppression of Indigenous peoples. Thus, my research aims to document empirically and advance theoretically, our understanding of how Indigenous identities are experience and interact with settler space.

Terminology

Before proceeding, it is important to define a number of key terms used throughout the thesis, including settler, Indigenous, Western, and settler colonialism. The term “settler”³ refers to those who are not Indigenous and who “occupy lands previously stolen or in the process of being taken from their Indigenous inhabitants or who are otherwise members of the ‘Settler society’, which is founded on co-opted lands and resources” (Barker 2009, 328). I use “settler” instead of “non-Indigenous” for two

² I use this term to refer to settler people (scholars, activists, artists, among others) who engage in Indigenous issues.

³ Some scholars I quote use “Settler” while others use “settler”; I use “settler.”

reasons. First, I use “settler” because it necessarily accounts for the “particular set of ethics, motivations, fears and desires” (Barker 2009, 326) that characterize the settler colonial mentality in Canada (326). Second, my use of this term reflects the language used by many of the Indigenous and Indigenist scholars, as well as my participants, to whom I refer. It is important to note, however, that the term “settler,” as I use it, “does not imply a moral or ethical judgement; rather, it is a descriptive term that recognizes the historical and contemporary realities of imperialism that very clearly separate the lives of Indigenous peoples from the lives of later-comers” (Barker 2009, 329). It is also important to bear in mind that “settler” is a limited, and by no means a comprehensive term because it does not address (a) hybrid identities (multi-ethnic/racial), (b) the reasons *why* people/s settled in Canada (i.e., refugees, slavery), nor (c) the racism that exists among settlers (i.e., white settlers and racialized settlers) (Barker & Pickerill 2012).

Next, I use the term “Indigenous”⁴ to refer to those “with connections to pre-colonial lands who were then subsumed and dispossessed by colonizing power, [and] its definitional boundaries are contested and fluid” (Barker & Pickerill 2009, 67). “Indigenous” is a contested term because, as Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred and Tsalagi scholar Jeff Corntassel (2005, 597) explain:

[it] is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism. The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from European and other centres of empire. It is this oppositional, place-based experience, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning facts of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world. (Emphasis added)

Thus, while “Indigenous” remains a problematic term that “creates a tangle of ambiguities” (Johnson and Murton 20017, 127), it reflects the language⁵ commonly used by many scholars I draw upon, as well as my participants. I use “Indigenous” throughout my thesis, but acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are culturally, linguistically,

⁴ Again, some scholars I quote use “Indigenous” while others use “indigenous”; I use “Indigenous.”

⁵ It is important to note that in the Canadian context, scholars also use the terms “Aboriginal,” “First Nations,” “Native/native” and “Indian.”

spiritually, territorially and historically diverse. Using “Indigenous” and “settler” presents us with a contentious and over-simplified binary yet, I believe it is necessary in this context because it centres the land at the core of my research.

I use “Western” as an umbrella term that encompasses the major countries (such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia) that have been heavily influenced by (via imperialism/colonization) and who contribute to the expansion of (via settler colonialism⁶) European cultures (mainly the United Kingdom, France, and Germany). In many cases, I refer to “Western” rather than “settler” because the former necessarily implies the pervasiveness of European norms that existed before and during colonial expansion to the “New World.” This term, however, “should not be misconstrued to assume that imperialism is a solely Western pursuit or that all Western culture is concerned with imperialism. Rather, it is in recognition of the incredible amount of influence that Western imperialism has had on contemporary global realities and the obvious connections between political imperialism and other aspects of Western society” (Barker 2009, 340).

Finally, I rely on the term “settler colonialism” to refer to the specific and *ongoing* “dynamics of colonial power” that characterize Canada.⁷ According to Barker and Pickerill (2012, 1709), settler colonization in the Canadian context “has not and does not rely simply on the crude swapping of one people for another in place; rather, entire ways of being in place, of perceiving spaces, underlie the colonial project.” Furthermore, Alfred (2005, 128) describes Canadian settler colonialism as a “spiritual and psychological wars of genocide and survival”; that, what began as a classical imperialist strategy of “brutal physical dispersion and dispossession, which often left the spiritual and cultural core of the surviving imperial subjects intact” (128), has shapeshifted and has become “represented by the spiritual and cultural annihilation and the denial of authenticity” (128). The “inability of classical imperialism to completely subdue or control Indigenous populations globally” (Barker 2009, 333) — as evidenced by Indigenous peoples resistance “to being physically or legislatively extinguished, in order

⁶ I return to this further on.

⁷ Here, Canada refers to the legal and territorial definitions of the Canadian state as determined by the Canadian state, but it is important to note that “the role Canada plays in an imperial system [...] extends geographically beyond borders” (Barker 2009, 325).

to secure the territory of Canada for further imperial imposition” (362) — has thus developed into what Alfred and Cornthassel (2005, 601) call “shapeshifting colonialism,” which “is reactive and adaptable and more concerned with an ideology of control than creating specific structures” (Barker 2009, 333). Unlike classical imperialism, settler colonialism attempts to achieve “the end goal of establishing a stable social order based on a stratification” of oppressed people “who allow themselves to be oppressed and even cooperate with their oppressors in exchange for the option to oppress others and thus create some level of privilege for themselves” (327).

Outline of Thesis

Chapter 1 contextualizes my research in the academic literature with a review of the three main bodies of research that feed my project. The discussion on decolonization from Indigenous and Indigenist perspectives, and space and identity from feminist geographical perspectives, provide a conceptual and empirical basis from which my research findings and analyses aim to engage and build upon. I then turn historical interrogations of Canadian urban settlement in order to justify my assertion that settler cities are made up of a variety of settler spaces. In Chapter 2, I present my methodology and discuss the various methods selected to conduct my study. I explain why I opted for a syncretic methodology that incorporates Indigenous and critical qualitative ways of knowing, in the form of “decolonizing methodologies” which account for my positionality as a settler/Indigenist researcher. In this chapter, I include a description of my research design, data collection and analysis, and conclude with a discussion of the limitations and ethical considerations. Moreover, the aim of this research is to demonstrate the decolonizing approach, which I attempted to follow throughout my research process. Chapters 3, 4, and 5, discuss and analyse the findings generated from the sharing circles, interviews, and reflexive journals. Each chapter is organized conceptually to reflect three different dimensions of space: space as material, space as social, and space as (de)colonized. Chapter 3 investigates the material qualities of the University of Ottawa campus space and how they impact the participants’ every day experiences. Specifically, I focus on the built environment (through architecture, spatial layout, and use of concrete) of the campus and how it is imbued with and projects

distinctly settler values, which in turn, impact the way the participants' experience and perceive the space. Because campus is made up of various micro spaces, I also compare the participants' varied and diverse experiences of green spaces, classrooms, and the Aboriginal Resource Centre (ARC). Chapter 4 examines the social qualities of the University of Ottawa campus space by not only looking at the relationship between space and identity, but also grounding this relationship in Indigenous worldviews around the land. The participants' experiences of campus space demonstrate that the built environment impacts social interactions among students, in that it favours settler (specifically Anglo, white, middle-class) identities, behaviours and worldviews over Indigenous worldviews. Consequently, settler norms are reproduced and sustained in and through campus space – a process that I call “settlernormativity.” In this chapter I demonstrate the process of settlernormativity by drawing on feminist geographical conceptualizations of agency over and performativity of identity in and through space. Specifically, I document how Indigenous students navigate and negotiate identity and settler culture and norms throughout their everyday experiences of campus space. In Chapter 5, I present the participants' ideas around how to decolonize the University of Ottawa campus space. In order to understand their views, I first provide some background to explain why they choose to attend university in the first place and show that their purpose and intention are distinct in that they are embedded in Indigenous struggles for decolonization. I then use Dene scholar Glen Coulthard's (2014) work on the “politics of recognition” to highlight the distinctions (and criticisms) participants' made between cultural recognition in and through the University of Ottawa campus space and the decolonization of the campus space itself. Here I include a discussion of their visions and recommendations for feeling “more comfortable” as Indigenous students on campus, but not necessarily for decolonizing the campus itself as a space. Instead of decolonizing space, I argue for *acts of decolonization* that momentarily disrupt and transform the built environment and the social characteristics (including settler norms) of the space in order to present to its occupants and witnesses an alternative place that is open and welcoming to Indigenous visions of justice, “voice, presence and resurgence” (Simpson 2011, 97-98). Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarizing the key findings and making recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1

Decolonization, Space and Identity: Basis for conceptualizing Settler normativity

Introduction

My research draws upon and hopes to contribute to literature regarding decolonization from an Indigenous perspective in Canada, human geographical conceptualizations of space and identity, and historical analyses of settler cities. In this chapter, I review the major theoretical contributions of scholars in these fields, and highlight specific areas on which my research builds. I begin with a review of research on decolonization from an Indigenous perspective. By Indigenous perspective, I am referring to literature that engages and confronts the colonization of Indigenous peoples.⁸ While my research focuses on the Canadian context, I draw from Indigenous and Indigenist scholars who write in other settler colonial contexts such as the USA and New Zealand. I do this because much of the work by scholars in the Canadian context has been inspired by or is an extension of seminal works from scholars in other contexts. Given settler colonialism is a “highly spatial process” (Barker & Pickerill 2010, 1706), I discuss conceptualizations of space and identity as theorized by feminist geographers. I draw on feminist geographical analyses because feminist geographers believe that (a) space and identity are necessarily mutually constitutive, and (b) identities are intersectional. Finally, because decolonization is a “place-based process” (1706), I “ground” the literature on decolonization and space and identity in the historical specificities of Canadian settler cities. Drawing on work by Dene political scientist Glen Coulthard (2014) and historian Penelope Edmonds (2010) to situate this research within the unique characteristics of settler cities in Canada.

Decolonization

Indigenous nations of North America have arguably been the subject of a vast body of Western scholarship, so much so that they have been “studied to death” (Wilson

⁸ Decolonization is also a body of work that engages and confronts the colonization of African nations and peoples by European countries.

2008, 9). This work has investigated the cultural wealth of Indigenous nations (Morgan 1851; Clement 1996), including their material cultures, political traditions, and worldviews; it has analyzed the legacy of colonialism that wreaked havoc on those nations through misunderstandings and disputes over land claims agreements (Ray *et al.* 2000) and the attempted destruction of Indigenous cultures through residential schools (Miller 1996, Milloy 1999, Churchill 2004). Moreover, it has examined the organized resistance of Indigenous nations to colonialism in the form of armed uprising (Obomsawin 1993), land claims struggles (Lawrence 2012), and assertions of cultural identity and sovereign nationhood (Alfred 2009).

Building on this scholarship, and in tandem with the emergence of post-colonial anti-racism and theory, scholars are developing new research on Indigenous decolonization from an Indigenous perspective. According to Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (2000), however, Indigenous decolonization should not be confused with post-colonialism or anti-racism; although their endeavours are related, in so far as both fields center around deconstructing power relations, Indigenous decolonization emerges from “the inability of Eurocentric theory to deal with the complexities of colonialism and its assumptions” (Battiste 2000, xix). Rather, as Battiste explains, Indigenous decolonization “is based on our pain and our experiences... It rejects the use of Eurocentric theory or its categories” (xix).

Furthermore, as Lawrence and Dua (2005) demonstrate, the land issue remains a central point of divergence between Indigenous decolonization and post-colonial theorists. Lawrence and Dua (2005) maintain that post-colonialism and anti-racism, from an Indigenous perspective, distort understandings of ‘race’, racism, and history (132) because they are fundamentally “premised on an ongoing colonization project” (123) and thus fail to see the Canadian nation as foreign to its land base (127). Focusing on the land reveals “important gaps between Western and traditional knowledges that shape how we see these relationships to land” (126); for example, it uncovers how people of colour also participate in projects of settlement. Similarly, geographers Barker and Pickerill (2012, 1707) argue that “much existing work that explores how coalitions that form across difference [...] exclude consideration of Indigenous people’s space and place.” Focusing

on the land necessarily situates Indigenous people differently than other oppressed groups, and thus needs to be taken into account within anti-oppressive research.

The term decolonization, from an Indigenous perspective, encompasses a wide spectrum of guidelines, methods, or approaches, and many scholars have highlighted distinctive motives, concerns, and concepts that drive this work (Mutua & Swadener 2004, 33-34). At its most basic level, decolonization is grounded in valuing, reclaiming, and foregrounding Indigenous voices and epistemologies (31) with the aim of psychologically, culturally, institutionally, and territorially ‘un-doing’ colonial oppression (Smith 1999; Alfred 1999; Mutua & Swadener 2004). Decolonization works to destabilize colonialism’s legitimacy and actively transforms structures characterized by colonial relationships to systems that respect the nationhood and territories of Indigenous nations (Regan 2010; Wilson and Yellow Bird 2005). Some scholars such as Taiaiake Alfred (2009) and Angela Cavender Wilson (2005, 255) advocate for a return to the traditional (“return to the tribal”) in order to decolonize. They suggest “find[ing] answers from within [...] traditions, and present[ing] them in ways that preserve the integrity of our languages and communicative styles” (Alfred 1999, 143-144) so as to secure Indigenous national sovereignty. Others such as Paulette Regan (2010) urge settlers to take the responsibility for decolonizing themselves and their country, arguing that, “we must work as Indigenous allies to “restory” the dominant-culture version of history ... as told by Indigenous peoples themselves” (6) in order to reach reconciliation. Scholars such as Kovach (2005; 2009) and Smith (1999) see decolonization as taking form in the legitimization and establishment of Indigenous worldviews in the ongoing production of knowledge within academia.

Despite the wide-ranging conceptualizations of decolonization by Indigenous and Indigenist scholars, there are three themes that connect the broad range of ideas. Decolonization is (a) based in the land, (b) involves cultural revitalization, and (c) includes settler participation. Decolonization is based in the land because, as Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014, 7) asserts, settler colonialism in Canada is secured to continually “facilitate the *dispossession* of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority” through capitalism, racial hierarchies, and state power.

Decolonization also involves cultural revitalization, or what Anishnaabe scholar Leanne Simpson (2011, 17) refers to as “returning to ourselves”:

We need to rebuild our culturally inherent philosophical contexts for governance, education, healthcare, and economy. We need to be able to articulate in a clear manner our decisions for the future, for living as *indigenous Peoples* in contemporary times. To do so, we need to engage in *Indigenous* processes, since according to our traditions, the processes of engagement highly influence the outcome of the engagement itself. [...] In essence, we need to not just figure out who we are we need to re-establish the processes by which we live who we are within the current context we find ourselves. We do not need funding to do this. We do not need a friendly colonial political climate to do this. We do not need opportunity to do this. We need our Elders, our languages, and our lands, along with vision, intent, commitment, community and ultimately action. [...] If this approach does nothing else to shift the current state of affairs – and I believe it will – it will ground our peoples in their own cultures and teachings that provide the ultimate antidote to colonialism...

Finally, decolonization includes settler participation for two major reasons. First, settlers are entrenched in colonialism and continually, to varying degrees, benefit from the dispossession of Indigenous lands. Thus, in order to dismantle the structures of colonial oppression, settlers must necessarily actively engage in this process. Second, creating alliances with settler populations is a logistical reality. Coulthard (2014, 173) writes,

Settler colonization has rendered our populations too small to affect this magnitude of change. This reality demands that we continue to remain open to, if not actively seek out and establish, relations of solidarity and networks of trade and mutual aid with national and transnational communities and organization that are also struggling against the imposed effects of globalized capital, including other Indigenous nations and national confederations; urban Indigenous people and organizations; the labor, women’s, GBLTQ2S [...], and environmental movements; and, of course, those racial and ethnic communities that find themselves subject to their own distinct forms of economic, social, and cultural marginalization.

More recently, leading Indigenous scholars (Alfred 2005; 2009; Simpson 2011; Coulthard 2014) in the Canadian context have refocused conceptualizations of decolonization from seeking state-recognition to resurgence. This work developed in response to self-determination efforts of the past 40 years by Indigenous communities in Canada to establish peaceful coexistence and mutual recognition from the state, or a

“politics of recognition” (Coulthard 2014), which according to these scholars has only worked to re-enforce the colonial relationship. Moreover, a politics of recognition advocates “the institutional recognition and accommodation of Indigenous cultural difference as an important means of reconciling the colonial relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state” (Coulthard 2014, 106). But because the terms of recognition are usually determined and granted “by and in the interests of the master (colonizer)” (439), Indigenous peoples come to identify with (or become subject to) their unequal relationship with the state, and thus help to sustain it. In other words, recognition is a “gift” bestowed by those in power to those dominated, which does little to change the structures of colonialism. A shift towards resurgence on the other hand, advocates for Indigenous people/s to “turn away” from the “assimilative lure of the statist politics of recognition, and instead be fashioned toward our on-the-ground struggles of freedom” (Coulthard 2014, 48). For these scholars, resurgence is about “critically reevaluating, reconstructing, and redeploying Indigenous cultural forms in ways that seek to prefigure, alongside those with similar ethical commitments, radical alternatives to the structural and psycho-affective facets of colonial domination” (Coulthard 2014, 48-49).

Despite being relatively recent, decolonization research has opened up important new spaces for academic exploration and political action. By recognizing the deeply embedded colonial settler culture in the Canadian context as a starting point, decolonization is constantly working to break down the barriers of the dominant power structures. This process has begun with historicizing the land in a process anti-racist scholar Sherene Razak (2002) calls “unmapping” (5). Unmapping undermines “the idea of settler innocence ... and [it] uncover[s] the ideologies and practices of conquest and domination” (5). Much of this research has thus far tended to focus on decolonizing institutions such as the judicial system and the academy/education (Smith 1999; Kovach 2010), and the child welfare system (Libesman 2013) among others. Yet, despite the unprecedented migration of Indigenous people from reserves and rural areas to cities since the 1970s^{9 10} (Proulx & Howards eds. 2011), the everyday spatial experiences of

⁹ In Canada, government census data revealed in 2001 that almost half (494,095) of the 976,305 people identifying as members of at least one of Canada’s Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) resided in urban areas. Of this urban Canadian Aboriginal population, almost 20% (175,760) lived in five cities: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto. *Canada’s Urban Aboriginal Population Fact Sheet*, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada,

Indigenous people in cities remains largely understudied. Furthermore, how to decolonize space and especially urban space remains unclear. Indeed, research concerned with the racialized, gendered, and heterosexualized nature of Western and settler cities and urban spaces is growing (Dua and Robertson eds. 1999; Brown and Strega 2005). But, as geographer Evelyn J. Peters (2004, 255) observes, few scholars have “explored how the definition of the city, particularly in colonized countries, excludes Indigenous peoples and cultures.” In order to understand how space can be decolonized, we must first establish the co-constitution of space and identity in order to then be able to study how Indigenous people/s experience urban settler space on an everyday basis.

Space and identity

Scholarship on “social space” has been, and continues to be, a collaborative process from wide-ranging fields. In the context of colonialism and settler societies, feminist geographers and post-colonial scholars have made significant contributions. Here, I have gleaned from both areas of thought and have woven together the theoretical hearth of my research.

According to Doreen Massey (1991; 1993) places are constituted by the distinct lines of connection between the global and the local. Drawing on her work, space is understood as being part of “an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification” in which the material and the ideological are co-constitutive (Jacobs 1996). No longer are spaces seen as the “neutral backdrops” or “uncomplicated stages” upon which inequality is produced and sustained by capitalism (Pratt & Hanson 1994). Rather, they are made up of what Edward Said (1993, 56) calls ‘overlapping territories’ and ‘entwined histories’ precipitated by colonialism, that produce unstable and uneven arrangements of power.

Drawing upon Foucault’s (1984) work on biopower and Butler’s (1990; 1993) work on performativity, feminist geographers have reconceptualized processes of identity and space formation. How identities form in and through space, and within multiple systems of domination, has become central in uncovering “the uneven material conditions of

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/of/uf/uf/fs>.

¹⁰ Between 1986 and 1991, the urban Indigenous population in Canada increased by 55 per cent in contrast to the non-Indigenous population in Canada increase of 11 per cent. *Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Perspectives and Realities*, vol. 4. (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1996), 603.

everyday life” (Fincher & Jacobs 1998, 3). Difference, which was once thought of as being made up of “culturally” defined urban groups with pre-given identities (e.g. ethnic minorities) by Chicago School urban sociologists¹¹ (Jacobs and Fincher 1998, 5), is now understood as being “socially produced and multiply located” (5); meaning that at any one time we can occupy more than one system of oppression (Jones & Moss, 1995, 254). Identities are conceived as a process of ongoing intersections of multiple grids of difference that are temporarily fixed in a location and time (Pratt 1998, 28). It is in specific moments and locations that particular identities are foregrounded, performed, and negotiated. Jane M. Jacobs’ work shows that the way in which identities are represented, signified, and performed, marks out the “tendential lines of force,” or boundaries, “by which [colonialism] holds” (Jacobs 1996, 6). Though it is understood that spaces are in constant motion, to deny the reality of boundaries is a privilege afforded to those not trapped by them. Borders in space (and place) are tied up with social boundaries (the formation of identity and its complement, the production of difference) but there are multiple grids of difference and complex and varied links between space and identity formation (Pratt 1998, 27). According to Homi Bhabha (1994) “multiple cultures and identities inevitably inhabit a single place... and a single cultural identity is often situated in multiple, interconnected spaces” (27). Thus, cultural/social boundaries are a product of “articulation between different elements of experience and subjective position” (27). In specific moments and locations (or resting places) particular identities are foregrounded, transgressed, and sometimes subverted through negotiations of identity politics (Anderson 1998, 202). It is for these reasons that Jacobs’ urges us to attend to the “micropolitics,” the specifics of the “local.” Thus, while spaces and identities are indeed understood as processes rather than fixed entities, how struggles over identities are constituted and contextually determined creates localized arrangements of power, or what Jacobs calls “micropolitics” (34) with unstable cultural/social boundaries. How localized arrangements of power are manifested have to

¹¹ “E.W. Burgess and his colleagues in the Chicago School of urban sociology produced the now overexposed concentric zone model of urban growth, a model that was expected to stand as a template for “the city” conceived as an “organism” with its own internal logic of growth and development. Within this framework, Burgess plotted what he saw to be the predictable spatial patterning of ethnic enclaves, racial ghettos, areas of prostitution, and “clean and bright suburbs” (Jacobs and Fincher 1998, 5). The Chicago School’s conceptualization of difference is useful as a point of comparison to demonstrate how ideas of social difference and urban spatiality have since then transformed.

do with what Bondi and Rose (2003) refer to as politics of redistribution and recognition (230) whereby a group is being both materially (access to space and resources) and symbolically represented. For example, the Muslim Students Association at the University of Ottawa has worked hard (predominantly through events and campaigns) to gain access to engage with “redistribution” which has afforded them a prayer space, an office, and funding for campaigns and events, as well as visibility that contributes to a growing culture of tolerance on campus. Likewise, ICSSA, through their decolonization mandate, is demanding of the administration to allocate space and resources for Indigenous students at the University of Ottawa, who will in turn be recognized and made visible.

That identities are contextually determined indicates that subjectivities are necessarily anchored in space and time; identity comes through the temporary fixing of the array of differences that constitute the embodied person”¹² (Jacobs & Fincher 1998, 7). Moreover, as feminist scholar Kathy Ferguson (1993) argues, identities are *multiple* rather than *mobile* (158) because it is in “specific [temporal] moments that particular identities are foregrounded, transgressed, and sometimes subverted through negotiations” of the localized identity politics, or micropolitics. Kay Anderson’s (1998) research on Vancouver’s Chinatown suggests that “identities are often configured in spaces where the [(albeit, unstable)] boundaries between cultural differences are inscribed...sites of difference inject a material presence into the discourses (e.g. of race and gender) that condition cultural hierarchies” (202). Space must thus be understood as ever-shifting, materially grounded struggles over identity, power, and representation colliding with multiple systems of oppression; the uneven operations of power in and through space can only be understood by attending to, and mapping out the material and symbolic constitution of *specific* spaces.

While economic and political processes are the bedrock of colonialism, a colonial system solidifies itself and attempts permanence, by reproducing colonial culture (Jacobs 1996; Said 1993). This imported, European culture, which has come to dominate all aspects of urban life in North American settler societies (what I will henceforth refer to as

¹² Judith Butler (1993) conceptualizes this “temporary fixing” as “performativity,” a process “that works through discourse as a means of establishing the parameters of identification by which the subject comes to be known” (Jacobs and Finch 1998, 7).

“settler spaces”), is not only rooted in, but also dependent upon, binary social categorizations: definitions of the Self in contrast to the Other (Jacobs 1996; Said 1993); dominant constructs tend to define the Self as white, rational, male/masculine, able-bodied, cis-gendered, Anglophone, moneyed, and Christian, among others, and the Other as its opposite. Euro-American settler notions of the Self and Other are the building blocks for the hierarchies of power that characterize the Canadian colonial society, and have provided legitimization for the dispossession, domination, and violence of Indigenous communities and territories (Razak 2002). The notion of the Self/Other, which outlines the ‘highest’ moral order and the ‘rules of conduct and behaviour’ have been, and continue to be, encoded onto the settler urban landscape. Euro-American settler notions of the Self and Other have never been stable, however, as they are always under threat by the ‘unpredictable’, ‘irrational’ Other (Jacobs 1996, 2-3; Said 1993; Razak 2002). This unstable identity remains at the roots of Canadian settler identity. Literary theorist Northrop Frye (1995, 264) famously described Canadian settler culture as deriving from a “garrison mentality,” describing a process by which settlers (during early colonial settlement) both physically and psychologically defended themselves from the surrounding hostile environment and its fearsome Indigenous inhabitants (Atwood 1972; Jones 1970). Thus, as Kathleen Kirby (1996, 48) argues, the anxious European/settler Self can only achieve his sense of S/self in the new environment by knowing and controlling the landscape, and by keeping the Other out through spatial confinement such as “Indian” reserves. Cartography, urban planning, and architectural aesthetics enabled settlers to establish a material and representational colonial identity (Jacobs 1996, Razak 2002) in Canada. Spaces have been measured, (re)named, bound, and regulated to *realize* an imagined geography and an imported culture, and to be incorporated into “the global power grid of empire” (Jacobs 4, 1996). And so the Settler created Canada in his own image, and in the image of the Settler he created it.

Feminist geographers have shown that the dominant norms inscribed in the material urban landscape through the process of colonialism are further maintained by institutions and structures of governmentality (Jacobs and Finch 1998, 7). Through repetition and regulation, structures of difference, which demarcate the privileges and rights each person may enjoy, are made to have the “appearance of substance” (Butler

1990, 33). Moreover, they have shown that such inscribed norms are made up of various regimes of power that intersect in complex ways across space and time. Some feminist geographers have looked at how urban space is the product of patriarchy (Doan 2010; Valentine 2007); urban design is guided by persistent stereotypical gender roles and thus leads to the gendering of spaces. Spatial structuring practices dividing the public from the private for example, has worked to “construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude and suppress gender and sexual difference preserving traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures” (Duncan 1996, 128). Other scholars have argued that in addition to being gendered, spaces are also sexualized and “heteronormative” (Valentine 1993, 2007; Doan 2010). They contend that heterosexuality is treated as the dominant and default sexual orientation and permeates urban space, leading to the marginalization of gender and sexually “deviant” people. Similarly critical race theorists have shown that spaces are racialized (hooks 1981; Said 1993; Mohanram 1999). Many scholars have shown that whiteness, which is associated with the embodiment of high morality and privilege, is the standard from which people of colour are identified, stereotyped, and spatially segregated (Kobayashi & Peake 2000). Taken together, this research demonstrates that dominant norms are encoded in the built environment and constantly shape and are shaped by identity and difference formation.¹³

In spite of these significant advancements in feminist geography and post-colonial research, less research examines Indigenous identity formation in urban spaces. Lawrence and Dua (2005) account for this discrepancy arguing that Indigenous people tend to be uncritically included as small “interest group” within a larger antiracist struggle of racialized people. This default inclusion not only obscures the ways in which people of colour benefit and participate in the ongoing settlement of Canada, it also denies the contested status of the land being settled in the first place (131). Thus, while a Senegalese student at the University of Ottawa may share with Indigenous students experiences of racialized oppression and marginalization on campus, the former student benefits from the theft of the unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territory and resources upon which the institution is laid. In order to account for the significance of land and urban space in

¹³ Other scholars have contributed to this research by examining how other norms, including ableism and ageism, are inscribed in and through space.

the production of identities in settler colonial contexts, I now turn to the literature on settler cities.

Settler Cities

Historian Penelope Edmonds (2010) argues that historical scrutiny of the land as it undergoes settlement and urbanization in the Canadian context permits us to see that these settlements are distinctly *settler* colonial cities with particular political and racialized modes of land reconfiguration unlike anywhere else in the colonized world (6-7). Identities have been constructed through centuries of material and discursive production, first by Europeans and further regulated by Euro-Canadian settlers and immigrants (Edmonds 2010, 5). Edmonds' work which historicizes the development of cities in Canada shows how "New World" cities are fundamentally different from other colonial cities; they are *settler* cities. She argues that these cities are unique because they were built through the "distinct process of settler colonialism and its central dynamic of suppression ... the displacement of Indigenous peoples and their replacement with settlers" (5). Her work demonstrates that settler cities manifest unparalleled modes of spatial commerce ("nodes in active trans-imperial networks" (7)) coupled with deeply encoded European values, which in turn reconfigures, resignifies, and regulates bodies and spaces (6). While Edmonds' work is crucial to establishing and situating embedded settler values, it does not account for how these values are embodied, performed and experienced in and through space within settler cities. I turn to Coulthard (2014) and Razak (2002) to account for the different types of spaces that exist within settler cities.

Coulthard (2014, 173) explains that "the relationship between Indigenous people and the city [...] has always been fraught with tension." This is because, he argues, "Canadian cities were originally conceived of in the colonial imagination as explicitly non-Native space—as *civilized* space—and urban planners and Indian policy makers went through great efforts to expunge urban centers of Native presence" and move Indigenous peoples to reserves or inner cities of urban centres (urban "Native" spaces). Sherene Razak (2002, 129) asserts the forced segregation of urban space from "Native space" began to dissolve during the 1950s and 1960s. Echoing Jacobs' (1996) and Fincher and Jacobs' (1998) work on urban space and identity discussed earlier, Razak

(2002, 129) writes:

The city belongs to the settlers and the sully of civilized society through the presence of the racialized Other in white spaces gives rise to a careful management of boundaries within urban space. Planning authorities require larger plots in suburbs, thereby ensuring that larger homes and wealthier families live there. Projects and Chinatowns are created, cordoning off the racial poor. Such spatial practices, often achieved through law (nuisance laws, zoning laws, and so on), mark off the spaces of the settler and the native both conceptually and materially. The inner city is racialized space, the zone in which all that is not respectable is contained. Canada's colonial geographies exhibit this same pattern of violent expulsions and the spatial containment of Aboriginal peoples to marginalized areas of the city, processes consolidated over three hundred years of colonization.

Coulthard and Razak provide complexity to Edmonds' analysis of settler cities presenting the spatial divisions that have developed within the urban centres. Building on their work which focuses on spaces within the city in general, my research looks at a more specific space. Furthermore, whereas they examine the processes (e.g., through planning for example) that produce urban spaces, I will look at the experiences and perceptions of more micro spaces that Indigenous students have. Furthermore, drawing on the notion of heteronormativity, I will show how settler spaces are "settlernormative." While Canadian settler cities are inherently imbedded with dominant settler norms, settlernormativity varies in and through the more micro spaces that make up these cities. As seen above, cities are made up of a variety of micro spaces whose boundaries and identities are fluid and are constantly intersecting with dominant structures of oppression to differing degrees and levels of exclusion (to a range of different groups). I propose then, that within settler cities there are distinct micro urban spaces, such as the University of Ottawa, that are imbued with distinct processes of settlernormativity. Such spaces are settler spaces.

Chapter 2

Decolonizing Methodologies

Introduction

This chapter presents my research methodology, including the process behind the design and realization of this research. First, I describe my relationship with the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Students Association (ICSSA). In the next section I present the theoretical underpinnings of my methodology. I draw from Indigenous and qualitative Western anti-oppressive/feminist/critical scholars in order to develop a decolonizing methodology appropriate for this research. Then, I describe and justify my choice of methods for data collection and I discuss how the data was collected and analyzed. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the limitations and ethical considerations surrounding my project.

The ICSSA: my collaborative research partner

In 2011, I started volunteering for ICSSA. Working with them as the re-wrote their constitution through consensus-based decision making. After a few months, I toyed with the idea of doing my Masters' research on Indigenous-settler relationships at the University of Ottawa and discussed this with members of ICSSA informally to gauge how they felt about it. My idea was met with overwhelming support. Not long after, following the lead of the Idle No More movement, ICSSA turned its full focus on launching a decolonization campaign of the University of Ottawa, known as the "Five Demands." During the winter of 2012, we created an Idle No More "embassy" (in the form of an information table) at the University of Ottawa that provided settlers and Indigenous students with information on the movement and upcoming workshops. I co-managed the embassy and encouraged students to attend the round dance at Tabaret, Idle No More workshops, our general assemblies to support the soon to be announced Five Demands. Finally, the Round Dance at the Rotunda held on January 9, 2013 solidified, for me, that I wanted to shape my research around decolonization at the University of Ottawa campus. As such, at an ICSSA meeting, I formally asked the members of the coordinating circle if they would approve my research topic as well as play a supportive

role in the project as a whole. At the meeting, we agreed that I would become the ICSSA's "Collaborative Research Partner" which meant that they would actively assist by advising me on cultural protocols, helping with participant recruitment, and linking me to resources. In exchange, I offered to write a report for ICSSA summarizing my findings as source material for their campaign. We made this agreement knowing that the findings of my research may not support their campaign.

It is important to note that during the participant recruitment and data collection portions of my research in Fall 2013 and Winter 2014, there were internal conflicts among members of ICSSA that consequently changed my relationship with the organization. Many of the members with whom I had developed friendships resigned their participation with ICSSA. This meant that communication between myself and the new ICSSA (as I had previously not developed friendships nor worked with them) broke down and my role as Collaborative Research Partner faded. The members who left ICSSA, however, remained committed to this research project and both recruited participants and participated in the sharing circles and personal interviews as planned. I still intend to give back to ICSSA and given the time that has passed, will ask them, upon completion of this thesis, what they would like me to do for them.

My time with ICSSA taught me about me about "relationality," meaning that, "We know what we know from where we stand" (Kovach 2009, 7). My time with ICSSA also prompted me to practice and embody humility, and perhaps most importantly, to radically shift my thinking about the land, unceded and unsundered Algonquin territory, upon which I occupy and from which I benefit. These (on-going) lessons guided me as I, with the help of ICSSA, assembled a collaborative methodology for this research project. During my undergraduate studies in human geography, my work focused primarily on feminist geography, which consequently left me unfamiliar with the settler Canadian context. As such, through this MA research I have only just scratched the surface.

Methodological Meeting Grounds

For this project I brought together Indigenous and qualitative (critical) Western traditions by fusing their "natural alliances" (Kovach 2009, 13). As such, I sought to

engage a syncretic approach grounded in Smith's (1999) notion of "decolonizing methodologies." It is important to note, however, that it is *through* a graduate program and thesis at a settler institution that I am able to carry out this research, and thus this project still functions heavily within the Western academic tradition. Rather than relying solely on critical qualitative methodologies, I draw upon Indigenous methodologies as well because they are grounded in the "reality of the lived Indigenous experience" (Wilson 2008, 60). Kovach recognizes the usefulness of using a mixed approach that adapts Western models to Indigenous ways of knowing, asserting that "the greatest ally of Indigenous research will be those non-Indigenous 'methodologies from the margins' that do not hide from but embrace the *political* nature of research" (Kovach 2005, 33), such as feminist, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches (which I will from now on refer to under the umbrella "critical methodologies"). Possessing a "critical reflexive lens that acknowledges the politics of representation" (Kovach 2009, 34) within research, is promising because both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies "assume the relationally constructed aspect of knowledge production" (22) and provide a strong common ground for Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers (and individuals) to understand each other (33).

Indigenous methodologies are distinct from even the "most" critical qualitative Western methodologies because they center "tribal epistemologies" (Kovach 2009, 25) which challenge the foundation of Western knowledge production and purpose; but the focus here will be on their shared values and characteristics. Indigenous and critical methodologies "value both process and content" (25), what Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) refers to as "ceremony." For Wilson, research is ceremony because it requires a process of preparation "that happens long before the event" (60). For Kovach and Wilson, research process and content should be grounded in relationality, respect, and reflexivity.

Relationality

Plains Cree scholar Winona Stevenson (2000) explains, "Seldom do you hear a Cree Elder say 'I know.' What is heard is 'I believe' or 'I believe it to be true'" (19). This

way of thinking, according to Kovach (2010), acknowledges the “experiential while engaging that the abstract and theoretical” (22) (what critical methodological scholars may refer to as “interpretive” and/or “subjective” knowledge); furthermore, valuing the experiential is inclusive of multiple truths. In particular, Indigenous ways of knowing assume that all knowledge is cultural and based in a relational context (Wilson 2008, 95), and arise from interrelationships to the human world, the spirit, and the inanimate entities of the ecosystem (Kovach 2010, 27,). This distinct Indigenous characteristic is especially important for this research project because it can assist in highlighting the differences between settler and Indigenous students’ conceptualizations of space and place, which emerge from contradicting worldviews around *land*.

Respect

In the context of settler-colonialism, the act of researching “is still deeply political” (Kovach 2010, 29). Respect implies that the researcher fulfills a role and obligation in the research relationship, and is constantly accountable to their relations (Wilson 2008, 76). Critical methodologies “turn the world into a series of performances” (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, 5) that “bring researchers and their research participants into a shared, critical space, a space where the work of resistance, critique, and empowerment can occur” (5). For Indigenous scholar Evelyn Steinhauer (2001), respect goes even further than the research participants, it “regulates how we treat Mother Earth, the plants, the animals, and our brothers and sisters of all races ... Respect means you listen intently to others’ ideas, that you did not insist that your idea prevails” (86). Here, respect acknowledges that remaining accountable in the research relationship goes beyond respecting the participants as individuals but rather, it means respecting the holistic nature of where their knowledge comes from (the land, the communities, the ancestors). Finally, respect is grounded in reciprocity. Because knowledge is relational, seeking information “ought not to be extractive, but reciprocal, to ensure an ecological and cosmological balance” (Kovach 2010, 57). Yet, due to the legacy of (on-going) colonialism, “Culturally responsive research practices must be developed [so that they locate] power within the indigenous community” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 6). Moreover, the research must not only give back something meaningful to the participants and all

other sources of knowledge, the research process should be designed according to what the research participants consider to be “acceptable and not acceptable” (6). Maori scholar Russell Bishop (2005) argues that such work “encourages self-determination and empowerment” (quoted in Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 6). Borrowing from Smith (2000, 239), this should lead the researcher to ask:

1. What research do we want done?
2. Whom is it for?
3. What difference will it make?
4. Who will carry it out?
5. How do we want the research done?
6. How will we know it is worthwhile?
7. Who will own the research?
8. Who will benefit?

Asking these questions is part of “checking your heart” and ensuring that the research is being conducted in a good way. My intention is to respond to these questions throughout the thesis.

Reflexivity

Since knowledge gathering is highly interpretative (relational), “the stories of the researcher and the research participants are reflected in the meanings being made” (Kovach 2010, 26). Indigenous and critical methodologies then, accentuate the importance of reflexivity throughout the research process. Self-reflexivity, or “checking your heart” as Shawn Wilson (2010, 60) calls it, is about power relations; it demands that the researcher “be continually aware of their own biases as a means of consistently *locating* themselves in the research” (Kovach 2009, 26). Self-locating, a term often used by Indigenous scholars, is especially pertinent as it values space, place and the local as an integral source of knowledge; “we can only interpret the world from the *place* of our experience” (Kovach 2009, 110). It is important to note that reflexivity is not intended to be a confessional that absolves the researcher of their privilege, nor of the inherently hierarchical tensions that exist between the researcher and the participants, for this frames privilege and unequal power-relations on the individual level. Reflexivity rather, is the continual process through which the researcher

recognizes how their culture and knowledge are shaped by the *structures* of oppression, so that they can become *aware* of the “power dynamic flowing back and forth” (Kovach 2009, 112) between the researcher and the research participants. Feminist geographer Kim V.L. England (1994) explains, “reflexivity is self-critical sympathetic introspection and self-conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as researcher” (82). Thus, self-location is critical and continual.

As a settler Canadian, I recognize that I am an outsider to the Indigenous colonized experience. While my upbringing was different from the average white Canadian (I was born in Peru, lived in Brazil as a child, as well as in Tanzania as a teenager), I was mostly raised¹⁴ with typically settler-Canadian values and enjoyed relative financial stability. My ancestors have not only had a long (within the colonial period) presence in Ontario and Quebec (it can be traced back many generations), some of them were also directly involved in the colonial project of Canada. There is, for example, a statue in front of Quebec’s Parliament Building as well on Parliament Hill in Ottawa of my great, great grandfather Robert Baldwin who helped establish Canada’s first “Responsible Government.” My roots then are steeped in settler culture and continue to grow in illegally settled Indigenous land. Nonetheless, my critically and politically engaged parents whose careers have been committed to marginalized communities sparked in me my social justice inclination. Furthermore, in addition to being a young, (mostly) heterosexual, white, able-bodied, Western educated, middle-class, Anglophone with a level of privilege I will probably never truly understand or appreciate, I also identify strongly with anarcha-feminism and seek to actively decolonize the relationship between settler and Indigenous activists who are resisting the colonial, capitalist and patriarchal structures of oppression. I also seek to decolonize myself and accept that this will be a life-long journey.

During my research project design process, ICSSA, through consensus, defined my role as their “Collaborative Research Partner” which implied that I be constantly accountable and responsive to the concerns of the partnering group, that I be rigorously

¹⁴ I say mostly because I did not learn English until I moved to Canada at age 7, and also because in Peru I was partially raised by my mother’s Peruvian “co-madre” (co-mother) who bestowed upon me her own non-Canadian cultural values.

observant of and open to Indigenous protocol, and that I be respectful of the comfort levels of research participants. With guidance from members of ICSSA, and further literary direction from various Indigenous and critical scholars (many of who I consider mentors), I sought to remain aware of my positionality in both the design and content of my research. During my fieldwork, I often qualified a question with either an explanation as to why I was asking it or shared a personal story. I made the participants aware as to why I was doing this research and explained what I was hoping to learn and do with the findings. I did my best to remain humble in my interactions with my participants by carefully listening (and quietly fighting my temptation to interject with questions and comments).

Decolonizing Methodologies

Sarah de Leeuw *et al.* (2012) remind us that, “relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in settler colonies are inescapably marked by colonialism” (188). In Canadian settler society, universities are not only the “centers where knowledge is created, maintained, and upheld” (Kovach 2009, 12), they have also been, and are continually complicit in furthering the colonial project through extractive and essentializing research practices. Thus, “introducing Indigenous knowledges into any form of academic discourse [...] must ethically include the influence of the colonial relationships, thereby introducing a decolonizing perspective to a critical paradigm” (30). Decolonizing methodologies specifically work to unsettle and disrupt the ways in which “Western science and the modern academy have been part of the colonial apparatus” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 2); it is about “taking apart the story [and] revealing underlying texts (Smith 1999, 3). Centralizing Indigenous knowledges, which have most often been rendered as *objects* of study in the Western academy, necessarily turns the tables, making “Western systems of knowledge the object of critique and inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 6). Valuing Indigenous perspectives and knowledges is crucial for settlers such as myself to disrupt what we consider to be normal, and forces us to engage the oppressive mechanisms that construct and privilege our perceived normalcy that has taken form in settlernormativity. Decolonizing methodologies then are necessarily transformative because they “work towards instigating change” (Kovach 2009, 43) both structurally and

personally.

During my fieldwork, Western methods that adapted to Indigenous methods were employed with a decolonizing agenda. Sharing circles, reflexive journals, and personal interviews were conducted in order to center Indigenous knowledges, thereby challenging Western academic norms of knowledge gathering. Secondly, the methods directly engaged the topic of decolonization within the context of a settler institution, which again challenges the normalized oppressive aspects of the University of Ottawa.

Case Study

Decolonizing methodologies are also grounded in “the history, context, and agency” (Smith 2000, 229) of the *local*, rather than the universal. Understanding Indigenous struggles as universal perpetuates the racializing power of colonialism and Western research by rendering Indigeneity as a “free-floating signifier” (Grande 2000, 348). Given the diversity of not only Indigenous and settler populations respectively, but also the uneven relationships of power between these groups throughout the Canadian state more broadly, “it is impossible to search for answers that will apply everywhere equally” (Barker and Pickerill 2010, 1707). My research then is concerned with the spatial and social conditions of the University of Ottawa campus. This urban space is a “stage for intertwined discourses of settler colonialism, social “Settler” identity development and Indigenous resistance to colonialism” (1707).

Volunteering for ICSSA since the Winter 2011 has given me insight into the daily challenges Indigenous students experience on campus. Informal conversations with Indigenous members of the student organization revealed that many of them feel alienated at the University of Ottawa, pointing to a lack of Indigenous presence, whether it be by cultural signifiers/symbols throughout the campus or the perceived presence (or lack thereof) of Indigenous people themselves. They described the difficulty in accessing knowledge on Indigenous resources and services provided at the university such as the Aboriginal Resource Centre (ARC) and the Indigenous Students Association (ISA) due to lack of advertising and visibility (the ARC was previously tucked away, out of sight, in a corner of the University Center (UCU) and recently moved to an off-yet-close-to-campus location). Many of ICSSA’s members also described how spatial regulations of different

campus spaces felt oppressive to their cultural expression. One member told me that an Indigenous professor demonstrating a traditional smudging ceremony for his students during class was quickly shut down by security because it was considered a fire hazard according to university safety code. Another member described the oppressive nature of classrooms at the University of Ottawa as they force a power relation between student and professor. In many rooms, the chairs and tables are bolted to the floor, permanently fixing a particularly Western view on classroom learning and structure compared to Indigenous learning systems. Moreover, the round dance at the Rotunda and ICSSA's "Five Demands" were ignited in response to the various negative experiences Indigenous students were constantly encountering at the University of Ottawa.

Second, I chose the University of Ottawa because university campuses are special spaces. Walton-Roberts' (2011) work on Canadian universities demonstrates that they are unique and diverse loci with the ability to alter their surroundings. Walton-Roberts' (2011) research on international students attending Waterloo University shows that these institutions offer safe and more tolerant spaces away from the relatively pronounced racial and religious discrimination that students experienced beyond the campus. Her respondents highlighted the spatial inclusion they felt on campus as being integral to their everyday experiences of space and place; this spatial inclusion takes form in prayer rooms, cultural centers/spaces, and symbolic representations of cultural diversity. Through community services and outreach, political activism, and cultural events, universities actively promote cultural difference and tolerance to the wider community. As students, faculty and staff from myriad backgrounds at the University of Ottawa work to (consciously or unconsciously) symbolically and materially transform the institution to be more inclusive, as seen with ICSSA's and ISA's "Five Demands" decolonization campaign, the University is presented with the potential to positively alter itself and other spaces surrounding the campus.

Finally, from a geographical perspective, the University of Ottawa is also a well-defined space with relatively clear boundaries. Located in the southern western edge of the downtown residential neighbourhood of Sandy Hill, the University of Ottawa campus is bound by the Rideau Canal to the west, Mann Ave to the south, Henderson Ave to the east, and Daly Ave to the north.

Furthermore, it is the combination of my work with ICSSA, ICSSA's decolonization campaign, the unique qualities that characterize Canadian universities as "special spaces", and the well-defined spatial boundaries of the University of Ottawa campus that presented me with an ideal case study for this research.

Selected Methods

My data collection relied on three Indigenized qualitative methods: sharing circles, reflexive journaling, and personal interviews.

Sharing Circles

Sharing circles are an Indigenized form of focus groups. Feminist researcher Patricia Leavy (2007, 172) argues that focus groups are a useful tool for "exploratory research where little is known about a topic" and for understanding the *daily* experience of oppression that may go unnoticed (182). In the context of my research, understanding the Indigenous participants' *everyday* experiences at the University of Ottawa campus was crucial because, as Kovach (2009) explains, "The relationship with the settler society impacts our world daily, in the supermarket, in neighborhoods, and in educational institutions. In post-secondary education, Indigenous students experience the burn of colonial research on a consistent basis most evident in the suppression of Indigenous knowledges" (76). Thus, this method allows access to "subjugated voices" (Leavy 2007, 173). Leavy (2007) argues that the group dynamic, or "group effect" opens up a context for "group members to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences" (173) through a dynamic, "multivocal narrative larger than the sum of its parts" (175). Furthermore, "feminist infused" (175) focus groups privilege participatory knowledge building such that in the group setting, both the participant and researcher can gain knowledge such as thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences on a particular topic (172-175). Leavy does warn, however, that the "group effect" can also impede knowledge building as some members may dominate the discussion making others feel silenced or uncomfortable to speak up. Keeping this limitation in mind, I included reflexive journaling (I return to this further on) and follow-up interviews as alternative spaces in which participants could share.

The purpose of the sharing circles was to understand the participants' spatial experiences of the University of Ottawa campus. Based on a small pilot study I conducted during my coursework, I decided to host two sharing circles. The pilot study revealed that without direct engagement with human geography concepts, the participants found it difficult to distinguish their experiences of the academy (e.g. course content, class discussion structure, student/professor relationships), and the physical space of the campus (e.g. flags, signage, classroom structure, architecture and building names). Accordingly, the first sharing circle resembled a lightly structured workshop in hopes of "training" the participants to think spatially. The second sharing circle was designed to complement the first one and was therefore held one week later and required participants to attend both. The second sharing circle resembled the structure of "typical" research sharing circle in that I asked a series of open-ended questions that facilitated conversation and story-telling (see Appendix C).

According to Kovach (2009), what distinguishes sharing circles from focus groups is that they "normally require the accompaniment of food, and there is a meditative acknowledgement of all those who are in the circle, including the ancestors that sit with us" (124). For both sharing circles, I made sure to provide the participants with beverages, snacks, and lunch with a vegetarian option. By hosting the sharing circles at my house, I was able to provide my guests with a hot-cooked meal. I planned to conduct two sharing circles for this research, each with their own purpose.

Second, sharing circles are different from focus groups because they emphasize each person getting a chance for input (124). This implies that a sharing circle may last for several hours. Given the busy schedules of my participants, I limited the sharing circles to six hours of their time, three hours for each sharing circle.

Third, Kovach (2009) explains that, "an elder or cultural person also leads the circle" (124). Given the cultural diversity of my participants, I was advised by my thesis committee to select the person I consider to be my elder or cultural leader to guide the circle. The person I chose was one of my mentors, Cree activist and community leader Mista Wasis. Mista Wasis had not only been involved in many of ICSSA's initiatives, he also has years of experience working in diverse Indigenous activist contexts throughout Canada. Mista Wasis has taught me a great deal about Indigenous cultures, politics, and

histories in Canada, and keeps me laughing throughout it all. Our friendship includes an openness in which he is upfront with me about cultural differences between Indigenous and settler people/s and holds me accountable to respecting protocol. Additionally, with his years of experience MCing¹⁵ pow wows, I felt he possessed the skills for engaging a group of participants. Together, Mista Wasis and I decided we would co-facilitate the sharing circles. Because “research is imbued with a power hierarchy, with the researcher having final control over the research design, data collection, and interpretation” (Kovach 2010, 125), we hoped co-facilitation would help mitigate the power dynamic between the participants and myself. Mista Wasis’ role was to open and close the circle according to his cultural protocol (I will return to this in a moment), as well as ensure that each participant was given the time and space to speak. My role was to lead the workshop in the first sharing circle, and to ask questions in the second sharing circle. We agreed to respect the fluidity of what each participant shared and asked that no one else speak until the person is done sharing. This “allows the participants to share their story in a manner that they can direct” (Kovach 2009, 124) on their own terms.

Kovach (2009) explains that an aspect of Indigenous methods is the use of cultural protocol “which is a set of guidelines for interacting with those holders of knowledge whom a researcher seeks out” (127). As a sign of respect, I wanted to include cultural protocol during the sharing circles, however, because my participant sample was culturally diverse, and because cultural protocol “varies depending upon to tribal practices” (127), it was difficult to navigate the appropriate course of action. Mista Wasis and I decided that, since he was the cultural leader selected to co-facilitate the sharing circles, he would follow his Cree cultural guidelines. He taught me that in his culture, gifting tobacco is a sign of respect and reciprocity, so before both sharing circles, I gave him a tobacco offering. I also presented him with sage, upon his request, in order smudge the participants of the circle.

Both sharing circles were audio-recorded (with free and informed consent by my participants) in order to ensure that their voices came through my research as truly as possible. Additionally, I made sure to inform my participants that my supervisor, Dr. Luisa Veronis and Mista Wasis would be present for both sharing circles. Dr. Veronis,

¹⁵ MC stands for Master of Ceremony, but it is also often used as a verb that implies hosting.

took notes during both the sharing circles. It is important to note that while my supervisor took great care to remain aware of her presence in the sharing circles (by embodying humility and passiveness), her being there may have impacted the levels of comfort participants had with sharing their ideas. The same applies to Mista Wasis.

Reflexive Journaling

Reflexive journaling is a “narrative” method employed by both qualitative and Indigenous researchers. The aim of this method is to give participants control over their own observations. Reflexive journaling is particularly aligned with Indigenous epistemologies because it is a space in which thoughts, reflections, doubts, anxieties, observations, and *dreams* can be recorded and are valued as integral knowledge because it is grounded in reflexivity and relationality. Researchers who want to document and track their process of reflexivity and self-location often use this method rather than depending on conventional field notes. This is a method I regret personally not employing throughout my research process. While my field notes do include some personal reflections (mostly in the form of sketches), it felt more natural for me to verbalize my thought process with my supervisor and mentors throughout the research process. I regret not journaling because the entire research project has been marked by many waves of self-doubt, transformation, humility, anxiety, anger and excitement, all of which reveal how “the self influences research choices and interpretations” (Kovach 2009, 112).

However, I chose this method for my participants to use as an additional and alternative tool for engaging with the research topic. As a hands-on learner myself, I understand that sharing circles may not complement each participant’s learning style and/or personality type. While the participants may have felt comfortable sharing their thoughts with me, they may not have felt sharing them with others in the circle, thus, after the first sharing circle, I provided each participant with a notebook in which to record their insights, guided by a list of questions (see Appendix D). Specifically, I asked them to document their spatial experiences of campus for the duration of one week in preparation for the second sharing circle.

Personal Interviews

I conducted personal interviews in response to the limited size of participants who attended the sharing circles. The participants who wanted to attend the sharing circles but could not due to scheduling conflicts, agreed to participate in personal interviews. In order to allow for consistency, I had to adapt the personal interviews in a way that would capture the values and discussions of the sharing circles. I sought then to conduct interviews (about one and a half hours each) that were conversational and “flexible enough to accommodate principles of native oral traditions” (123-4), but that also respected the participants’ busy schedule. Limited by time and resources, my on-the-go interview adaptation did not include my co-facilitator, a workshop, or journaling. Instead, after explaining the purpose of my research, I opened the interview with a description of the sharing circles, explaining the various topics that emerged and what I was hoping to prompt from the participants. From there, I asked each participant a series of open-ended questions that encouraged them to also think about their spatial experiences of the University of Ottawa campus (see Appendix E). Again, with informed consent, I audio-recorded all of the personal interviews.

With Indigenous people from all over Canada migrating to cities, urban Indigenous communities are truly diverse. The participants of my study are a testament to this. As such, I worked hard to adapt a methodology and subsequent methods that remained sensitive to Indigenous knowledges, cultures, politics, protocols, and the impacts of colonialism and research, and that held me accountable to the power dynamics that may arise throughout the research process. Moreover, the research methodologies and methods embodied a decolonizing agenda in that they worked to not only disrupt, but also to *transform* the oppressive structures of Western research (and more broadly, colonialism) by *centering* Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing.

Participant Recruitment

In order to recruit participants for this study, I relied on posters and a recruitment email. I put up the posters (see Appendix F) in key areas of the University of Ottawa,

such as the Aboriginal Resource Centre (ARC), the ICSSA and ISA offices, and student spaces such as the University Centre (UCU). The recruitment emails (see Appendix G) were sent with permission by members of the ICSSA and ISA through their list serves. The email recruitment had a snowballing effect as it accessed Indigenous participants with whom I had no connection. This form of recruitment proved to be more successful than the recruitment posters because the participants who did respond my recruitment materials did so via the ICSSA's and ISA's email letter. To be selected for the study, participants had to be enrolled (or recently graduated) as an undergraduate or graduate student at the University of Ottawa, be 18 years of age or older, and self-identify as Indigenous; this includes First Nations (Status or Non-status) Métis, Inuit, and/or Indigenous from outside the Canadian nation state.

According to Kovach (2009), "having pre-existing and ongoing relationship with the participants is an accepted characteristic of research according to [Indigenous] paradigms" (51). Having previous relationships with participants is a central theme in much research involving Indigenous peoples. Due to the relational factor in sampling, the process of participant recruitment is "directly connected to the trustworthiness of the researcher" (126); "it is not simply a matter of the researcher choosing the participants. This process is more reciprocal" (126). Interestingly, of the nine participants I recruited for my research, there was only one I had met for the first time. I was close friends with four participants, had strong familiarity with three, was acquainted with one, and was introduced the final participant through this research and via referral from another participant. I strongly believe that the individuals who did choose to be part of my research did so because they trusted me as a researcher. Conversely, I also believe that the reason people who did not know me did not respond to my recruitment material was because they had no perceived reason to trust me.

Participant Profile

This study includes a sample of nine Indigenous students at the University of Ottawa: four are men and five are women and they ranged from ages twenty to thirty-seven; three identify as Métis, five as First Nations, and one as Inuit; seven were undergraduate students at the time and two were graduated students (one of who was a

graduate student at a different university but had recently graduated from the University of Ottawa); three have a background in sciences, and six have a background in Arts and Social Sciences (five of whom were enrolled in the Aboriginal Studies Program as a major or minor). The participants have a wide range of experiences in their respective reserves and/or home communities. Finally, the participants expressed differing levels of connection to their cultural backgrounds and spiritualities.

Data Collection

After receiving ethics approval from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Ottawa in January 2014, I conducted fieldwork from February to June 2014. Below, I provide the specifics for each data collection method.

Sharing Circles

During my fieldwork I conducted the two sharing circles in February 2014. As mentioned earlier, the sharing circles were designed to complement one another, with each being held one week apart. As such, I was hoping to have the same group of participants attend both sharing circles. Due to scheduling conflicts, however, each sharing circle was conducted with a different set of participants (yet with some overlap). I had also intended on having present at least 8 to 10 participants at each sharing circle, but again, scheduling conflicts permitted a much smaller number.

The First Sharing Circle

The first sharing circle was held at my house in Sandy Hill, close to the University of Ottawa campus. There was a particularly bad snowstorm that day so of the nine confirmed participants, only three showed up. One of the participants required childcare so I hired a babysitter to mind her child at my house during the sharing circle. In total, there were six of us: the three participants, my supervisor, my co-facilitator and myself. After giving an overview of my research project, I explained to the participants the ethical measures I was taking (audio-recording the session and using pseudonyms), after which they (as well as Mista Wasis and my supervisor) signed a consent and

confidentiality agreement. Then, we sat in a circle on the floor of my living room and Mista Wasis proceeded to open the circle with a traditional smudge, and a prayer in Cree. Once the circle was opened, I began with an introduction re-iterating my research, its intentions, and its purpose. I told the participants that this sharing circle was intended to prompt the participants to think about their *spatial* experiences, particularly of the University of Ottawa campus. Finally, I explained that no one was obligated to share if they did not feel comfortable doing so, and that once it was time to share, we would move clock-wise in the circle to give each person a turn to speak, during which no one else was allowed to speak.

I began the discussion with a description of a space that makes me feel particularly happy or comfortable. I emphasized the physical features of the space and how it made me feel, as well as contextualized it with a personal story. I then asked each participant to describe a space or place in which they feel comfortable and/or happy. After each participant shared their response, we took a break to eat lunch in the kitchen. After our lunch, we returned to the circle in the living room and I introduced the method of reflexive journaling. Once the reflexive journaling exercise was explained, I handed each participant a notebook. Mista Wasis then closed the sharing circle with a prayer in Cree and the participants went home.

The Second Sharing Circle

The second talking circle occurred as planned, as a follow-up to the week of reflexive journal documenting. The sharing circle was held at my house in Sandy Hill. Of the eight confirmed participants, four attended the sharing circle. Two of these participants did not attend the first sharing circle so I filled them in on the reflexive journaling exercise that they missed before we opened the circle. The other two participants had attended the first sharing circle. In total, there were seven of us in the sharing circle: four participants, my co-facilitator, my supervisor and myself. Before we opened the circle, I gave an overview of my research and explained the ethical measures I was taking to protect confidentiality. I also informed them that the sharing circle would be audio-recorded and transcribed. Each participant, as well as Mista Wasis and my supervisor signed a consent and confidentiality agreement. After, Mista Wasis opened the

sharing circle with a traditional smudge and prayer, I explained the purpose of the sharing circle, that I would be asking them questions about their spatial experiences of campus, and reminded the participants that they were not obligated to answer any questions with which they felt uncomfortable.

Using the same sharing structure as the first sharing circle (going around the circle one by one so each person could share) each participant shared their reflections and journals from the previous week. I had not received any of the journals before the second sharing circle so I was not able to prepare *specific* follow-up questions before hand. I did, however, with the assistance of Mista Wasis, prepare more general follow-up questions. Three of the four participants had written journal entries throughout the week, but only two of them had brought the journals with them to the sharing circle. The other participant sent me an electronic copy of their journal a few weeks later. After each participant shared their reflections, I asked follow-up questions and opened the floor up for discussion. With Mista Wasis mediating the discussion, the participants talked about how they envision transforming or decolonizing the University of Ottawa campus. We took a lunch break and then continued the discussion thereafter. After about three hours of discussion (including the lunch break), we agreed as a group that we could close the circle. Mista Wasis closed the circle with a prayer in Cree.

Reflexive Journaling

Towards the end of the first sharing circle, I gave each participant a notebook in which to record their thoughts, reflections, and observations. Inside each journal, I included a set of guiding questions, but the style of documentation was open and flexible. As a group during the first sharing circle, we decided that each participant should write a minimum of one page per day. I instructed them to return the journals to me after the week completed so I could read through them and prepare questions for the second sharing circle. I encouraged them to supplement their journaling with photos (using their smartphones, or disposable cameras I would provide upon request), drawing, maps, and poetry if it suited them. I also encouraged the participants to collaborate on their journaling process or do it individually.

As mentioned above, three of the four participants who attended the second

sharing circle had written entries in their journals (with the exception of one who recorded her thoughts on her phone). Two of the three participants who had written in their journals (one of which was recorded on the phone) brought them to the second sharing circle. The third participant who wrote in the journal but did not bring it to the sharing circle, sent me a copy a few weeks later via e-mail.

The sharing circles and journal documenting occurred directly after the University of Ottawa's "Reading Week," a time when students are submitting mid-term projects and/or writing exams. This was a very busy time for the participants and I believe made it difficult for them to work on their journals. Moreover, journaling may not have been a method the participants felt comfortable with. While the journaling method was not as successful as I had hoped in engaging the participants, it was nonetheless a useful tool as I believe it still encouraged the participants to make mental notes of their spatial experiences of campus.

Personal Interviews

Many of the confirmed participants were not able to attend either sharing circle but agreed to participate in personal interviews at a date convenient for them between March and June 2014. I conducted a total of five personal interviews. Each personal interview was audio-recorded with informed consent. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately one and a half hours. During the interviews I gave each participant an overview of the sharing circles, explaining the workshop exercise and the reflexive journaling. I then proceeded to ask them open-ended questions.

Follow-up Interviews

All of the sharing circle participants agreed to participate in audio-recorded follow-up interviews, however, due to conflicts in scheduling, some participants could not participate. I was able to conduct follow-up interviews with 4 participants during March-July, 2014. Each interview was not longer than one hour and I asked specific clarifying questions (after I transcribed the audio-recordings) with reference to their responses in the sharing circles. The follow-up interviews were also an opportunity for participants to include additional comments they did not feel comfortable sharing in the

sharing circle sessions. One interview was conducted at my house in Sandy Hill, another two were held at cafés, and the fourth was done over the phone.

Data Analysis

Each interview and follow-up interview was transcribed in full by me. The first sharing circle was not transcribed because the responses generated were not directly related to the research subject matter. The second sharing circle was transcribed in full and all quotes used in the following chapters from the sharing circle come *only* from the second sharing circle. I read over the transcripts and journal entries and began the interpretative process of “sifting and sorting” (Cloke *et. al.* 2004, 216) in search for responses that exemplified themes such as inclusion, exclusion, Indigenous presence and decolonization. As new themes emerged, I added them to my coding tree (in the form of a table), some as major themes, others as sub-themes, including settler student identity, passing versus non-passing, and strategies for inclusion (see Appendix H). Since this research is based on the personal and subjective experiences of the participants, combing through the transcripts was not a straightforward process. The data went through a long process of classifying, re-arranging, labeling, making lists, and so on. Once I had established a set of major themes, I organized the content of each theme into sub-themes, from the general to the specific, using a table (see Appendix I). The major themes that emerged were: campus as safe space, settler student identity, “passing” versus “non-passing,” strategies for inclusion, decolonization, and Indigenous presence on campus. I then organized these themes into three conceptual bundles: campus as a material space, campus as a social space, and how the students engage decolonization. Each conceptual bundle became its own “findings” chapter.

The data coding and analysis stage of this research was particularly challenging. First, while I was coding the data, I realized that I was projecting a Western way of organizing and ordering ideas onto my participants’ stories, their truths. This made me uneasy because I wanted to represent my participants’ responses as accurately as possible. Second, the findings of this research are presented in a thesis format, which inevitably takes a linear form. Moreover, by separating my research into chapters that isolate the social aspects of campus space from the material aspects, or the methodology

from the literature review, “suggests that each component can work independently rather than as an interdependent relational research framework” (Kovach 2009, 122). While I found the participants’ responses to be complex and holistic, the textual aspect of this research forced me to separate their ideas and experiences into a linear format. It is my hope that I have represented well the voices of my participants. As such, I make use of extensive quotations.

Limitations

While this project generated significant insights, it also has its limitations. First, my pilot study conducted for this research project revealed the difficulties of organizing the coming together of university students with diverse course, employment, life, and family schedules. My experience has shown me that it is challenging to get full commitment from students, especially (and understandably) from those who have children. This proved to be a major limitation of my data collection as my sample size was considerably small. Second, due to the unequal nature of settler-Indigenous relationships, the majority of my participants (8/9) were those with whom I had built trusting relationships through my previous volunteer work with ICSSA. I believe that despite ICSSA’s and ISA’s standing in their student communities, Indigenous students who did not know me, consequently did not feel comfortable participating in this study. I also believe, as has been confirmed through informal discussions with Indigenous students with whom I am friends, but who declined from participating, that academic research projects may be intimidating for some people. My friends expressed worry of not having the perceived level of intellectual knowledge required for this project, even though they were university students. Despite my insistence that this project focuses on the participants’ own experiences, some of my friends were not convinced that they had anything valuable to add. This is an ugly side of the academic world. Finally, my time participating in many of ICSSA’s projects and the subsequent friendships that were developed, made “it impossible to separate the academic and the personal” (Barker and Pickerill 2012, 1707) in this research. I see this as both a limitation and strength. This is a limitation because throughout the data collection, the participants would often use vague or referential language and communication with the (unconscious) assumption that I

would know what they *meant* to say. This led me to ask many clarifying follow-questions to ensure that I had the most accurate understanding possible. My friendships with the participants were also a strength because they discussed issues with me that I do not think they would have discussed with a stranger or acquaintance. Despite the small turn-out in participants, I firmly believe that without my friendships with the majority of my participants, I would have had a much smaller sample, if any sample at that.

Ethical Considerations

Margaret Kovach (2009) argues that “the relationships within the Indigenous research approaches include the respect that must accompany the research process. [...] Relational research is concerned with doing research in a good way” (35). What Kovach stresses here is that Indigenous research approaches engage ethics throughout the entire research process. Throughout this chapter I have raised and highlighted the associated ethical issues with the various aspects of this project. However, there is an additional ethical consideration I would like to raise in this section.

The ethical consideration I have not yet expressed is the issue of externalizing Indigenous knowledges gathered through this research. Through this thesis, I am exposing to the Western and settler academic realm the personal and intimate experiences and cultural knowledges of a marginalized group of individuals. This exposure can render these knowledges vulnerable to “misinterpretations, appropriations, and dismissals that often accompany Indigenous ways of knowing within the academy” (Kovach 2009, 12). This vulnerability exists within the on-going context in which Indigenous people/s are still under the Western and settler gaze. Kovach (2010, 28) reminds us that “While we may currently be in a more inclusive moment of qualitative research, Indigenous communities are still being ‘researched’, albeit with more political finesse” (31); those who attempt to fit Indigenous knowledges “into Western cultural conceptual rubrics are destined to feel the squirm” (31). On the other hand, many Indigenous scholars, including Kovach (2009), “desire to transform the exclusive domain of knowledge creation immersed in Western thought and [...] universities” (158) and thus recognize the need to include, in a good way, Indigenous knowledges in the academy. For me, that “squirm”

will never go away, but I take it as an important reminder of the political nature of this research. While this research is indeed exploratory, it also attempts to be transformative.

Chapter 3

The Contours of Settler Space

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the physical aspects of the University of Ottawa campus as described and experienced by the participants. According to the *Globe and Mail's* annual Canadian University Report 2012 (Globe and Mail 2012a),¹⁶ a study based on undergraduate students' opinions across Canada, the University of Ottawa scored a B- (62-66/100) under the "Campus Atmosphere" indicator, and a B (66-70/100) under "General Attractiveness of Buildings" (Globe and Mail 2012b). This positions the University of Ottawa comparatively low in terms of providing a positive and aesthetically pleasing campus. My research participants provided their insights on this general sentiment of the University of Ottawa campus from an Indigenous perspective. Their descriptions suggest inextricable links between the built environment and a sense of place in addition to shedding light on Indigenous-settler relations in and through space and place.

My findings reveal the ways in which Indigenous students attending the University of Ottawa experience and attach meaning to the material features of the campus. They further indicate that their experiences are distinct from those of other students, settler students. Their experiences differ due to the materialized history of colonialism through architecture, urban layout and the uses of place naming, which actively symbolizes settler dominance over land, knowledge, and processes of inclusion and identity formation. Their experiences are also distinct because Indigenous people/s tend to have holistic relationships with the land that contrast starkly with Western worldviews. Western relationships with the land not only differ vastly from their

¹⁶ The 2012 Canadian University Report survey reflects the opinion of 33,000 current undergraduate students. According to the report, "the results are derived from answers to approximately 100 questions. A number of strict controls were built into the process to help ensure that those included in the sample represent Canadian undergraduates. The data were further weighted to reflect the gender split of the actual undergraduate student population at each participating institution. A mean score for each university is calculated for each question based on the responses of students who attend that school. Universities are assigned a letter grade that matches their mean scores (out of a maximum of 9.0) for each variable" (Globe and Mail 2012a, 76).

Indigenous counterparts, they necessarily oppose and oppress Indigenous relationships with the land. It is this uniquely Indigenous experience rooted in the land that leads me to argue that the University of Ottawa is a settler space that Indigenous students experience as exclusive.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the theoretical underpinnings of *place* as conceptualized by geographers. This will provide the conceptual framework for analyzing the descriptions of the University of Ottawa as a place. Then, I present the results from the sharing circles and interviews conducted with the participants on their perceptions of the built environment of the campus and of Indigenous presence at the University of Ottawa. The findings are organized by scale, beginning with the campus as a whole, then narrowing down to more defined spaces such as green spaces, the classroom, and the Aboriginal Resource Centre (ARC). Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

Conceptualizing Place

Place is a complex and dynamic notion and debates are on-going among geographers around what place *is* and how to conceptualize it. A good starting point is a three-part definition advanced by political geographer John Agnew (1987) who distinguishes place as a relationship between “location,” “locale” and “sense of place” (Cresswell 2004, 7). Location refers to the fixed coordinates of the earth upon which the place rests: the University of Ottawa is located at 45°25N/75°40W (Google Maps). Locale stands for the built environment and the material conditions, which physically mediate the everyday conditions of social life and relations (Cresswell 2004, 7). The University of Ottawa is a downtown urban campus tucked in behind the Rideau Canal, in a corner of the residential neighbourhood Sandy Hill (see Figure 2).

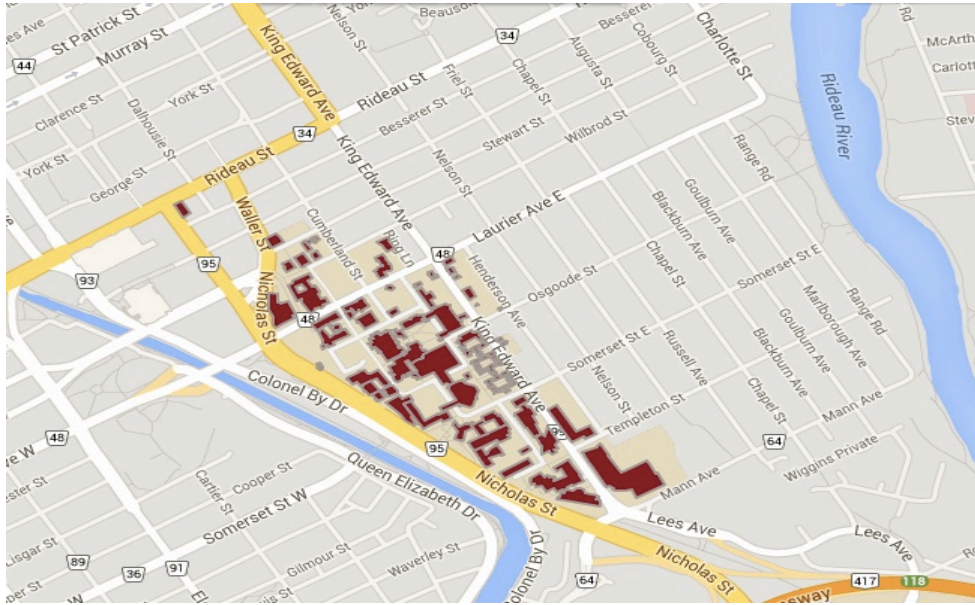


Figure 2: Map of the University of Ottawa Campus
Source: Google Maps. (2015). University of Ottawa, Street map.

The campus hosts a variety of architectural styles from neo-classical (echoed in the institution's logo), to brutalist modern and contemporary. With its roots as a pontifical university under the direction of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Archives of the University of Ottawa), a distinct thread of Catholicism permeates throughout the campus with the presence of three churches, streets named after saints, and the company of priest Joseph-Henri Tabaret's statue. The campus is made up of buildings, paths, classrooms and research/teaching labs, all of which physically control the mobility of students throughout the campus; campus space is organized based on Western planning methods.

Sense of place refers to the individual and collective meaning associated with a place, often an emotional attachment (Cresswell 2004, 7). One's sense of place is strongly linked with the person's multi-layered identity (7); a student who comes from a low-income family may feel a weaker sense of place or belonging on the university campus than a student who comes from an upper-middle class family. Similarly, a rural student may feel out of place at an urban university while an urban student may feel right at home. Thus, how one experiences a place varies from person to person depending on

identity and social location. But in addition to these definitions, it is also important to consider the politics of place and the role of power.

Power and the Politics of Place

Experiences and meanings of place(s) are not benign but filled with power and politics. Feminist and post-colonial scholars (Valentine 1993; Kitchen 1998) show that places are constructed by normative processes that physically and symbolically work to exclude ‘others’ (based on their ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, gender). The material aspects of a place are not only the result of decisions made by those in power, they also reflect and project the values held by the privileged (Cresswell 2008, 136), “the people who build the buildings and monuments and inscribe texts on to the material fabric of place. All of these processes involve choices that exclude people and the meanings they represent” (136). In other words, spaces and places are imbued with relations of power.

Feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1991) argues that how one experiences a place, its uniqueness, has largely to do with the intersection, or “articulated moments” of “a particular constellation of social relations meeting together at a particular locus” (154). Thus, global processes and networks such as capitalism and colonialism engage one another at different geographical points (with their own localized characteristics: accumulated history, physical geography) to create their own unique places, or “distinct mixtures” that produce myriad senses of that place (153). This line of reasoning is helpful to underline the richness and diversity of experiences within one defined space. Sense of place on campus then is relational; as a student threads their way through particular concrete pathways between buildings, stops to catch their breath by sitting on a bench under a tree, and continues on to their way to class in a windowless room underground, their impressions shift. Their “routes through the place, their favourite haunts within it, the connections they make (physically, or by phone or post, or in memory and imagination) between here and the rest of the world vary enormously” (153). Massey’s work not only suggests that places, like peoples’ identities, are multi-layered, but that they are also “constantly contested, transgressed and resisted by the excluded” (Cresswell 2008, 137).

Given contemporary conceptualizations of place as political, and the role of identity and social location in the meaning and experiences of place, what about conceptualizations of place for Indigenous peoples in urban settler space in Canadian cities? My research findings suggest that such conceptualizations leave out important information. Using Agnew's (1987) location, locale, and sense of place conceptualization, I will apply an Indigenous perspective to describe the University of Ottawa campus:

Location: The land that the University of Ottawa occupies is unceded and unsurrendered by the Omàmiwinini Algonquin nation. The land's geographical coordinates did not exist until the process of colonialism. Thus, the given coordinates of the University of Ottawa favour both a Western interpretation of "location" (and therefore land) and a Western interpretation of history.

Locale: As the research participants pointed out (and which is often forgotten by Western geographers), the campus floor may be made of concrete, but it rests upon earth, the land. There are hints of what lies beneath the concrete in the form of green spaces, but these spaces are manicured and controlled to align with the cultural inscription of the rest of the campus. The "colonial gaze [which] sought to familiarize the landscape and naturalise British presence" (Taylor 2000, 28) through architecture, place naming, and spatial planning (via displacement and dispossession) also extends to the re-inscription of the land with British and European flora. Thus, the earth is not just made up of geological layers, it is also compiled of differing, and often divergent cultural interpretations of *locale*.

Sense of place: Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) asserts that Indigenous people "have a literally 'grounded' sense of identity" (88). Similarly, Standing Rock Sioux scholar and activist Vine Deloria Jr. (1973) posits that Indigenous people put greater emphasis on space and/or the environment signified by the relationship with and obligations to the land, rather than (linear, Western) time, which values the progression of territorial development and administration (Wilson 88). It is through Western interpretations (rooted in Hobbes' "state of nature") and impositions of location, locale, and sense of place that distinctly settler places have been established in Canada. Many Indigenous scholars suggest that the meaning of place is uniquely different for

Indigenous peoples. This is due to a worldview that shapes and defines a particular relationship to the land. This is also due to historical and on-going processes of colonialism, which has attempted to reformulate this relationship to suit Western colonial objectives. Considering the meaning of place (and space) is fundamentally different for Indigenous peoples, my investigation aims to (1) understand how Indigenous peoples/students experience place, particularly urban spaces in contemporary Canada, and thus (2) begin to discern and to identify the contours of settler (urban) space.

Indigenous Students' Experiences of the University of Ottawa Campus

In this section, I will begin by focussing on my participants' experiences and perceptions of the built environment of the University of Ottawa campus. Then, I will present their views on Indigenous presence throughout campus.

The University of Ottawa Campus: "a concrete maze"

When asked to describe the physical aspects of campus, my participants' responses were overwhelmingly similar. "One of the first things you notice at the University of Ottawa, something I am very aware of every time I set foot on it, is concrete" (Shawn, Sharing circle). Chris described the impact of the concrete landscape:

[...] for a lot of [Indigenous] students the campus is foreign. To be honest, the uOttawa campus is very sterile looking yet dirty at the same time. The cement walls ... It's kind of an intimidating experience. That also produces a little bit of reserve in people. (Personal interview)

Similarly, Hannah recounted, "Nothing on campus physically evokes emotion culturally, doesn't express that it's a cultural space. Campus feels void of both inclusion and exclusion, it's just concrete and cement" (Sharing circle). In short, it is a "concrete maze," as James put it (Sharing circle).

Reflecting on her favourite spaces on campus, Mary described the campus itself as too "rushy, you get from A to B" (Personal interview). James said "...everything is so go-go-go [...] The only place that has any grass is Tabaret Lawn ... [which] is circled by three streets and traffic, it's not where I wanna go" (Personal interview). Hannah relayed,

“It's just concrete and cement, and students, and that's it, there's only these lanes and avenues and everyone's in them very strictly” (Sharing circle).

During the 1960s and 1970s, brutalist modern architecture flourished on many North American university campuses¹⁷ (including the University Ottawa, see Figure 3, 4, 5 and 6) as they experienced rapid expansion. Brutalist architecture is often characterized by blocky and repetitive angular geometries usually made of concrete; originally, the intention was to make buildings look “machine-like” (Peter Smithson in Smithson *et. al.* 2011, 39). It has been heavily criticized for being alienating, soulless and lacking a relationship with the environment (Habermas 1987, 318). The research participants highlighted this lack of relationship with the environment that many of them believe distinguishes the University of Ottawa: the “campus is so urban, students forget about the land [...] we feel even less connected to the land and we're less likely to think about ‘what's the history of this space?’” (James, Personal interview).



Figure 3: The BioSciences Complex



Figure 4: Colonel By Building

¹⁷ Some Canadian university campuses that feature this architectural style include McGill, University of Toronto, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, and Université de Montréal among others.



Figure 5: Courtyard at the University Centre



Figure 6: The University Centre

Brutalist architecture emphasizes machine-age efficiency, large scale, and speed. Its form and function are rooted in modernist principles that made the distinction between necessary and unnecessary basic human needs in order to create an efficient living or working space (Frampton 1992, 262-8). This is echoed in Leah's observation, "... the whole University physically itself, is built for efficiency so, how many students can we pack into here that's safe for fire hazards, of course, not safe for learning."

Brutalist architecture, and modern architecture more generally, can be seen as symbols of Western culture materialized in place/space, an "expression of the arrogant authoritarianism of planners, politicians and corporate leaders" (Relph 1989, 212). Geographer Edward Relph (1989) draws upon environmental psychologist Robert Sommer's (1974) analogy of prison design to describe modern architecture, "everything is spartan, secure, easily maintained with barren open spaces, metal fences and blank facades, authority evidently in control" (249). Brutalist architectural values contrast greatly with Indigenous relationships to the land, because such relationships are holistic, respectful of the earth, and culturally relevant.

It would not be a stretch to assume that the University of Ottawa campus is only one of many urban settler spaces with such features the participants have encountered. You do not have to wander too far off campus to stumble across the "solitary arrogance of the unarticulated office block, [...] the monstrous department stores, monumental universities and congress centres" (Habermas 1987, 318); to traverse "landscapes of fear and the topographies of despair" (Vidler 2001, 2) cast by modern urbanism. Yet, there

seems to be something particularly unnerving about the University of Ottawa campus. For many students, the university becomes their “home away from home.” It is a place where individuals’ identities are shaped and re-shaped (Quinju and Maliki 2013), “a portal of self-discovery” (Kovach 2009, 5). My participants feel especially alienated at the University of Ottawa campus because its built environment, which has been developed through Western planning and architecture, is so deeply disconnected from its land base.

Indigenous Presence on the University of Ottawa Campus

Across Canada universities are trying to improve the Indigenous “presence” at their institutions by providing more services and programs geared towards Indigenous students. The extent to which these services and initiatives are being implemented at other Canadian universities reveals how far behind the University of Ottawa is in recognizing the Indigenous presence on its campus. It is in this context that I asked the participants to describe their views regarding the presence of Indigeneity at the University of Ottawa.

In the context of my research, I use Chris’ definition of Indigenous presence. He defines it as “cultural recognition on the campus through aspects of architecture, the layout, campus events, names and general student presence” (Personal interview). Most participants agreed that an Indigenous presence exists in the form of Indigenous students and community, as well as the Aboriginal Resource Centre. However, the participants raised a number of important nuances with regard to how the Indigenous presence is perceived by Indigenous and settler students.

First, Indigenous students are aware of the presence of Indigenous students and community – or to what some participants refer to as “family” – on campus. James reflected, “There’s definitely an Indigenous presence on campus in the sense that, I know [for] a fact that there are a lot of Indigenous students” (James, Personal interview). Emily also said, “I definitely think there is [a presence], but whether it’s strong, it’s strong in the sense that there’s a family, you can definitely build a family with the Aboriginal people on campus” (Sharing circle). However, the participants highlighted the diversity of the Indigenous community having a distinct lack of cohesion:

...there's no cohesion between the Indigenous groups on campus. There's an Indigenous Law group for Indigenous students in Law, there's the new Indigenous Students Association, there's ICSSA, there's Indigenous Students in Nursing, and we're all over campus. There's supposedly 500 Indigenous students registered on campus, yet, who would know that, who would know that at all? Where are we? (Hannah, Sharing circle)

More generally, participants suggested that this lack of cohesion extends beyond the Indigenous “family”; it characterizes the University of Ottawa as a whole:

...campus itself is very small [physically] compared to Carleton [University]'s, they're way spread out, but they have a tighter Aboriginal community there, but it's just weird that you can't find anything, even though it's such a small area (Leah, Personal interview)

And,

The campus is set up to [...] to divide the humanities from the social sciences, from the natural sciences, engineering, with the minimum of mixing of different categories of students. (Shawn, Sharing circle; see also Figure 7)

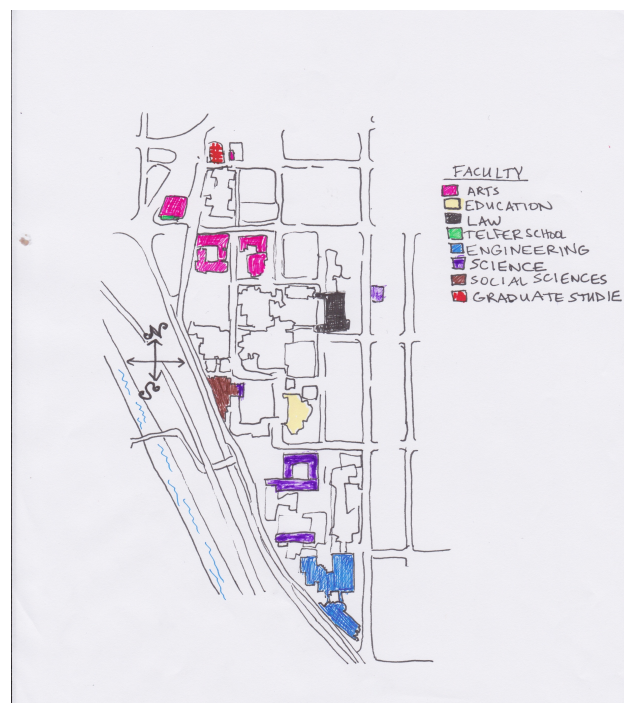


Figure 7: Map of the University of Ottawa Faculties

Furthermore, the Indigenous presence is limited to the student, faculty and administrative body. Cultural recognition in the form of building naming, architecture, layout and spatial features does not exist at the University of Ottawa: “...there are several spaces on campus that recognize Francophone identity, especially the new [monument] erected just outside the Music building. There are no Aboriginal pieces on campus... The minute you leave the Aboriginal Resource Centre, [Indigenous] presence is gone” (Chris, Personal interview; see also Figure 8).



Figure 8: Monument de la Francophonie

Leah expresses how this lack of spatial presence of Indigeneity impacts her daily experience of campus:

I feel like that history that Aboriginal people have had in Canada and how they interacted with other people that were not from the Americas, and that whole history that went down, I feel that's not accurately reflected on campus and *I feel excluded because of that*. (Personal Interview)

Thus, the lack of cultural recognition coupled with a physically and socially fractured campus makes it difficult for Indigenous students such as my participants to perceive the full extent to which Indigenous identities and knowledges are embodied and represented at the University of Ottawa.

Second, the participants made a distinction between Indigenous presence on campus as perceived by Indigenous students and as perceived by settler students. As James put it:

...do I think that the presence is known to non-Indigenous people? Absolutely not. So many people don't know that [...] we have this history of colonialism, and all these things and so I would say overall, a public presence? No. But an individual presence of identity? Yes. (Personal interview)

Similarly, Leah described:

...if I was not an Aboriginal person and I was walking on campus I would not know there are Aboriginal people. I might know that there is a teepee once in a while and I might think that's the only people [...] It's really hard to tell if someone's Indigenous or not because all the heritages, people's heritages getting mixed up, so you can't really tell... (Personal interview)

The influence of the teepee presence on campus is worth commenting on because it raises a number of significant issues related to Indigenous-settler relations and space. Each year since 2006, the University of Ottawa Community Life Services hosts a snow festival with winter-themed activities. One such activity includes spending a night in a teepee erected on Tabaret Lawn. The teepee used resembles a plains teepee and dons the University of Ottawa logo (see Figure 9).

Two issues arise. First, the lack of Indigenous cultural presence on campus coupled with commonly shared stereotypes about what Indigenous people are supposed to look like (phenotypically) shape, according to the participants, how settler students perceive Indigenous presence at the University of Ottawa. Settler students assume there are little to no Indigenous students attending the University of Ottawa. Second, the inappropriate use of Indigenous culture, in this case, a plains teepee by non-Indigenous people, which ironically is the only cultural inscription of Indigeneity on campus outside the Aboriginal Resource Centre, further shapes how settler students perceive Indigenous presence on campus.



Figure 9: The University of Ottawa Teepee

While the teepee could be interpreted by many as a form of acknowledgement or recognition of Indigenous presence on the University of Ottawa campus, its use is seen as highly problematic by Indigenous individuals such as my participants. According to a number of them, this teepee is erected without the consent of the Algonquin nation, nor Indigenous students, staff, and faculty in general. My participants' reactions to the use of the teepee at the University of Ottawa were unequivocally negative; they consider every aspect of it as offensive. Leah expressed:

First of all, the teepees are for the plains people and that doesn't make sense to put it up [here on Algonquin land], I don't know why they did that let alone put their logo on top of it, and I've been inside it and it's cold, and I'm pretty sure teepees are not cold like that and, I think it's made of plastic. Anyways, it's basically like a McDonald's toy, that's what it looks like... (Personal interview)

Shawn said:

...this is not a form of Indigenous presence. It is a decoration... It is not used by Indigenous students, it is used by Community Life Services. When Indigenous students asked if they could help put it up, they were told it had to be done by a contractor for liability reasons. It is put up, without prayer, and without the entrance facing east. To be even more insensitive, it has painted on the side a giant University of Ottawa logo. In some cultures, only war deeds are painted on such dwellings, and others only images given in spiritual dreams or visions. [...] What is clear, is that the teepee is a decoration for the administration. With the logo, they claim ownership, they claim control, they appropriate; with their policy, they leave out any Aboriginal participation in their use of Aboriginal culture. (Follow-up interview)

For many of the participants, the teepee symbolizes settler dominance over the campus and by extension settler ignorance due to the lack of dialogue between the administration, settler communities and Indigenous communities at the University of Ottawa.

It is apparent that as Indigenous people/s my participants experience the distinctly Western values that are inscribed throughout the built environment of the University of Ottawa campus. These values impact their day-to-day interactions with campus space and often lead them to feel excluded in multiple ways (alienation from the land, erasure of Indigenous culture and history of settler-Indigenous relations among other things). Furthermore, the University of Ottawa campus not only overshadows Indigenous presence on campus, both symbolic (lack of Indigenous cultural signifiers) and physical (in terms of Indigenous students, faculty and staff), one of the few “Indigenous” material signifiers it does have is annually erected without the consent of Indigenous people/s on campus. It is based on these findings that the University of Ottawa campus emerges as a distinctly settler space. In the next section, I will show how within and throughout

various micro spaces on campus my participants experience varying forms of inclusion and exclusion with the aim to highlight the uneven fabric of settler power relations in and through place.

The University of Ottawa Campus and Spaces of Inclusion and Exclusion

I asked the participants to identify spaces on campus in which they feel positive feelings such as comfort, inclusion, and contentment, and negative feelings such as discomfort, exclusion, and displeasure. To capture these feelings, I refer to the former as spaces of inclusion, and to the latter as spaces of exclusion. Below, I discuss such feelings as they were experienced in three different types of campus space: green spaces, the classroom, and the Aboriginal Resource Center (ARC).

Green Spaces

Participants made numerous comments about green spaces on the University of Ottawa campus, which raised a number of issues regarding relationships to the land. Indeed, Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear (2000, 78) explains,

The Earth cannot be separated from the actual being of Indians. The Earth is where the continuous and/or repetitive processes of creation occur. It is on the Earth and from the Earth that cycles, phases, patterns – in other words, the constant motion or flux – can be observed [...] Aboriginal philosophy [is] holistic and cyclical or repetitive, generalist, process-oriented and firmly grounded in one place”.

Land is significant to Indigenous people/s because it is a way for them to connect with what Little Bear (2000) calls the “spider web of relations” (79).

Before proceeding, it is important to briefly explain the origins of “green spaces” in modern cities and their significance in Western/settler culture. In modern cities where concrete is abundant, green spaces are meant to provide the fast-paced modern human with a form of refuge. Green spaces in urban environments are designed for aesthetic, environmental and/or recreational purposes (Haq, S.M.A. 2011, 601). Green spaces originate in the “Garden City movement” initiated in 1898 in response to the harsh living conditions that accompanied the growth of industrial cities (Gregory et. al. 2009, 267;

Livesey 2011, 271). This form of urban planning intended to contain low-density residential communities within greenbelts to promote self-sufficiency and well-being (Gregory *et al.* 2009, 267; Livesey 2011, 271). Green spaces reflect a Western view of nature that involves human dominance over the land.

In 2009, the University of Ottawa pledged to transform its campus into a model of environmental sustainability¹⁸ and in 2012 was ranked as the 14th most sustainable university out of 215 universities worldwide¹⁹ (UI GreenMetric), yet green spaces on campus are few and far between. Nonetheless, existing green spaces are certainly appreciated (and utilized) by many of my research participants. Mary reported that green spaces were the only place where she felt comfortable on campus:

Tabaret lawn and the lawn in front of Fauteux, the green spaces by the caf [...] I love walking to the new ARC, it's on Stewart, I love it. [...] I love taking the walk now from the library to passing by Tabaret lawn... You can breath, there's trees, and I have a lot of good memories there. We've had some outdoor classrooms there [...], and of course I think of the Powwow, I just like that space.

Compared to the rest of the campus, which is a concrete maze, Mary feels comfortable in whatever green spaces there are because they fulfill, to a certain extent, their roles of refuge from the fast-paced energy that characterizes the University of Ottawa campus. However, some participants expressed dissatisfaction for the green spaces on campus. Shawn recounted:

There are relatively *few plants, none of them local species*. When I started out at the University of Ottawa, I would make use of the few such spaces as were available. I would go and eat my lunch by myself under the spruce trees, the ones outside of Lamoureux... (Follow-up interview)

His critique of green spaces on campus went further when he describes Tabaret Lawn:

¹⁸ The University of Ottawa signed a pledge known as the “Ontario Universities Committed to a Greener World”.

¹⁹ Since then, the University of Ottawa has lowered in its rank. In 2014, it was ranked 125 out of 360 universities worldwide.

You think about the whole idea of a lawn, only one type of plant, no diversity, perfect conformity, all the grass has to be the same height, anything, which is different, is a weed. I don't like lawns; the obsessive degree to which every piece of grass is made to conform to an exact height; the way in which any diversity is viewed as undesirable, unclean, and embarrassing. They don't make me feel comfortable. So [the lawn is] kind of symbolic for that need to control. (Follow-up interview)

Shawn's reflections draw attention to the fact that green spaces are distinctly Western constructs that reflect and project a Eurocentric relationship with the land and campus. His use of the lawn as a metaphor for colonialism and colonial dominance over nature and land, including Indigenous land, illustrates how places are layered with meaning, literally and figuratively. Atop layers of diverse native vegetation, memories, and meanings, are layers of foreign plant species, selective memories, and imported meanings. His account demonstrates that Indigenous perceptions of space/place are shaped by Western, colonial and settler norms. These spaces are settler spaces that convey settler norms, hierarchies, and worldviews.

Shawn did however find a hidden gem on campus, which quickly became his favourite spot. He shared his secret:

...they were building a court yard in the science complex when I first started out [at uOttawa]. Even when it was under construction, I used to pace there before exams. When it was built, it was planted with plants from the boreal forest. Despite the loud fans of the building ventilation, which open onto the courtyard, these plants are heard. They sound different, they sound like the forest in the wind. They sound like, despite my urban birth, what *my mother taught home sounds like*. This quickly became one of my favourite places. It was also my own place for the most part. I almost never saw another human soul there. It didn't interest the majority of students or staff. This courtyard, The Husky Energy Courtyard – as is typical of anything named for the north [...] was also important to me because it had Bear-Berry or Kinnik-kinnik, a very sacred plant that takes the ceremonial role of tobacco in the North. After a few years, they removed all of the Kinnik-kinnik. However, a few maidenhair ferns, my favourite type of fern, remain. So I still visit those.²⁰ (Follow-up interview)

²⁰ I will discuss this space again in Chapter 5.

These experiences of Indigenous students demonstrate that green spaces on the University of Ottawa campus symbolize the collision of two worldviews. On the one hand, access to nature in a sea of concrete provides meaning and comfort for some participants. On the other hand, the ways in which nature is manifested on campus distinctly express settler values, dominance over the land, and are experienced as a form of settler colonialism by some other participants.

The classroom

All of the participants discussed their experiences of classrooms. While in general many of them feel campus is a safe/supportive space to express their Indigenous identities, they often feel invisible and excluded in the classroom. Two participants in particular described how the physical aspects of the classroom impact their learning experience. Specifically they discussed distinctions between linear and circular arrangements. Hannah reflected:

... a couple of months ago I walked into Georges Sioui's classroom and it's a typical classroom on campus where there's multiple desks and chairs, it's an inner room so there's no windows at all, you can't see nature, it was an evening class so it started 5:50 pm so it had already been dark for a while (it was winter). Professor Sioui being Wendat himself, he prefers to direct his classes in a circular fashion so they were able to move the desks in this classroom which you can't in a lot of classrooms; they rearranged the desks at the beginning of every class into a circle, which is amazing, it's an amazing thing. Part of me is always proud to see that as *decolonization*, that despite the space they're in and what they're given, they can do that, and adapt it to what they need, to what the needs are of the classroom, of the students, of the prof. But when you look at the class, the actual physical space, makes me a little sad, it dampens my pride because there's more chairs than what are needed for that class, so they arrange their desks into a circle, and then you have all these chairs and desks pushed to the margins. What that does, it encroaches upon the circle, it makes it almost somewhat uncomfortable. It's trying to find a circle within a space that doesn't allow for a circle, so it's not a perfect circle. It still works but it can't be realized the way that it should be, it's hampered in many ways, it feels claustrophobic in there because you have desks and chairs on the margins but they're pushing you in because there's no other room, because you have 4 walls to create this square, this rectangular shape, it makes me think of trying to fit a square peg in a round hole but opposite, a peg in a square hole, it doesn't work that way [...]. I've had that experience with many Aboriginal studies classrooms on campus that I've

taken where that ingenuity of trying to fit in a space, the way in which we're comfortable, and it's challenging and we do it despite ourselves, despite the environment, but there's something so unfortunate about it that those efforts need to be made all the time. (Sharing circle)

Hannah explains how the built environment of a Western style classroom are inscribed with settler norms that demand a hierarchy between the teacher and the students. She explains how such norms reproduce colonial values in and through space, and how disrupting those power relations are an act of decolonization. Yet, Hannah's account also highlights how even within active defiance of the classroom's spatial arrangements, decolonizing it can only go so far, for she still felt closed in by the remaining chairs.

Likewise, Charlie reflected on how the spatial arrangements of the classroom produce particular arrangements of power that reflect distinct views and norms about learning and knowledge sharing (one that is settler vs. Indigenous):

I noticed over the week that I had two different types of classrooms, one in which desks, like seating was organized sort of linearly in rows in fronts of a lecturer who speaks. I also had classes in which the seating was arranged either around a boardroom type table or just a ring of desks. I very much prefer the more circular arrangement because well first of all, it allows everyone to see everyone else when people are speaking, which I think is important considering how much information can be transmitted through non-verbal cues and also, it's less hierarchical in nature. I found that in the more linear set up, if a student proposes an idea, it then either has to be *legitimized or delegitimized* by the professor, and then that idea comes to the rest of the students. Whereas a more circular set up, it goes straight to them while talking to everyone, and there isn't that gatekeeper of knowledge, which I really like because I found that, often if I propose an idea in a classroom in the linear set up the prof often re-formulates that idea to *conform to their own worldview and I think that there's a great potential for violence against Indigenous peoples in that way, especially when it comes to challenging the prof on things that are very colonial*. I found in the circular set up there was more discussion after and before class, I felt closer to the people I was with because there was better discussion and conversation within the class, I found that in the linear set up, after or before, there is none of that talking. I don't meet the other people in the class, even people who I know I don't really talk to them that much, it's very much like go there, get the knowledge, memorize what the prof wants you to memorize and leave. Whereas in the more circular set up, it's all about making connections and thinking with others, and there's much more communal learning, which I like a lot more, it's a lot richer. That's what struck me most with these two different types of classrooms. [...] *I feel*

excluded when the environment doesn't enable me to act in accordance to my worldview and I think that that's what that classroom thing doesn't do, it doesn't allow me to learn the way I learn best, the way I want to learn.
(Sharing circle)

Charlie included descriptive drawings in his reflexive journal to illustrate the two main types of classrooms and how their spatial characteristics facilitate the flow and exchange of knowledge (see Figure 10).

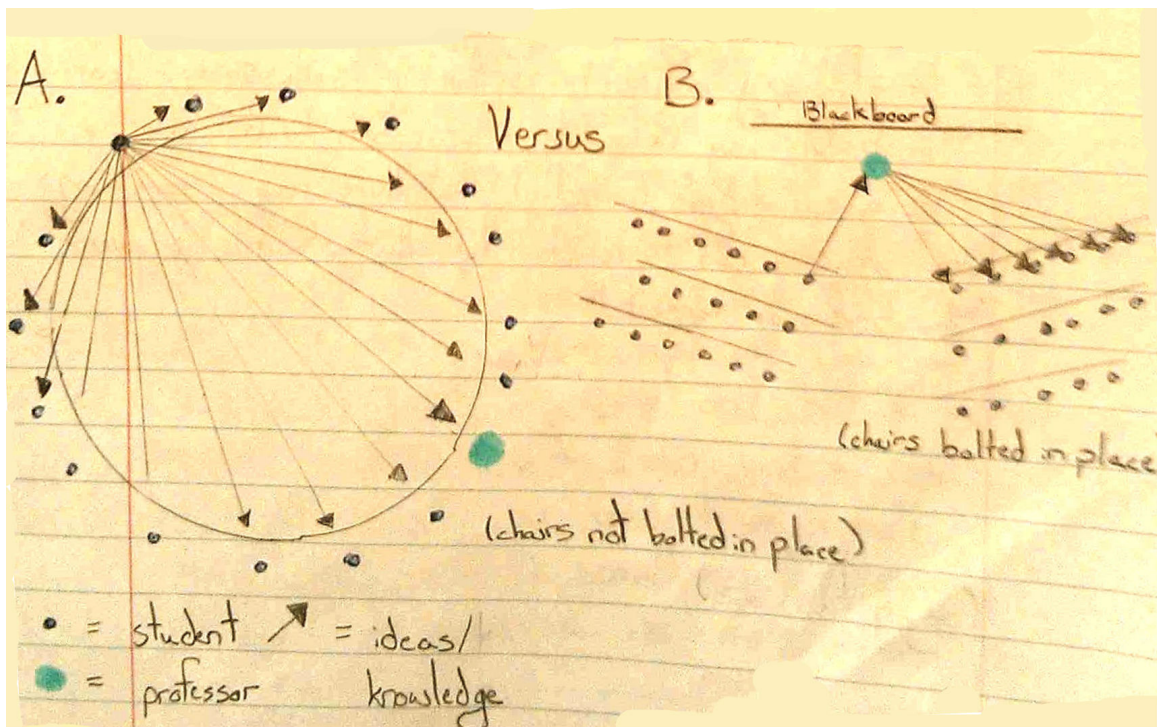


Figure 10: Circular vs Linear Classroom
(Used with permission)

In this case, his account sheds light on how these spatial arrangements of the classroom convey two different views of the teacher/student relation, learning processes, and knowledge sharing – one that is distinctly settler with hierarchical relations (teacher centric, professors as sources and guardians of knowledge, linear), and the other that is Indigenous (more equal relations, collective sharing and learning).

Both stories demonstrate that the classroom is a space imbued with power. The two participants demonstrate how settler values and colonial power are projected in the architecture of campus from the macro (campus as a whole) to the micro (the classroom).

These smaller scale spatial experiences can be seen as microcosms of colonial process of dominance. Just as the land has been administered, organized, and named to represent and activate Western values, so has the space of the classroom. Attempts to disrupt this order often facilitate and help to accommodate (even temporarily) other worldviews, but they are, to a certain extent, always mediated by the material expression of settler culture (or as Hannah put it, “trying to fit a round peg in a square hole”).

Charlie’s story underpins how the spatial qualities of the space affect his learning experience; in the “linear classroom” the professor becomes the gatekeeper of knowledge. The linear style necessarily projects onto the occupants of the room, a hierarchy of power, which privileges the teacher’s knowledge over that of the students. This is not to say hierarchies between teacher and students do not exist in Indigenous practices, but it is the spatial qualities of the circle in which the students and teachers sit that facilitate a more respectful and holistic approach to knowledge.

The implications of these findings are that some of the participants feel like their knowledges and worldviews are obfuscated by the spatial arrangements of the classroom. These spatial arrangements emanate Western settler values that overshadow and often exclude Indigenous values and worldviews. Thus, their experiences further gesture to the distinctly settler colonial qualities of the University of Ottawa campus that shape my participants’ learning.

The Aboriginal Resource Centre

All of the participants also discussed their experiences of the ARC. Some see it as a space of inclusion, while others see it as a space of exclusion, and still others as both. Some participants expressed their desire to see more arts and crafts supplies available for use at the centre, while others expressed wanting to see more art on display. However, as James so poignantly asked “how do you take all [the differing and diverse needs of Indigenous students] into account in one space?” (Personal interview).

In spring 2013, the ARC moved from the University Centre (UCU) at the heart of the University of Ottawa campus and student life, to a new location off campus beside a homeless shelter called “Shepherds of Good Hope” (see Figure 11). The new ARC has

more space to accommodate the growing Indigenous student population as well as ventilation, which allows for smudging. Much of my fieldwork was conducted during the move and thus some of the respondents had not yet been to the new ARC. When referring to “the ARC” I am signifying the old location in the UCU (see Figure 12), and for the ARC at the new location I will write “new ARC.”

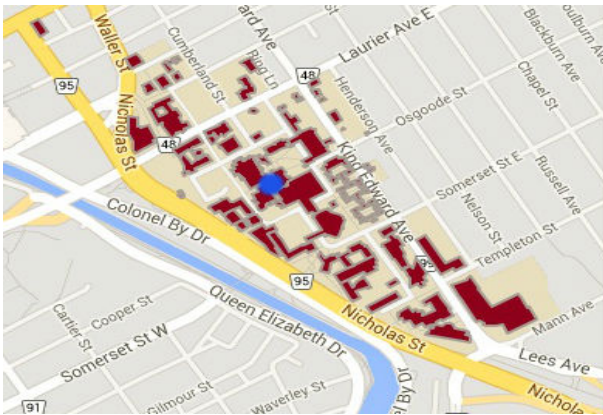


Figure 11: Location of the Old ARC

Source: Google Maps. (2015). University of Ottawa, Street map.

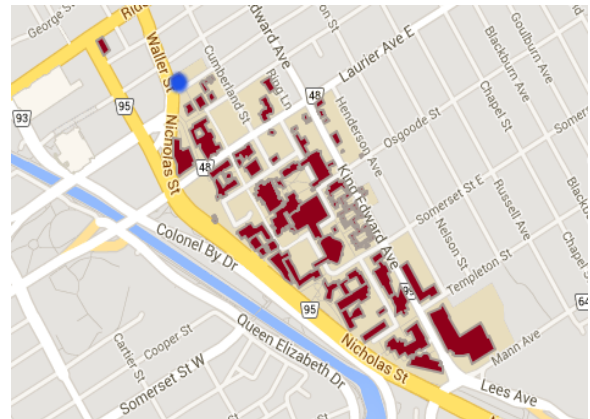


Figure 12: Location of the new ARC

Source: Google Maps. (2015). University of Ottawa, Street map.

The participants tended to discuss two aspects of the ARC, its physical/material aspects and its social meaning. Some of the participants do not particularly enjoy the ARC because of its physical limitations, what Shawn described as “a small, minimum sized resource centre which is done to the minimum specifications based off of the number of students” (Personal interview). The size of the space directly impacts the ways in which students choose to use the centre:

If I want to meet up with some Indigenous friends I never meet there, ever. I think that as a space, it's very, very lacking. It's very, very small, if you want to put on events, it's not really conducive to that because there's the foyer there that is shared with other student groups... (Charlie, Sharing circle.)

Meanwhile others, while they enjoyed the old ARC, they much prefer the new space.

We used to have a beautiful space in the UCU. The downside was, it was tiny and very busy. It was difficult to find because it looked like it was in a closet. So many people had a hard time finding us because we're behind a steel door. So we ended up moving to a large space simply because we needed more space. There are so many students starting to come to the ARC that students

couldn't study anymore, it got packed too easy, there were too little computers, so we moved out to [...] 1 Stewart Street. It's a much larger space, with more computers, a common area to chat, really nice accessibility for computers and even if you take your own computer they hook up wireless printing from your computer. We have a meeting room that we can use, it's a really nice space. (Chris, personal interview)

As suggested in Chris' account, there are issues with the locations of both ARCs, old and new. The old location was difficult to find:

...when I started [my degree] the ARC didn't even have signs or directions pointing people to locate it. Not even Aboriginal students knew how to find the place. In the coming years, myself and a handful of other students and staff began to change this. (Chris, personal interview)

The new ARC's off campus location has produced mixed feelings amongst the participants, whether it is its distance from campus, or its symbolically charged location. Shawn joked,

...that it is the furthest they could put us from the centre of campus, and the closest they could put us to the Shepherds of Good Hope, so we wouldn't have far to walk when we give up on our degrees and go to join our people, who are quite overrepresented just one building away at the [homeless shelter]. (Follow-up interview)

That said, the access to more study space, common area, computers, and ventilation for smudging is viewed as a positive upgrade.

The cultural meaning of the ARC was also the source of mixed feelings. For those who tend to feel excluded, it has very much to do with the identity and meaning of the space. Sophie commented,

...the ARC is just another space on campus where you can throw your books, where you can put your bag, you can go study, or if you need a computer, but it's not a space where students can go, it's lacking, I think, culturally [...] There's nothing traditional about it, that's exactly what I'm saying about the ARC. Even when you sit down and talk with the elder, it's in an office [...] The new ARC is far, it's just an office. It looks like a little department, you know, one big room with computers. I think it's great for an office space

when kids need to sit and study and do their homework, but a place to practice their spirituality, there's no space for that. (Follow-up interview)

Moreover, as Hannah put it,

...even the Aboriginal Resource Centre, there's nothing specific about that space that says 'this is a cultural space where I can be'. Even in those 'pan-Indian' terms, like my Mi'kmaq culture specifically, or anybody else's, there's nothing that says 'we can come to this space and just be'. (Sharing circle)

Hannah's account exemplifies how the identity of the ARC does not reflect her Indigenous identity. She comments that while the space is meant to be inclusive of all Indigenous cultures and identities, it has the opposite effect; its 'pan-Indian' identity does not make Hannah feel invited. Similarly, James pointed out,

... the logo as it is now, the medicine wheel, I know a lot of Métis who don't identify with that part of the history, we have such a unique history of having both, some of us don't smudge and prefer to believe in Catholicism, other people smudge, and so that itself is also a difficult history to try and navigate as an Indigenous space right? [The] fact that there are a lot of Indigenous people who still believe in Christianity and still believe in those types of faith and don't identify with medicine wheel or the creator, how do you take all this into account in one space? (Personal interview)

James raised issues of inclusivity within such a diverse community of Indigenous individuals. He shows how, due to colonialism, Christianity has further complicated and fragmented how Indigenous people/s identify spiritually. In turn, despite efforts to be inclusive of all Indigenous identities, some Indigenous student (may) feel excluded at the ARC.

The participants' stories express the complexities that exist within and among Indigenous communities. With such a diverse group of Indigenous students on campus, these complexities emerge in (the very few) Indigenous spaces such as the ARC, which for some participants, are exclusive to their particular identities.

It is clear that, building on Agnew's (1987)'s conceptualization of place, the built environment is intimately connected with our everyday experience of a space and our

senses of the place. I have shown how for the participants, as Indigenous students, their experiences of the University of Ottawa campus are imbued with relations of power from the macro level (the campus as a whole) to the micro level (the classroom, the ARC). What many may consider mundane physical aspects of the campus – a teepee with the University logo, a rectangular shaped classroom, the location of the ARC – for the research participants, these aspects are charged with (often exclusionary) settler colonial values. As one participant noted, “no student is immune to feelings of exclusion” (Chris, Personal interview) from a space. Students of colour or international students for example may also feel impacted by the physical arrangements of the University of Ottawa campus. However, it is also the *sense of place* that my participants as Indigenous students develop while on campus that distinguishes their experiences from those of others. The meaning attached to campus as a place for the Indigenous participants is rooted in an Indigenous worldview that exhibits a more holistic relationship with the land (whether by cultural upbringing or by the inherent politics of being Indigenous). Further, the physical aspects of the campus project the ongoing history of settler colonialism: the contested nature of the land upon which the campus rests, the naming, organizing (urban planning), structuring (through architecture) and taming of land (domesticating the environment) according to Western values and norms, and the denial (by omission) of Indigenous knowledges and histories that allowed for the University’s existence in the first place. The findings reveal that the built environment and its meaning is not fixed or static, but rather is constantly reproducing the values embedded in it from within its form. The University of Ottawa and its community benefit from the on-going dispossession, exploitation, and settlement of Indigenous lands. Thus, the everyday experiences of the University of Ottawa campus by Indigenous students, which are inherently rooted in a different understanding and development of sense of place, make visible the contours of settler space.

Chapter 4

Negotiating Indigenous Identity In and Through Settler Space

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the social aspects of the University of Ottawa campus as described and experienced daily by my research participants. As argued in Chapter 3, physical spaces are imbued with and project the values held by those in power. In the context of the University of Ottawa, these physical spaces lay out the contours of settler spaces. This chapter seeks to demonstrate the complex intersections between experiences of space and identity, and how these impact the participants' sense of self. Notions of performativity and agency become central to understanding how the participants navigate and negotiate the social scripts of settler culture in and through space, what I argue is *settlernormativity*.

The reflections shared by the participants reveal the complexity of Indigenous identities as they interact with student culture at the University of Ottawa campus. They express a foundational identity of Indigeneity, and a strong sense of self; they demonstrate both conscious and unconscious processes of identity negotiation that come from an understanding of what it means to live and participate in a settler dominant society. While their Indigeneity predominates and is understood as being rooted in a land base, it is also “a construction, a product, and an effect of historical social relations” (St. Denis 2007, 1070), that is, settler colonialism. As such, their experiences of the University of Ottawa campus space present a unique set of identity politics that is different from other groups.

This chapter first presents how the participants experience their Indigenous identity in a variety of spaces throughout the University of Ottawa campus. This section highlights a spectrum of attitudes, experiences, and intersections that exist among the participants. In addition, I discuss my participants' perspectives on a “settler student” identity that dominates the campus. The next section looks at settler attitudes towards Indigenous students. Then, I present Indigenous students experiences and intersections of identity and how they negotiate these through agency and performativity. Further, I show how my participants are racialized by both settler and Indigenous students in and through

campus space, in order to demonstrate the spectrum that exists between “passing” as white and not “passing” as white. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the significance of these findings.

Situating Indigenous Identity at the University of Ottawa

There is a growing body of literature (Maina 1997; Chinouard & Cousins 2007; Carjuzaa & Ruff 2010) describing the initiatives universities are undertaking across North America to create more culturally inclusive and safe pedagogies, curricula, and campuses to meet the needs of diversifying student (and professor) populations, including Indigenous people/s. However, Cree education scholar Verna St. Denis (2007, 1084) argues that “these interventions do not adequately address the racism that our [Indigenous] youth face on a daily basis” in school. My research findings contribute to documenting and to advancing understanding of the social experiences of Indigenous students of the University of Ottawa campus as a space, including the difficulties and challenges, quite often racist, that they face on a daily basis. Below, I will first discuss how my participants perceive Indigenous identity at the University of Ottawa.

Indigenous Identity at the University of Ottawa

A major theme that emerged from discussions with participants was the growing presence of Indigenous students on campus. Many participants expressed that this increasing Indigenous student presence on campus has led to a shift in settler students’ attitudes towards them because Indigenous students often share more accurate information about Indigenous realities. Leah shared,

...it's weird, there's been so much of an information shift because when I was younger people would ask the stereotypical questions like "Oh, did you live in an igloo? Is it true you don't pay taxes?" and all that but now that I'm grown up, people are more, they're not sure how to approach me because they're hearing conflicting information so, they hear one thing like "Oh yes, Aboriginal people live off taxes, they get to go to school for free, they still live in igloos", and then they hear actual, more Aboriginal voices, actually speaking out against residential schools and things that actually happened to them [...] and now they don't know what to think, so they're more cautious when approaching me... (Personal interview)

Leah alludes to what many Indigenous scholars and activists have noted as a distinct cultural resurgence by the current generation of Indigenous youth in Canada. Leah compares experiences from when she was younger to the present and shows how stereotypes held by settlers of Indigenous people/s are being challenged. They are being challenged and further, informed, because many Indigenous young people are re-asserting their identities (Maina 1997, 294; Swanson 2010, 432) by voicing their perspectives. This Indigenous resurgence needs to be understood in relation to the broader Canadian context, including the rise of Idle No More, an ongoing grassroots movement, which started in 2012 among Indigenous people/s in Canada against the federal government's controversial omnibus Bill C-45.²¹ Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014, 160) explains that:

from the perspective of many Indigenous people and communities, the changes contained in Bill C-45 threaten to erode Aboriginal land and treaty rights insofar as they reduce the amount of resource development projects that require environmental assessment; they change the regulations that govern on-reserve leasing in a way that will make it easier for special interests to access First Nation reserve lands for the purposes of economic development and settlement; and they radically curtail environmental protections for lakes and rivers.

During the movement's first year, many Indigenous students and settler allies at the University of Ottawa led by student organizations such as the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Student Association (ICSSA) and the Indigenous Students Association (ISA) at the University of Ottawa organized workshops, events, and round dances in order to generate awareness and participation among settler students on campus in support of the movement.

Relatedly, Mary discussed how efforts made by Indigenous students to have their voices heard have impacted her everyday experience of campus:

²¹ Bill C-45 is a 400-page budget implementation bill that contains "comprehensive changes to numerous pieces of federal legislation, including but not limited to, the Indian Act, the Fisheries Act, the Canadian Environmental Act, and the Navigable Water Act" (Coulthard 2014, 160).

I feel like lately there's been an emerging Indigenous presence on campus. I think that's due to a lot of people, not just the ICSSA and the ISA's "5 Demands" and movement, but I feel like there's a growing awareness from the Idle No More, Indigenous and non-Indigenous professors making an effort to, I wouldn't go so far as to say decolonize their classrooms, but they're trying to do something to increase the Indigeneity on campus and in their classrooms. I feel, maybe it's just because from my first year to my third year you're a lot less aware and you have friends and all that kinda stuff but, *I feel like over the last three years of being there I feel like it's a safer space for me to identify as being Indigenous.* ... We are in the age of multiculturalism and we see it all over campus, and so when Aboriginal people are deliberately, or just unconsciously excluded, it's evident now. So I think Aboriginal people used to go to university and they expected to not see any of that, *whereas now it's very clearly evident that we're excluded.* (Personal interview)

Mary's comment suggests that the information shift is producing notable and positive, effects on campus. While she certainly acknowledges that Indigenous students, such as herself, still experience exclusion, she also recognizes that as the student population is diversifying and voicing their needs, universities are under greater pressure to be more inclusive and are thus taking measures to be as such.

Two more participants shared their experiences of attitudes towards Indigenous students and processes of inclusion on campus:

I do find people [on campus] do treat me differently when people find out I'm Aboriginal but as far as negative comments go, generally not so much... (Chris, personal interview)

It's interesting that I've experienced racism mostly outside of campus, it's very rare that I have experienced it on campus, that's the one good thing I can say about campus [...] On campus I've been able to have a space, what very little space there is... (Hannah, sharing circle)

Chris and Hannah express relatively positive experiences on campus. Their comments align with Walton-Roberts' (2012) findings on the experience of international students from visible minority groups attending Canadian universities (in her case, it was in "second tier cities"). Her participants indicated that they felt safer, more comfortable and included on the university campus than off campus. Walton-Roberts argues that universities are particularly diverse and tolerant spaces, which produce open communities

that positively contribute to social cohesion. Specifically for Hannah, the University of Ottawa campus stands out from other spaces outside of campus as a place where she can feel safer and more easily avoid experiencing racism.

Another participant offered a different, contrasting perspective. Reflecting on her experience at the University of Ottawa, Sophie argues that even though:

[The University of Ottawa is] starting to become more inclusive of Indigenous people and Indigenous issues [...] there's a big lack of education ... I think even professors are not educated enough... [Classes] are always taught by non-Indigenous professors and I don't agree with the way they're being taught so I always try, as a student, to assert myself as an Indigenous Anishnaabe ... [the University of Ottawa does not] have the right people doing things or working side by side, they just say "ok well, let's do it this way" and it's not always the appropriate way and it always ends up being really offensive and inappropriate. Even in the executive positions, Alan Rock, people need to be educated. (Follow-up interview)

Sophie's reflection suggests that the University of Ottawa, and more specifically its faculty, are indeed opening up and responding to Indigenous "issues" in the classroom by acknowledging and teaching them as topics. But the problem is with *how* the subject matter is approached and by whom it is approached, that often produces exclusion rather than inclusion. For Sophie, becoming an Indigenous-inclusive university goes far beyond raising Indigenous topics in the classroom; it must involve Indigenous voices, educating settler professors, staff and faculty, creating safe spaces for sharing, and handling sensitive topics with absolute care. "I don't know why they're so afraid of us," Sophie laughed, "why can't they just come to us and work together?" In other words, Sophie explains that there needs to be better and stronger dialogue between settler and Indigenous populations at the University of Ottawa.

As Indigenous presence on campus increases, the stories shared by the participants reveal a spectrum of perspectives on, and experiences of being Indigenous at the University of Ottawa. Leah and Sophie point to the widespread lack of basic knowledge by settlers on Indigenous peoples and histories in Canada, but acknowledge an information shift that is opening a space for such knowledge to emerge. Mary sees the shift as having potential for creating positive change at the University of Ottawa because

in only three years she experienced many positive attempts by professors to be inclusive of Indigenous topics and knowledge. On the other hand, Sophie sees that while the “new” information is there it is not being utilized with care, whereby faculty and administrators attempt to be inclusive but do not take the time to properly educate themselves on the topic.

Indigeneity and Intersectionality

A central theme addressed in the sharing circles and interviews was the core aspect of Indigenous identities. My research participants come from a diverse array of backgrounds and experiences ranging from status to non-status, reserve to rural to urban, male to female, young to mature, married to single, independent to parent to single parent, traditional to modern, heterosexual to two-spirited or queer, uni-lingual to multi-lingual, and everything in-between. Most participants recognized that their identities were layered and multi-faceted. However, they also demonstrated that their Indigenous identity prevails above all others. Hannah expressed:

... when I'm on campus I'm Indigenous. I'm Indigenous all the time in my life, that's the part of myself that I connect with. I don't disregard my mother's [non-Indigenous] culture at all, I grew up with my mother, and I'm very close with my mother's side of the family, but *I consider myself to be Indigenous* and so when I go out in the world, *that is the aspect of who I am that is probably closest to the forefront* aside from personality traits and everything like that. ... I know who I am, I know my culture, I know how I *connect* with my culture and that's all that's important. When I go onto campus as an Indigenous woman, that's who I am, regardless of whether the space accepts me or not. (Sharing circle)

Hannah acknowledges that she is made up of different identities, including her mother's non-Indigenous culture and her gender, but that such identities exist in relation to her core Indigenous identity. She also explains that her Indigeneity remains pervasive regardless of the dynamics of the space she is in (i.e., acceptance or not).

Similarly, Emily emphasizes the pervasiveness of her Indigenous identity, regardless of the spaces she is in:

Depending on the environment that surrounds me, I always express my Mohawk identity. Whether it be a visual arts studio course or political

science/aboriginal studies lecture, I would not be myself if I did not express my identity. (Sharing circle)

Like Hannah, Emily sees herself as primarily Indigenous, specifically Mohawk, but suggests that the *outward* expression of her Mohawk identity varies from one space to another. By adapting the expression of her identity in relation to various spaces, Emily's comment suggests that she employs agency and performativity as she moves in and through spaces of her everyday life.

Shifting to another aspect of identity, Mary described how Indigenous students do not share a "student" identity:

...a lot of us have kids and a lot of us are married or common law and we have our lives, there's a lot of mature students as well, or we're taking care of sick parents back home and we have to fly home because we live in a fly-in community. It's not a normal "student" experience, and maybe that's why *I don't identify as being a student, I identify as being Indigenous because I'm kind of here to do a job and go back home...* I can't relate to when other women are talking about their experiences. *I don't feel like I'm a woman, I'm an Indigenous woman, I'm Indigenous first.* (Personal interview)

Mary's response highlights the various layered and intersecting identities of what she understands an Indigenous student embodies, demonstrating that they come from a different social positioning, again with Indigeneity as a core identity. She further suggests that this kind of positioning produces different everyday experiences than a "typical" (i.e., settler) student.

Settler Student Identity

The "student identity" was a theme that came up frequently among the participants. Most of them recognized a distinct student identity that dominates the university, an identity with which they do not *entirely* identify because it embodies distinctly settler attitudes and behaviours that often consciously and/or unconsciously exclude Indigenous students. Many of the participants described their experiences of confronting and interacting with the student identity and student culture in general on campus. James relayed:

...when on campus, I do believe the *so-called "student identity" is imposed on myself* and most individuals. Unfortunately, I don't think this student identity is representative of my own culture/experience, and I think that extends to most other Indigenous students as well... (Personal interview)

James highlights the lack of representation Indigenous students experience in the greater student community. He brings attention to the dominance of the settler student identity, an identity that leaves little room for others to be expressed, as being particularly alienating to Indigenous students. With regard to the settler student identity, Hannah described a similar experience:

I thought a lot about inclusion and identity and how that relates to space and my own idea of spatial consciousness, and what that means cause that's the only way I can relate this for my own personal sense of being. ...what emerged was, to me, this idea of my multi-layered identity that I take with me everywhere I go ... seems to be *peeled away when I'm on campus*, when I'm in that space. I think it's more subconscious than conscious. *When I come onto the physical space on campus*, only one single layer of identity seems to emerge and that is of "student," which is *imposed by the campus and the structure of the campus*, and *what the campus represents*, and I don't feel like there [are] many places for my other identities, the other layers to emerge. It's not for lack of trying, but I conformed to that because of what the space allows. To me, *that represents colonization*, because it's hampering what is naturally there for me, its hampering what I carry, my culture, my identity, what represents me, what I've carried from my ancestors on forward, and it is stunting that in a sense. (Sharing circle)

Hannah further elaborates on her multi-faceted identity, but in this case describes how on campus, her Indigenous identity can experience tension with the student identity. She describes the process in which her identities are obfuscated and replaced by that of the student identity. Hannah sees the student identity as being something that emerges from, and is projected by the campus, both the physical and social spaces. She describes the exclusion and confinement she feels by the student identity as representing colonization. This suggests that the student identity, which Hannah unconsciously feels compelled to embody, has a particular set of values and behaviours that are normalized and exclusionary in and through the campus space, as will be elaborated below.

Finally, the participants talked about what they believed to be characteristic of the student identity (specifically “settler” student identity) – privilege and entitlement. James said:

I find that with students, for some reason we have this thing, it's like "we feel comfortable asking whatever we want because we're there to learn and that's what we're taught," but then you get into a territory where you start asking some things that you shouldn't be asking necessarily. [...] These *colonial* spaces [like uOttawa] are created by those involved in it, and obviously the majority of those people are settler people, and that sense of entitlement that they get from these spaces where they feel comfortable asking about, whether it's asking a person of colour where they're from or asking an Aboriginal person what their ancestry is or what tribe they are, or if they have a spirit name, things like that, that entitlement that they get, that's what needs to be re-focussed in their mind, to a point where they realize this isn't right ... I think the student identity is often regarded as individuals with privilege, being able to afford the cost of university, and as having a history of university-educated families, though many Indigenous people in university are first-generation like myself. (Personal interview)

Not only does James make an explicit connection between students and settlers, he goes further to include privilege and entitlement as key aspects of a settler identity. For James, students at the University of Ottawa, who are predominantly settler, are a product of the settler, colonial features of the University of Ottawa, a space created for that population. He regards the university as having a degree of openness to inquiry, but finds that there are few boundaries around *how* such inquiry is explored by students. For James, these are clearly colonial behaviours and attitudes that are also social characteristics and behaviours promoted by the University of Ottawa campus because it is a space for learning.

Another aspect of settler student entitlement exists in the form of access to education. Chris explained that many Indigenous students face different challenges of accessibility to education that most other Canadians expect as a standard:

[...] When [students] hear I'm Aboriginal they're like "oh it must be so nice to get free school" and I'm like "it must be nice to have 18 years or 16 years of good junior high and high school, primary school. It must be nice to get three square meals a day and go to class in a school that has lights, to be able to go to high school that has a power mechanics and wood working and all

these wonderful outlets. There are high school students who are willing to give their left leg to be able to get that type of experience and be prepared for university. (Personal interview)

Here, Chris adds further nuance to the distinct privileges to which settler students have access. He points out that it is privilege, or lack thereof, that sets Indigenous students' experiences apart. He argues that non-Indigenous students have much greater (and I argue inherent) access to mainstream education than Indigenous students. Even if Indigenous students *do* have access to education, Chris argues that the quality of the education, from infrastructure to content, is extremely poor. For Chris, most settler students have access to public education, a privilege many Indigenous students do not possess; this settler privilege shapes social behaviours, attitudes and identities on the University of Ottawa campus, thus creating differences between settler and Indigenous student identities.

Both James and Chris raise related issues. James explains how Western style university education projects an air of openness to inquiry but is rooted in a sense of entitlement to knowledge that often excludes and oppresses others. Chris demonstrates how unequal access to public education positions settler students at a much greater advantage once they begin their university studies. He shows how this greater accessibility to education pervades in settler students' culture, and identity, which in turn, makes Indigenous students feel they are different and do not relate.

Agency and Performance of Identity

Other participants discussed in more detail how the settler student identity is imposed and experienced to the effect of impacting their dress, behaviour, performativity, and agency. Two different, but interrelated processes emerged providing significant insights into how indigenous students negotiate their identities in relation to a dominant settler student identity and culture. First, some discussed the need to conform and fit in to settler student identity and culture. Second, others talked about the need to un-do or underperform their Indigenous identity. Each of these processes will be illustrated through the cases of Leah and Shawn respectively.

Leah reflected on her experience of trying to fit into settler student identity and culture:

Even just the way people dress at the University is different from high school and I was sort of grateful to be there [uOttawa] because I felt like "Yes! Now that I'm at this great university I have to act all professional" and I didn't really dissect what professional meant to myself until I started breaking it down to like "*ok, dress like everyone else*" I started [...] finding out who I'm sort of idolizing or trying to dress like, or act like, they all tended to be *rich white people* (laughs), so I felt like if I didn't act like that, I wouldn't be, I don't know, I would be sorta not taken seriously on campus so, I sort of took pride in being professional so to speak for the first few months, but as you get tired, it just adds more stress [...] *I feel like a young, blonde first year girl can dress in jogging pants and Uggs and wear sloppy hair, but I can't dress like that because I'm not white.* (Personal interview)

Leah's experience demonstrates the pressure she feels of dressing and performing like a white settler student. Her account raises a number of issues important to understanding Indigenous students' experiences of identity on campus, especially that of conforming to dominant norms of professionalism and whiteness. Many scholars have discussed the relationship between professionalism and whiteness. Cheney & Ashcraft (2007) argue that what it means to be professional "lurks as a means of shaping, containing, and legitimizing appearances, decorum, behaviour, and attitude" (157). Others say it is an "institutionalized form of identity regulation because professionalism dictates preferred forms of behaving, communicating, and performing professional identities" (Goldstein Hode & Gist 2013, 11) rooted in, and normalized by white ways of knowing and doing (Page 2001; Saraceno 2012). Findings from Hawkins *et. al.* (2014, 324) on geography graduate students' experiences of graduate school across North America reveal that their perceptions of what being a 'good scholar' entails, "principles deeply informed by masculine, white, middle-class, and anglocentric ideals," manifested through dressing and speaking in particular ways. Furthermore, Hawkins *et. al.* (2014, 343) argue that "the professional body of an academic is inscribed with *constructions of an idealized white subject*" (emphasis added). Leah tried to fit in with "everyone else" on campus by conforming to some ideal white, rich student's dress and behaviour, but realized that she was trying to fit into the white, dominant culture.

Leah further underscores the exclusionary powers of the student identity by explaining that certain types of individuals, particularly those who *do* fit the dominant cultural profile (privileged²² white, blonde) are given licence to deviate from the norm and still be taken seriously, or at least more seriously than a person of colour deviating in the same way. Leah became aware of the process in which she *negotiates* her identity through her dress, performance, and behaviour in order to act white. This realization parallels trans woman and geographer Petra Doan's (2010) experience of going to a shopping mall and attempting to blend into mainstream "femininity" by overcompensating her own. Her attempt to fit in as a woman casually shopping on a Saturday afternoon resulted in her feeling the panoptic (Foucault 1977) heteronormative gaze. From this experience, Doan (2010, 648) realized that many of those who do not fall into the dominant norms must necessarily "cling to rigid models" of highly dichotomized identity markers and performances (i.e. woman/man, black/white, rich/poor), while those who already fit into the norm may safely transgress, to a certain degree, the normative expectations of people in a given space. Likewise, Leah expresses her perception that white, blonde female students can get away with wearing sweat pants and UGG boots on campus, while Leah feels that she cannot because she is not white. "Clinging to rigid models" speaks more broadly to Valentine's (2007, 14) discussion around identity and agency. She argues that "understanding [identity] as a situated accomplishment [...] recognizes the ways that individuals are actively involved in producing their own lives and so overcomes some of the determinism of previous ways of thinking about identities that often classified individuals into fixed categories." The level to which individuals consciously or unconsciously reproduce their lives, a process Valentine refers to as identification or disidentification, exists on a spectrum and is "highly contingent on the power-laden spaces in and through which our experiences are lived" (19), including campus space. While challenging and transgressing dominant norms may open new spaces for understanding and acceptance, it most often comes at a significant social cost for the individual as illustrated by Leah's experience who felt tired and stressed from performing "professionalism." Each experience then is mediated by a personal evaluation of the "trade-offs in terms of such things as social power, social approval and material

²² This could be alluded to by the coolness of wearing fashionable and expensive attire such as Uggs.

benefits” (Mehta and Bondi 1999, 70). For example, Leah understood that dressing professionally would provide her with approval and acceptance by her peers but the trade-off, she realized later on, was performing as white. Thus, just as identities and spaces are fluid, so too is agency. Leah’s process of self-disciplining highlights Doan’s, Hawkins *et. al.*’s and Valentine’s discussions around direct and subtle experiences of power, performance, and agency which lead her (to attempt) to fit into the white settler model.

Next, Shawn also struggles with performance and dress at the University of Ottawa, but he experiences a difficult process: he feels the pressure to *not* dress and *not* perform as Indigenous, that is, to *un-do* or underperform his Indigeneity:

When you're on campus, in that environment where you can't really expect understanding from people, *would I dare grow out a braid? Do I dare make it obvious, and if I did, would people see me as Aboriginal? Or just some guy with some braid?* Same thing with wearing a sash, like if I got on the canal or something like that. I'd wear a sash because it is good for insulation and for tying up my skates, that type of thing, [whereas] *on campus I sort of try to hide it...* (Follow-up interview)

Like Leah, Shawn feels as though, in order to be taken seriously on campus, he must regulate and negotiate his behaviour, dress, and performance. However, *unlike* Leah, Shawn feels compelled to perform as “non-Indigenous.” He shows how everyday aspects of who he is and how he expresses that, for example the use of his sash, are mitigated on campus for fear of being marginalized by other students. He also exemplifies both the fluidity of identity and ambiguity of the norms exercised on campus. Because campus is relatively open and tolerant, a braid presents a cultural ambiguity; adorning a braid can also be seen (and accepted on campus) as an identity marker of someone who is counter-cultural or alternative for example, an identity Shawn does not feel comfortable being necessarily associated with his expression of his Indigeneity. Alternatively, another interpretation could be that rather than feeling uncomfortable with being associated with such long-haired non-Indigenous identities, Shawn may feel that wearing a braid necessarily marks him as Indigenous. In any case, Shawn shows us how the contradictions of campus as a space, a white-settler dominated space that is also considerably more tolerant and inclusive than other urban spaces, both (re)shapes and

muddles how others understand his expression of his identity. It is important to note that unlike Leah who is visibly racialized, Shawn is Métis and is often perceived by others as being “white,”²³ thus self-disciplining, conforming and un-doing, take varying and complex forms for each participant as different aspects of their identities emerge and intersect. Both participants, however, demonstrate how they employ their agency, albeit to different degrees and levels of consciousness, in order to negotiate their identities as they confront settler student culture and the performativity of identity in relation to specific spaces.

Many scholars and activists (Fanon 2008; hooks 1990) have explored the processes in which racialized people in white societies attempt to embody and perform whiteness so as to better fit in. What makes Shawn’s story unique, however, is that, like many Métis individuals (and unlike other more visible “multi”-raced people), he occupies a middle ground where he is often racialized as white by both Indigenous and settler people to the point where he may feel like an imposter in both identity embodiments. Thus on campus, Shawn does not want to dress and perform as white nor Indigenous, but rather as non-Indigenous. In other words, he performs as neither Indigenous nor as white (i.e. in contrast to Leah).

The participants raised another aspect of identity and performance on campus. Chris reflected on how beyond appearance and dress, his behaviour also changes when he is on campus:

...not only am I representing myself but I'm representing my culture, my people, so when I'm on campus and I'm in public space, my behaviour does change. I consciously don't make crude jokes, I don't engage in rowdy behaviour, I wouldn't act the same on campus, walking through campus, in class, the same way that I would at home with my wife or with my friends or anything like that. (Personal interview)

Chris illustrates the pressure he feels to behave in particular ways because he understands that actions made by individuals who belong to marginalized groups, including Indigenous people/s, are often associated with the entire stereotyped group. He is thus

²³ Passing as “white” and its implications will be discussed further on in the section “Passing vs non-passing.”

very self-conscious of his performance in order to make sure he does not behave in way that may be associated with negative stereotypes of Indigenous people.

Leah, Shawn and Chris express the awareness that there are performative and behavioural expectations on campus that they must, to a certain degree, conform to not only as individual students but also as Indigenous persons. This awareness is rooted in an understanding that as “others,” they are constantly being observed and that any “inappropriate” behaviour will sustain negative stereotypes about an entire community or population at large – what Doan calls the ‘panoptic’ gaze. This further emphasizes Doan’s (2010, 45-46) argument that the performer and the (dominant) viewer of a particular space mutually constitute identity because when the performer’s identity fails to fit into the viewer’s perception of what is “normal,” the viewer’s gaze often results in policing the (non-normative) performer’s identity. In turn, the performers evaluate the “trade-offs” (Mehta & Bondi 1997, 70) and, in the case of Leah, Shawn, and Chris, police themselves so as to avoid discrimination. Like Leah and Shawn, Chris practices agency as he actively evaluates the implications of his identity and its associated stereotypes in relation to the social expectations of campus.

Participants also discussed the *relationality* of their identities by explaining how their behaviour changes from space to space on campus. This was clearly expressed by Emily:

Depending on the environment that surrounds me, I always express my Mohawk identity. Whether it be a visual arts studio course or political science [or] Aboriginal studies lecture, I would not be myself if I did not express my identity. The Aboriginal Resource Center has become a haven for myself not only to express my Mohawk fierceness and identity, but also to find a sense of family away from home. For me the question is whether or not certain environments on campus are a safe space to express my identity. Unfortunately, not all study areas and lectures are *safe spaces to express my identities* and all it needs is an expression of pride to implode the space. (Follow-up interview)

As seen earlier, Emily explains that regardless of the space, she always identifies as Mohawk, but it is the outward expression of her Mohawk identity that varies depending on the space. This is what Petra Doan (2010, 368) describes as a “complex feedback

relation' between bodies and the environment in which they mutually produce each other." Emily goes on to say that expressing her Mohawk identity has much to do with feeling safe enough in a space to do so, and that many spaces, especially student spaces such as study areas and lectures are indeed unsafe. She further implies that some spaces are so deeply charged with a particular set of values that an expression of something different such as "Mohawk pride" would significantly disrupt that space. Doan (2010) argues that the performance of gender, and by extension identity "in space not only shifts with each performance, but in a very real way each performance also changes the space in which it is performed" (639). Emily's understanding that her identity challenges the hegemonic norms of particular (unsafe) spaces requires that she negotiate her performance of her identity while on campus. Her understanding further emphasizes Doan's (2010) notion of viewer and performer whereby the viewer's gaze can lead the performer to self-police their dress and behaviour.

Other participants discussed differences between particular spaces at the University of Ottawa. Chris reflected on his experiences of campus and found that, depending on the space, there are variations in his behaviour. Earlier he described how his behaviour changes when he is on campus. Further on, he specified that the Aboriginal Resource Centre is a distinct space with pronounced social qualities:

My posture and my attitude does change when I walk into the ARC; you immediately open up when you're around your friends and you're around people that you know and the conversations change. Things are quite a bit different. You can see changes in behaviour [...] in different spaces [on campus].

Chris' sense of self, changes when he is at the ARC, a space he described as:

... a place to congregate; we get into heavy conversations or talk about events that are happening in the city. It provides a space to feel like we're at home again, or that we have a home or that we have a home, we're not in this pecking order institution, and although it's not the prettiest space in the world, it's [ours]. ... *I felt really included* the minute I met people at the ARC.

Being surrounded by other Indigenous students in a space specifically for Indigenous students, Chris is outside the academic environment and is able to act more like himself;

he feels comfortable and included. Significantly, Chris, as well as Mary and Emily (her comment regarding her Mohawk fierceness) described the ARC as feeling like home:

Definitely the ARC is my *safe haven*. As soon as I walk in, breathe a sigh of relief. I know the people and they get me, and even if they're studying biology, we can laugh about the same rez jokes and rez humor, to me that is *home*. (Mary, Personal interview)

Furthermore, the ARC provides some of the participants with a safer space to express their Indigeneity; it is a space in which they can check their student identity at the door and feel a stronger sense of belonging and community. Emily and Chris' stories underscore Valentine's (2007) and Doan's (2010) arguments that not only peoples' identities are fluid depending on the space they enter and occupy, but also the social characteristics of those very spaces are subject to transformation – in this case, the presence of Indigenous people in the ARC makes it a (safe) Indigenous space. Moreover, the contrasting spatial experiences that my participants have on the campus in general compared to the ARC reveal how dominant norms are projected in and through space, and are consequently interacted with in complex ways.

To conclude this section, my participants' accounts illustrate their individual experiences and processes of navigating different sets of values, expectations, and behaviours at the University of Ottawa, those of settler student culture, a culture rooted in white settler norms which permeate in and through campus space. By looking at how the participants dis/identified with the settler student identity based on their personal sense of self and Indigeneity, their performance, dress, negotiation and disciplining of self, and their un/conscious evaluation of different spaces on campus, we are able to start understanding the contours of the settler student identity and settler norms in and through space. As each participant enters the University campus, they negotiate which aspects of themselves they are going to perform in accordance with or rejection of the dominant settler norms of campus identity and culture. Each participant's performance of identities illustrates that they employ agency in their rejection and/or acceptance (and everything in between) of the dominant social norms – what I call settlernormativity – at the University of Ottawa. Leah and James' conscious embodiment of professionalism and appropriate

student behaviour, further highlight Valentine's (2007, 18) argument that the performer is disciplined from within the self according to the regulatory power of the hegemonic group, in this case settler culture. Furthermore, for many participants how they see their identity themselves changes when they are on campus (Doan 2010, 639).

The participants' reflections strongly reveal the complexity of Indigenous identities as they interact with dominant settler culture and identity in and through the space of the University of Ottawa campus, and more specifically the settler student identity and culture. They demonstrate a core identity of Indigeneity, and a strong sense of self. The findings also show both conscious and unconscious processes of identity negotiation that come from an understanding of what it means to live and participate in a settler dominant society. Their processes of identity negotiation are driven by their agency which varies depending on the individuals (i.e., how racialized and/or gendered they are) and the spaces in which they are (i.e., the degree of settlernormativity influence in a given space at a given time).

“Passing” versus “Non-passing”

Another major theme that emerged from the sharing circles and interviews was the issue of “passing as white.” In particular, those who visibly “pass” (and are perceived) as “white” are often treated differently by both settler and Indigenous students compared to those who do not. However, it is important to note that although the “non-passing” Indigenous participants – those who fit the stereotypical “racial” characteristics of Indigeneity – were not as frequently challenged on their Indigeneity based on the colour of their skin, they nonetheless have been subjected to invasive questions and racism. The theme of passing highlights how dominant racial ideologies mediate the *kinds* of social experiences the participants face on a daily basis (St. Denis 2007, 1082) in and through campus space. Furthermore, these experiences raise significant questions about *racial* and *cultural* authenticity.

The widespread and ongoing use of blood quantum as a determinant for Indigeneity by both settler and Indigenous populations in Canada has generated myriad difficulties (often violent) for Indigenous populations: most notable are the legal ramifications and the essentializing/racializing of Indigenous cultures. Essentializing is

the process by which racial identities are assigned and given meanings (St. Denis 2007, 1071). St. Denis (2007, 1071) explains that racialization “matters because members of society have internalized racist ideas about what skin colour tells about the value and worth of a person or a group of people.” According to Omi and Winant (1986, 63), differences in phenotypes and skin colour are “thought to explain perceived differences in intellectual, physical and artistic temperaments, and to justify the distinct treatment of racially identified individuals and groups.”

Questions of authenticity and belonging, that is, what it means to be “a ‘real’ Indian” (St. Denis 2007, 1069) also permeate and complicate Indigenous identity politics. Assimilationist policies such as the Indian Act of 1876, which defined who was or was not a status “Indian,” and large-scale institutions such as Indian Residential Schools have not only had unprecedented impacts on Indigenous people’s sense of identity and belonging (St. Denis 2007, 1073), they have also further informed how contemporary Canadian society perceives Indigenous identity. Such colonial policies and initiatives directly controlled Indigenous communities’ access to culture, tradition and language, leading to, for many, the devastating erasure of Indigenous ways. The legacies of blood-quantum and cultural racializing have produced in the Canadian imagination of “Indianness” entrenched in romanticized notions of roots, rather than “routes.” Massey (1998, 125) explains that “Routes” emphasize the “particular [articulations] of contacts and influences drawn from a variety of places scattered, according to power-relations, fashion and habit, across many different parts of the globe.” While social scientists have shown that judging cultural authenticity based on purity is over simplified (Massey 1998, 124), many Canadians (and as we will see further on, Indigenous people/s themselves) still hold romanticized and essentializing notions of ‘unspoilt’ Indigenous culture (126).

This section examines questions of cultural and racial authenticity as perceived by both Indigenous and settler students through participants’ experiences of “passing” as white. My discussions here assume that whiteness, race, culture and authenticity are problematic and contentious terms that quite often reproduce oppression, but are used in this context both to reflect the language (and by extension, thinking) used by the participants, students in general and Canadians at large, and to demonstrate the material consequences of such monikers. My intention, however, is to unsettle and unpack such

concepts through the everyday lived experiences of the participants at the University of Ottawa campus. The theme of passing as white is organized around narratives of passing on the campus in general, and then of passing at the Aboriginal Resource Centre, which will add further complexity to questions of race and identity as experienced by Indigenous individuals.

“Passing” on Campus

Settler students who encounter white passing that is, individuals who “look” white Indigenous students often feel they have license to examine and evaluate their degree of Indigenous authenticity. The participants who pass as white at the University of Ottawa shared their stories of being racialized and culturally examined by settler students while on campus. Mary described her experience of being scanned by settler students for signs of Indigeneity:

...if I don't say anything I'm absolutely just another white kid with debt ... It used to really anger me and embarrass me because watching people's reactions of "I'm First Nations" and people try and look at you for anything that's Native, so I used to be really embarrassed and tried to blend in, but I've never been able to blend in, something always comes up like, I don't identify with you, this is who I am and this is my perspective. "Passing" has always been something that came up. *I tried to "pass" and I've never been able to "pass" because who I am my blood and my identity is not white whatsoever and has nothing to do with my skin colour and how I look.* (Personal interview)

Mary recounts the embarrassment she feels when settler students search her visage and appearance for signs of Indigeneity based on their own notions of what it means to look Indigenous. This happened so frequently to the point where she has attempted to blend in, in order to receive less scrutiny. She realized quickly, however, that blending in as white is not an option for her for it goes against who she is and how she identifies. She further argues that the colour of her skin says little about her worldview, her experiences, her culture, and her knowledge, and that attempting to pass off as white is akin to deception.

Similarly, Charlie is often racialized by others on campus as white, and when he reveals his Indigeneity he is subject to an evaluation:

... even when I tell people my dad's Métis, people will go like, "oh yeah, I guess I can *see* that," but I never really get like, "I knew that off the bat", 'ya know? Most people, even Indigenous people I find, just *racialize me as white*. (Follow-up interview)

Charlie and Mary's cases demonstrate how if they do not reveal their Indigenous identities to others, they are automatically assumed to be white, even by other Indigenous people. Charlie specifically draws attention to the fact that others *racialize* him as white. Furthermore, Charlie and Mary also explain how when they do self-identify to others, they are often subject to racial scanning for signs of Indigenous authenticity.

When James openly expresses his Indigeneity, he often finds himself exposed to invasive questioning of his cultural and racial authenticity:

... the first time I identify as Métis to a person or to a group of people, they'll often ask very stereotypical questions. Some of it might be curiosity based which I understand. A lot of people will see this (points to a tattoo on his arm) and ask what it means and I'll say "oh I'm Bear Clan," and then they'll ask "so what does that mean and how did you get that?" and that, you know, I'm more comfortable answering versus people being like "oh you're Métis? Do you believe in the Creator? How Métis are you? Who in your family is Indigenous? What tribe are you?" People keep asking about tribes and things like that... (Personal interview)

When asked if it was more often that settler students asked him these types of questions, James responded:

Yeah, yeah, absolutely more settler people. I find that, with Indigenous people, they tend to either not ask questions when I identify as Métis, they'll just be like "cool," and then other Métis people will ask definitely more appropriate questions like "where are you from?" things like that. [...] I find that with students, for some reason we have this thing, it's like "we feel comfortable asking whatever we want because we're there [at the university] to learn and that's what we're taught," but then you get into a territory where you start asking some things that you shouldn't be asking necessarily. [...] These colonial spaces [like the University of Ottawa] are created by those involved in it, and obviously the majority of those people are settler people, and that sense of *entitlement* that they get from these spaces where they feel comfortable asking about, whether it's asking a person of colour where they're from or asking an Aboriginal person what their ancestry is or what tribe they are, or if they have a spirit name, things like that, that entitlement that they get, that's what needs to be re-focussed in their mind, to a point where they

realize this isn't right. [...] *I would say that the racism that I do experience comes from being "white passing" and being involved or being in a space where there are racist remarks being said, it's usually not towards me specifically but towards my community or my identity and them not being aware of it. Once I do identify, when people start asking those inappropriate questions; that to me is a form of racism.* (Personal interview)

Here, James expresses the invasion he feels by the questions people feel so seemingly unashamed (perhaps clueless) in asking with regard to his Indigeneity. In contrast, when he does pass as white, James is positioned “on the other side of racism” (participant in St. Denis 2007, 1083) where he can “hear what the ‘complainees’ have to say about “Indian’ people,” (1083) while the Indigenous students who do not pass are the ones “being complained about” (1083). James acknowledges the role colonialism plays in such instances. He reflects further by outlining the distinct relationship between settler and Indigenous students as being rooted in colonialism and further facilitated by the social space of the University of Ottawa. Referring to the University Ottawa as a colonial space, James observes that there are certain types of behaviours that are encouraged under the guise of “learning,” but are indeed rooted in the sense of entitlement colonialism has manufactured.

For Hannah, the entitlement settler students feel in examining Indigenous racial and cultural authenticity goes one step further. In some of her experiences, instead of asking questions, students have instead evaluated the authenticity of her Indigeneity:

...there's been a few instances where I've come across other people who have said "Oh, but you're not really Indigenous because your mom's white," or “[you] don't look like one,” or, "how can you know because you didn't grow up in the community?". Well, my family was dispossessed of their community because of colonization and that's not my fault. (Sharing circle)

It is Hannah’s skin colour, family composition and (perceived) upbringing that is subject to judgement by others who feel entitled to do so. Like James, Hannah also draws attention to the impact colonialism has had (and by virtue of her experiences, still has) on her and her family’s ability to practice and embody their culture.

It is apparent that there is an on-going dominance of essentializing notions of Indigeneity that pervades on the University of Ottawa campus. My participants show that

settler students feel entitled to define who is Indigenous and how (skin colour, ancestry, location of family/community, etc.). In the following, I discuss the participants' experiences of passing at the Aboriginal Resource Center (ARC) and other Indigenous spaces to show how many have themselves internalized essentializing notions of Indigeneity.

"Passing" at the ARC and Other Indigenous Spaces

Race-based identity is a politically charged script that has also been internalized by many Indigenous people and communities (St. Denis 2007, 1069). In fact, in the current context of Indigenous decolonization and cultural revitalization in Canada of the past 40 years, "accentuating authentic Aboriginal cultural identity has become highly regarded" (1076) and has had the consequence of producing within Indigenous communities categories of "Indians" such as "real, traditional, and assimilated" (1076). In her study of Mayan youth, geographer Doreen Massey (1998, 123) found that "cultures which felt themselves to be under threat would conduct a kind of archaeology in search of origins, a search for what was 'authentic' and essential to that cultural formation."

The issue of accentuating Indigenous cultural identity, the search for origins and what is authentic also emerged in the discussion with participants, especially with regard to their social and spatial experiences of the ARC at the University of Ottawa. While the ARC is experienced as an inclusive space, even a home for many Indigenous students, others identified the ARC as a space where they experience exclusion from other Indigenous students based on the colour of their skin. James, who is Métis, talked about the race-based exclusion he feels when he goes to the ARC:

...you also face that same exclusion from within the Indigenous population as well, like whenever I walk into the ARC, if someone doesn't know me there, they'll just think that I'm going there for a resource or something that I'm not actually there to meet other Indigenous people as well. ...oddly enough the ARC, it's one of those places where, if I go, not only do I not feel Métis, but like I'm white all of a sudden. ... This [the ARC] is for my community, but I don't feel welcome here, I don't feel represented and it just makes you feel more alienated than you already feel in normal spaces. ... Even a lot of Indigenous students don't feel welcome, especially, from what I've discussed with other Métis people, they don't feel welcome in that space, it's very First Nations. (Personal interview)

James describes how the very act of entering the ARC space itself makes him *feel* white suggesting that the “Aboriginal” in Aboriginal Resource Centre implies (for its users) and embodies (perhaps unintentionally) an unspoken set of racial and cultural values of “authentic” Indigeneity. Specifically, describing the space as “very First Nations,” a legal term (imposed by the Canadian state) to identify status holding “Indians” signals a level of authenticity and legitimacy (possibly associated with some degree of state/settler recognition) that characterises the space. Interestingly, in this particular space, James’ skin colour (and subsequent racial/cultural ambiguity) does not invite direct interrogation from others, as seen in his encounters with settler students, but rather automatically renders him as white in relation to “more authentic” Indigenous students, and thus unwelcome in the space.

Similarly, Shawn, who is also Métis, relayed how he feels excluded from the ARC. In his case however, he is directly questioned about his Indigeneity:

The Aboriginal Resource Centre was never a place I felt comfortable. I always associated the word Aboriginal with First Nations and Inuit primarily. This is especially true for institutions where services are involved. I made myself go to the centre, almost out of a sense of duty. Especially in the early years, people would put me on the spot. I also remember some very hostile things being said about Métis; particularly, I remember a pale skinned but status Mohawk making a show of his loyalty to his group against people like me. So it was never a space I liked using. (Follow-up interview)

Shawn’s experience illustrates how even when it is known that he identifies as Indigenous, his authenticity is still called into question because of his skin colour and “label” of Métis. By describing the space as “First Nations” and “Inuit,” James and Shawn shed light on the divisions that exist within multi-cultural Indigenous spaces and communities (as well as within “homogenous” Indigenous communities as we will see further on). Ironically, Shawn uses the same race-based language when referring to the “pale skinned but status Mohawk” individual to point out the contradictions of his anti-Métis rhetoric.

Charlie, who is Métis, described why he thinks Métis people often feel excluded from both within and outside Indigenous communities:

For the Métis I think it's extra [...] difficult just because there's so much [...] suspicion around white people who appropriate the label Métis. So there's that aspect too for white-passing Métis people. And also, even Métis people... well... There's no like, decided upon definition of Métis either, even among the Métis. The Métis would probably understand [...] it's very much a cultural thing, but there is still both by white settler society and by First Nations people, there's still this attachment of race to this notion of Indigeneity that Métis people aren't afforded. (Follow-up interview)

For Charlie, the Métis occupy a cultural and racial in-between space that presents them with exclusion from all fronts, something that they also experience at the University of Ottawa campus, including in both settler and “Indigenous” spaces.

Other participants revealed that they find themselves judging other Indigenous people using race-based criteria. Mary, who identifies as Mohawk but who often passes as white laments that even she herself judges other Indigenous people on their Indigeneity:

Even I judge people speaking at AFN²⁴ or at Band Council meetings and stuff and they stand up they say "as a Mohawk person" and then it's like, you don't look really Mohawk, but I would never say that to him right? But if I see someone stand up with the beautiful hair and the dark skin and I'm just like "she's Pocahontas" (laughs); I just give them more weight because of how they look. Even how I look, in my own experiences I still can't help but fall into that very colonial trap [of judging other Indigenous people's level of Indigeneity based on their skin colour]. Now it's something I take pride in because it defeats those stereotypes, people try to question me and slip me up and I'm like "I'm as Indigenous as the next person even though I don't conform to how you think I should look like and what I should be and who I am". So now I take pride in it I'm like "Yep! I'm First Nations and that's your problem not mine" ... [It's] really [difficult] because when I meet other FN people they do the same thing of judging me and I can't call them out on it because I do the same thing right? So if you're sitting around and there's a table of beautiful brown faces and then there's mine, the number of times that I've been ignored or people try to discredit me, but it creates a little more of a drive ... When you have people who know what they're talking about and they're traditionally and western educated they can have a far more powerful punch than someone that has the skin colour but they get discredited pretty quickly because they don't know what they're talking about. (Personal interview).

²⁴ Assembly of First Nations

Mary describes how she falls into the “colonial trap” of judging others based on the colour of their skin, even though (or perhaps in spite of) others doing the same to her. She even finds herself judging members of her own community back home. These findings suggest how colonial essentializing notions of race and Indigeneity are internalized by many Indigenous peoples themselves – which may serve/function as a form of “divide and rule” strategy from the settler state/society by making it challenging for Indigenous people/s to build a broad, common/collective identity as Indigenous.

In Chapter 3, I documented how the built environment of the University of Ottawa campus affects impacts the experiences and perceptions of Indigenous students such as my research participants in order to identify the contours of settler space. They discussed how the over-use of concrete paired with the lack of green spaces makes them feel uncomfortable and even excluded because they re-produce the colonialism. In this chapter, the focus was on the social norms embedded in the built and social environment of campus. My analysis and discussion of the participants’ accounts demonstrate how the various spaces throughout campus and in which they spend time, project and normalize settler values and behaviours, a process that I call “settlernormativity.” I unpacked settlernormativity by first discussing my participants’ Indigenous core identity. I did this by contrasting their Indigenous identities with their perceptions of the settler student identity. Then I showed how my participants negotiate settlernormativity. I did this by demonstrating through their various experiences of space how they consciously and/or unconsciously employ agency and performativity by disciplining their behaviour, dress and speech. Finally, my participants’ responses reveal that the ways in which settlernormativity is internalized, to varying degrees, by both settler and Indigenous students. The participants’ experiences of “passing” and “not-passing” as white revealed how the University of Ottawa campus is informed by and reproduces to varying degrees, long-held beliefs around entitlement, race, and cultural authenticity. It is important to note that while all settlers benefit from settler colonialism, settlernormativity encompasses complex hierarchies of privilege around race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality, among others that mediate and produce a wide spectrum of benefit.

Chapter 5

From Decolonization to Acts of Decolonization

Introduction

In the sharing circles and interviews I asked the participants about how they envision the decolonization of the University of Ottawa campus space. From the discussions, themes emerged around why the participants decided to attend university (part of the struggle towards decolonization), how they define and conceptualize decolonization, and how they envision the space of the University of Ottawa campus being decolonized. The themes covered in this chapter demonstrate that while many of the participants share many common goals, purposes and experiences, as explained in the first section, they also express tensions and debates among themselves (or between one another) in regard to questions of decolonization, as discussed in the second section. Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter are important to understand their views around decolonization. In particular, the participants raised critical concerns and distinctions between decolonization and cultural recognition, which is discussed in the third section. I use Dene scholar Glen Coulthard's (2014) concept of a 'politics of recognition' to tease out the participants' complex views on the issue of recognition in and through campus space. Finally, taking Coulthard's lead, I conclude by advancing a theoretical analysis for decolonization initiatives of the campus space at the University of Ottawa. I suggest to rely less on forms of cultural recognition in and through space, and instead propose to turn efforts toward momentary spatial *acts* of decolonization as a means of confronting the colonial dynamics and settler-laden power of the space.

Behind Enemy Lines

Indigenous students' experiences of the University of Ottawa are distinct because they confront, in complex ways, the settler-Canadian culture. Writing about Indigenous students in the US context, Standing Rock Sioux scholar and activist Vine Deloria Jr. (in Deloria Jr. & Wildcat 2001, v) explains that, "the educational journey of modern Indian people is one spanning two distinct value systems and worldviews. It is an adventure in

which the Native American sacred view must inevitably encounter the material and pragmatic focus of the larger American society.” The participants of my project experienced a similar process of “encountering” the dominant settler society in Canadian universities. As shown in previous chapters, during their university experience the students must navigate and negotiate “two distinct value systems and worldviews” in order to simultaneously adapt to dominant settler Canadian culture and yet remain true to their sense of self. However, what is also significant about Indigenous students attending the University of Ottawa, and arguably any Indigenous student at a Canadian university, are their intentions behind pursuing a post-secondary education. The sharing circles and interviews revealed that Indigenous students have clear purposes for the acquisition of post-secondary education, *strategic* purposes, which at their core involve engaging settler- colonialism. As one participant said, they are going to the University of Ottawa to go “behind enemy lines” (Chris, Personal interview).

My participants belong to what Kahnawake Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred (2014, x) calls the “New Indigenous Intelligentsia.” Alfred argues that only a few decades ago, “promising [Indigenous] youth” were groomed to become a small bourgeoisie as a means of serving as “go-betweens” (ix):

The white élite undertook to manufacture a Native élite. They picked promising youths, they made them drink the firewater principles of capitalism and of Western culture; they educated the Indian out of them, and their heads were filled and their mouths were stuffed with smart-sounding hypocrisies, grand greedy words that stuck in their throats but which they spit out nonetheless. After a short stay in the university they were sent home to their reserves or unleashed in cities, whitewashed. [...] The Natives were complacent and compliant; it was a rich time for the white élite. Then things changed. The mouths of Natives started opening by themselves; brown voices still spoke of whites’ law, democracy, and liberal humanism, but only to reproach them for their unfairness and inhumanity.

However, Alfred (2014, x) remarks that there is a changing trend emerging among the contemporary generation of youth. He believes that:

Native thinkers and leaders are coming on the scene intent on changing things, entirely. With the last stores of our patience, Native writers, musicians, and philosophers are trying to explain to settlers that the Native

can never be completely erased or totally assimilated. This *New Indigenous Intelligentsia* is trying to get settlers to understand that colonialism must and will be *confronted and destroyed*.

What Alfred underscores is a shift in agency and purpose by Indigenous youth. Compared to the past, he believes contemporary Indigenous youth are finding their voices, on their own terms, and engaging settler colonialism from a position of strength rather than weakness.

In this section I focus on the *intention* and *purpose* driving the participants to attend university. My findings are grounded in my participants' responses but likely speak to the experiences of Indigenous students at Canadian post-secondary institutions more generally (i.e., a Western education) rather than solely the University of Ottawa. Their responses further highlight that there is indeed a "shift" in cultural resurgence and re-assertion by contemporary Indigenous youth in that they are making their opinions heard and are participating in decolonizing movements such as Idle No More.

Interestingly, much like Alfred does in his work, the responses presented below draw upon war metaphors using terms such as "war," "conscripted," "protect," "battle," and "fight" among others. Moreover, the participants express agency and purpose in their decision to attend university. It is also clear that the participants are thinking about settler colonialism conceptually as their stories reflect not only colonialism as a subject, but also as a major issue that impacts them and their communities on a daily basis. For many of the participants, engaging with settler colonialism involves an awareness and practice of decolonization. Sophie describes more generally why she thinks Indigenous people attend university:

I think a lot of [Indigenous] people are going to university just because they want to learn how to *fight fire with fire*, they want to learn the 'white man's ways' as some would say it, so they can *fight the good fight*. (Follow-up interview)

Sophie provides a 'snap shot' of the purpose behind acquiring a post-secondary, Western education suggesting the importance of learning the settlers' worldviews and culture. Leah adds further depth by describing the sense of obligation she has to her people to

attend university to learn a “white person’s perspective,” while at the same time maintaining her Indigenous values along the way:

...my mum [...] taught me everything about being Inuk, so when she sent me to university she told me about all this stuff like [...]“that's going to be your professional sort of life and it's going to be very *not Inuk*”. [...] She taught me to think critically so everything I learned in school I thought "ok, I'm not going to take everything they say to be true that's coming from a *white person's perspective* that comes from a textbook that was written 50 years ago.” So she told me to think that way, so I'm able to separate that because I have my family close to me so it's easy for me to do and I know that I just have to [...] *get what I need and come back* and do what I need to do. [...] I almost feel like I'm being *sent off to war or something*, I'm being *conscripted* into, like, I have to go to university, and I have to learn what I need to learn so that I can *protect* my family because that's how it is, that's how it is now and all we can do is stay true to our values which is family, so whatever I do I have to *think about my family when I'm doing stuff*, and making sure I'm not selfish and taking more than I need. If I keep that with me everywhere I go, then I'm being Inuk. (Personal interview)

Leah raises a number of important issues: the differences between Indigenous and settler worldviews and values; what a settler education entails and its strategic importance for protecting Indigenous peoples; and how to navigate fitting in into settler culture without being assimilated. Leah’s mother helped her prepare for her university experience during which she would encounter settler culture and Western worldviews that contrast with “Inuk” ways. Leah is lucky to have such direction from her mother because according to Associate Dean for Aboriginal affairs at the University of Saskatchewan, Professor Kristina Bidwell (in Smith, 2015), Indigenous students are “usually the first generation to attend university, so there is no parental guidance available ... They are figuring it out on their own.” Leah’s mother taught her to apply a critical lens to the curricular material (“from a white person’s perspective (...) written 50 years ago”) she will encounter. Through her mother’s counsel and with the support of her family, Leah becomes aware that she must learn to navigate and negotiate her own Inuk worldview as she confronts the Western culture and settler society at the University of Ottawa. Specifically, she is conscious of her *purpose* as an Inuk person getting a Western education, which is to take what she needs from school in order to protect her people and her family, but not take *more* than she needs in order to remain true to her Inuk culture and values.

Leah's conscious effort to avoid cultural assimilation during her studies at a settler institution is a challenge many Indigenous students face. Speaking more generally about Indigenous intellectuals, Dale Turner (2006, 114) writes:

For an indigenous person the problem of assimilation is always close at hand. The anxiety generated by moving between intellectual cultures is real, and many indigenous intellectuals find it easier to become part of mainstream culture. This kind of assimilation will always exist, and it may not always be a bad thing for Indigenous peoples as a whole. It becomes dangerous when indigenous intellectuals become subsumed or appropriated by the dominant culture...

Turner alludes to the ever-present (and seductive) threat of assimilation Indigenous people encounter. Emily faces similar challenges with regard to cultural navigation and assimilation at the University of Ottawa but at the same time sees a Western education as necessary to surviving as Indigenous people/s in settler colonial society.

It just sucks because you have to get that education, but a real education is really at home [community]. If you're growing up and your parents aren't traditional in any sense, and you come here [to university] and you read everything, you know you have to [...], you know the education's important too cause you need a job, cause you can't live like your grandparents or your great grandparents used to [in their traditional ways]. You wish you could but it's not life today, and I think Aboriginal students need that because if you don't, you're just like assimilated and have all this knowledge. You can do a lot of things, you can work for AFN, [Assembly of First Nations] you can work for like INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada] or you can do whatever you want, and you can have a good job, but you still feel like you're missing something. I think a lot of people in university forget about that, that we come here with a *struggle*. (Sharing circle)

Emily articulates the marked differences between an Indigenous and Western education. She sees a “real” education as coming from “home,” where her people are. But she also notes the transformation her people have faced through colonialism and the subsequent introduction of capitalism and modern society that has led to a serious loss in “traditional” knowledge and ways of living. She fears that without access to a traditional education, Indigenous students are more vulnerable to becoming assimilated into settler culture, as has been observed by Alfred (i.e., the Native elite). She explains that

Indigenous students come to university “with a struggle,” one that defines their experience as they navigate the cultural pressures of settler society. In order to get a “good job,” she needs to get a Western education. Her references to the AFN and INAC, suggest that Indigenous students who become assimilated into settler culture become the next “Native élite.” Emily does, however, go on to express her agency in her approach to getting a university degree:

Not growing up Longhouse and speaking my language fluently has really made me examine my education. A high school counselor once told me “we need people who know the cultural aspects, and we need people who know the political aspects,” and since then I have investigated the political facets of Indigenous movements and vitality. In a sense, my Western education in Aboriginal Studies and Political Science is to analyze ‘the white man’s politics’ in order to continue research and *protect* my people... (Follow-up interview)

After seeing a guidance counsellor, Emily realizes that the continual loss of traditional knowledge and culture of her people can be protected in various ways. While she feels she cannot fully know the “cultural aspects” of her culture, she can better engage its “political aspects” by studying both Indigenous and Western political structures at a university. She knows that having a Western degree in a settler society equips her with the required armour to help her community because she is learning “the white man’s politics” by being accredited in the ‘white man’s system’.

Chris also understands why a settler education is useful. Like Leah and Emily, Chris received guidance from his community that helped him understand that getting a Western education empowers Indigenous people. He knows that within a colonial context, a Western university degree will help him address the issues of health and legal disputes around land and treaties that his community faces:

An Elder once told me, "if you want to win a generational *battle* of your own culture and of your own people, you can't do it your way, you have to learn *their way* and *beat them at it*. You're going to have to beat them at their own game." You see that happening right now. My friends are going into medical school as well [as me]. In order to *help their people* to be better equipped for medical concerns back home, and *bridge that communication gap* that exists between other cultures and ours, you have to learn the Western ways. That's happening right now. Most of the [Indigenous] students I know are in law

school. [...] So land claim issues, other lawsuits against private companies exploiting traditional lands, you're not gonna win these generational disputes necessarily by simply just holding a sign, you need legal representation. You need to be able to speak with them *in their own language* and be able to out-compete them, be able to prove your points, and articulate it in a way that they can understand it. A lot of [Indigenous] students say [...] "well, in order to help my people, [I] have to go behind enemy lines, and going behind enemy lines might necessarily mean learning *an entirely new education system*, learning a profession that's considered Western, right? We didn't traditionally need lawyers, we didn't traditionally need physicians, we didn't traditionally need teachers, and people of particular academic standing to do things that we used to do. But in order to help our people to heal, we need physicians now, we need lawyers to help us *fight the good fight* and ensure that we're not rupturing the land, that we're not disgracing other cultures in the exploit for money or resources, or to make sure that we're equally representative. So it is, in a sense, "going behind enemy lines" when you really look at it, you're learning a *new way*, you're learning *their way*, and you're doing it in a way so you can help your people. I think it's necessary, you either *adapt or you die*, and this is such a way for our people to adapt. We're resilient, strong and this is just one of the ways that we can remain on this earth. (Personal interview)

Chris describes the many ways in which obtaining a Western education is crucial for protecting his people noting that it is a current trend for many contemporary Indigenous people to do so. Advice from an Elder expressed to him the importance of focussing less on Indigenous ways and instead learning settler ways. Chris explains how, in order to survive in a settler colonial society, Indigenous people have had to continually learn to adapt to the changes and challenges brought on by colonialism, but that many of such attempts, such as protests ("holding a sign") have not yet rendered them as formidable opponents to the settler state, for private companies are *still* exploiting traditional lands. Prior to colonization, his people did not have the need for lawyers, doctors and teachers, but the devastating impacts of colonialism and dispossession have forced Indigenous communities to engage the state by learning its ways, language and education. For Chris, it is not just about surviving in a settler colonial society, it is also about changing the structure of colonial oppression. He is aware, however, that learning the dominant culture's way must not imply assimilating or "disgracing other cultures" because that would only work to reproduce colonialism; getting a Western settler education must act as an *armour* under which an Indigenous person or community fights.

Emily and Chris specifically described how they were both advised to engage the colonial state through a Western education as a means of protecting their people in addition to learning their own cultures. Aboriginal education scholar Verna St. Denis (2007) argues that, “some of the efforts Aboriginal people have made towards cultural revitalization [since the 1970s] may not always be as liberating and healing as they were intended to be” (1075). She believes that while “speaking one’s First Nations language, having knowledge of and participating in a myriad of spiritual practices, and knowing traditional stories and other cultural practices” (1076) are important to and have benefitted many Indigenous people, they “do not alleviate the social, political, and economic alienation experienced by too many Aboriginal peoples, both now and in the past [...] Although participating in cultural revitalization has helped many to withstand discrimination, it will not challenge or end the injustice” (1076). In other words, cultural revitalization is only part of the solution, and moreover, is a solution that “places the burden of change on Aboriginal peoples, yet again” (1080). Settler colonialism in Canada, with the help of the Indian Act, has left many Indigenous communities with limited to no access to their own traditional languages and cultures (1078). Thus, many Indigenous scholars, knowledge keepers, and activists are broadening their visions for confronting settler colonialism by adapting to the current reality and embracing each other’s strengths.

Clearly my participants have a sense of purpose rooted in protecting their people and challenging settler colonialism. They, with the insight and guidance of community members, see a university education as an opportunity and a strategy to address the needs of their people. Their mentors have seen and experienced how Indigenous struggles have evolved (or have evolved very little despite Indigenous strategies) and thus realize the need for a change in strategy. They have probably witnessed members of their community become part of the “Native elite”; they have probably seen members of their community go to prison for protesting against a mining company. A different strategy is in order.

As the Indigenous students train for battle at the University of Ottawa, they face many challenges along the way, challenges that have them constantly negotiating Indigenous and settler worldviews. These students stand out in that they come to

university with the mind-set that this is a strategy that will better equip them to fight for their people; unlike in the past, and unlike settler students, their experience at the University of Ottawa is difficult, and they come to university with the appreciation (and often pride) of the culture and worldview from which they come; they come to the University knowing they will probably go back home; for them, attending university is part of the struggle against settler colonialism, it is a decolonization strategy, it is an act of decolonization in itself. That's what makes them the "New Native Intelligentsia."

Decolonization Re-visited: Definitions and Debates

Prominent Indigenous scholars and activists (Alfred 2005; 2009; Simpson 2011; Coulthard 2014) have articulated what the decolonization means to Indigenous peoples in Canada. While decolonization both as concept and process is the subject of great debate, a number of themes can be identified that connect the broad range of ideas. As discussed in Chapter 1, Alfred (2005; 2009), Coulthard (2014) and Simpson (2011) show that decolonization is (a) based in the land, (b) involves cultural revitalization,²⁵ and (c) includes settler participation. During the sharing circles and personal interviews, I asked the participants to define decolonization in order to have a better grasp of their own views on the issue. They provided a diversity of definitions that overall reflect the main themes and arguments scholars raise in academic debates. In this section, I present the participants' complex views on decolonization. My goal is not to settle upon a universal concept or process of decolonization, nor is it to analyze the definitions, but rather to show how the participants' articulations *reflect* the on-going debates on the topic. As

²⁵ It should be noted that within the category of "cultural revitalization" is a strong emphasis by scholars to focus on "gender justice" because, as Coulthard explains, referencing Anishnaabe feminist Dory Nason, "'settler-colonial misogyny's' inherently destructive tendencies has also rendered [Indigenous women] subjects of 'epidemic levels of violence, sexual assault, imprisonment and cultural and political disempowerment' [(Nason 2013)]" (Coulthard 2014, 177). Indigenous women experience misogyny and gender violence from both Indigenous and Canadian societies and thus, gender justice demands that these societies, and "particularly Indigenous men stop conducting [themselves] in a manner that denigrates, degrades, and devalues the lives and worth of Indigenous women in such a way that epidemic levels of violence are the norm in too many of their lives" (Coulthard 2014, 178). While this is an absolutely crucial aspect of decolonization, it is a topic that did not surface during the sharing circles and interviews. While I do not doubt that the female participants have probably experienced forms of misogyny and gender violence throughout their lives, this is a topic that most of the participants did not engage. As such, while I acknowledge this issue as vital for understanding decolonization, I do not raise gender justice often in my analysis.

Shawn aptly put it, “what unifies all forms of colonization is the colonizer, it's not the experience that the actual community goes through [...] There's so many different experiences of being colonized” (Follow-up interview). Furthermore, the definitions discussed below illustrate the messiness of settler colonialism and its subsequent, uneven power-relations (as seen in the previous chapters) from the viewpoints and lived experiences of the participants.

Charlie's view on decolonization is rooted in the land and the nation-to-nation treaty agreements made around territories between the Crown and Indigenous nations throughout the (on-going) process of settlement in Canada:

What I sort of settled on (haha, pun) was [...] at least a return to the honour of the treaties being respected, do you know what I mean? And so then this Two-Row Wampum relationship of [...] peaceful, noninterventionist coexistence... Mutually noninterventionist! (Follow-up interview)

Charlie is referring to the intent of the treaty agreements, which in many cases assumed that “First Nations people would share the land, but retain their inherent right to lands and resources” (Gordon 2014, 71). Since the wealth and power of the Canadian settler state are sustained through, often illegal encroachment of Indigenous land and its resources to the detriment of Indigenous self-determination, honouring the original terms of the agreements set out by both parties would re-establish Indigenous nations' control over their land and consequently self-determination on their own terms.

Focusing on the land necessarily also implies settler participation in the process. Emily's understanding of decolonization focuses on cultural revitalization and settler participation:

As I think about decolonization, my mind never references the definition one can find in a textbook or in one's notes from a lecture. Rather, my mind races back to my community and the possibility of a family I will raise in the future. As a young Onkwehonwe woman, decolonization will always be a significant aspect of my life. As Taiaiake Alfred once said, “I want my children to be more Onkwehonwe than me” and that in a nutshell, is how I define decolonization. Decolonization is about the actions one takes to get back to their roots for the future generations to come. *Does it involve settler people? Of course, because [decolonization] is based on actions.* Interactions with settler people is inevitable, thus, enlightenment is always plausible. As

long as each individual can enhance the future generations, whether it be environmentally, spiritually, physically, mentally, organically, etc., with an understanding and sense of solidarity towards Onkwehonwe, I feel settler people can definitely be involved with decolonization. (Follow-up interview)

For Emily, decolonization is about reconnecting with her cultural roots and passing that culture onto future generations, emphasizing action (a typically Indigenous approach) over words in a textbook (a typically Western approach). She also acknowledges the importance of settler populations as being a part of the decolonization process; there needs to be better and more interaction by the settler population with Indigenous communities. Similarly, James believes settlers could participate in decolonization by being open to and embracing Indigenous worldviews and knowledge:

I think [decolonization is] a process involving settlers and Indigenous people incorporating Indigenous views in settler society, because there's no way we can turn back the clocks of time, go back to where we were, we live in a settler society, but it's about realizing the Indigenous ways... (James, Personal interview)

James sees decolonization as necessarily involving settler people/s because settler worldviews tend to deny Indigenous worldviews which, in turn, re-enforces colonialism. By forcing settlers to engage Indigenous worldviews, they are not only legitimizing Indigenous knowledge and history, they are also simultaneously challenging their own (often exclusionary, oppressive and violent) worldviews.

Chris also understands the importance of settlers engaging in decolonization. In particular, he is concerned less with action and more with the production of information and its communication:

Decolonization to me means breaking down the barriers of *ignorance*; really, to me that's what it means. It's saying "listen, I'm Aboriginal, this is what I'm about, this is what happened, it sucks, I know, this is how far we've come, and this is where we are now, let's go hand-in-hand and shape a better future so this sorta thing doesn't happen again". I guess decolonization for me is breaking down the ignorance of the past. So many people have a pre-formed opinion on really what happened in Canada, of *settler influence* and how people were basically put on reserves. For me, decolonization means just breaking that down, just making people informed of what happened and

changing [their] opinion of First Nation peoples as a whole by using that information. (Personal interview)

Chris emphasizes the importance of challenging the information that is constantly being communicated to Canadian society. He believes that both settler and Indigenous people/s are colonized through propaganda regarding Indigenous issues and settler colonization; he goes on to say:

I think Aboriginals are colonized because there's a mis-interpretation of information, I think the *settlers are colonized*, there's so much *propaganda* involved in Canada's history [...]. They really *should be part of the decolonization process* because, I mean, it's power of the people, power of one voice, having everybody behind you and support you with this *renewed information* that explains what has happened in Canada, and what is continuing to happen in Canada as far as the propaganda of information. (Personal interview)

To sum, what it means to decolonize for each participant is complex and thus involves a complex process. As such, their diverse views, values and approaches set the backdrop to understand their discussions around how to decolonize the University of Ottawa campus space.

Decolonizing the University of Ottawa Campus: Space and the 'Politics of recognition'

During the sharing circles and personal interviews I asked the participants how they would envision decolonizing the University of Ottawa campus as a space. As seen in the literature review in Chapter 1, a growing body of research discusses how to decolonize curricula, classrooms and administrations. Yet, there has been less engagement with the university as a *space* in and through which these curricula, classrooms and administrations function. When the participants discussed decolonizing campus space, they raised issues related to the politics of recognition (and its manifestations in and through space?). For them, recognition (in the context of decolonizing space) implies making *visible* the presence of Indigenous peoples, (on-going) histories, and cultures in the physical landscape of the university. While they also discussed the need for more recognition of Indigenous worldviews, knowledges and

learning styles in the classroom and curricula, my focus here will be on the spatial dimensions of recognition on campus. To do so, I turn to Glen Coulthard's (2014) work on the "politics of recognition" (outlined in more depth in Chapter 1) in order to feed my analysis of the findings.

In Chapter 3, I presented the participants' experiences and perceptions of the physical attributes of the University of Ottawa campus and their associated cultural signifiers; for example, how urban planning, architecture, and even statues tell the story of settler presence in Canada. Glen Coulthard (2014) explains that up until 40 years ago federal "Indian" policy was "unapologetically assimilationist" toward Indigenous populations (3). I would argue that such assimilationist policies extend to the spatial manifestations of said "Indian" policy particularly through city planning and development, and settler institutional buildings and spaces as well. In response "to the stronghold that colonial institutions had maintained for so long" (St. Denis 2007, 1047), many Indigenous communities have been participating in decolonization by *engaging the state* in order to both resist the many effects and legacies of colonization and create a relationship that is based on "mutual recognition" (Coulthard 2014, 3). Furthermore, according to Coulthard (2014, 3), over the past 40 years, Indigenous struggles have become entrenched in a "politics of recognition" characterized by:

the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to "reconcile" Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state. [...] most [models] call for the delegation of land, capital, and political power from the state to Indigenous communities through a combination of land claim settlements, economic development initiatives, and self-government agreements.

While there has been a more recent shift in attitudes toward Indigenous populations through more concerted efforts by settler institutions to "recognize" Indigenous populations, Coulthard (2014, 3) argues that "the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend." It is important to note that while Coulthard is strongly

critical of Indigenous initiatives that engage the state, he does acknowledge the need for this approach. Furthermore, it is the *way* in which this approach is realized that must change:

Settler-colonialism has rendered us a radical minority in our own homelands, and this necessitates that we continue to engage with the state's legal and political system. What our present condition does demand, however, is that we begin to approach our engagements with the settler-state legal apparatus with a degree of critical self-reflection, scepticism, and caution that has been absent in our efforts. (Coulthard 2014, 179)

As I will show below, these issues and criticisms with regard to the 'politics of recognition' also emerged in the discussions with my participants about how to decolonize the campus space of the University of Ottawa. In the context of the University of Ottawa, recognition of Indigenous peoples comes in various forms ranging from: Indigenous study programs and streams such as the Aboriginal Studies Program, option in Aboriginal Law and Indigenous Legal Traditions in the Faculty of Law, and the Aboriginal Program in the Faculty of Medicine; an Indigenous space such as the Aboriginal Resource Centre, and cultural events such as the Annual Pow Wow. My participants are both aware and critical of the on-going attempts by the University of Ottawa administration to recognize Indigenous identities and cultures, but unlike Coulthard, their perceptions are more ambivalent with regard to their significance. On the one hand, many are weary of both the processes and actions taken to represent Indigeneity by Indigenous students/groups and the University administration alike for fear of being tokenized (as has already occurred with the teepee on Tabaret Lawn). On the other hand, participants also express the desire to be *better* and more appropriately recognized on campus.

Recognition at the University of Ottawa, particularly in and through the space of the campus, has taken a number of forms so far: through re-naming a building (as mandated and negotiated by ICSSA and ISA); organizing and hosting the annual Snow Festival with an erected Plains teepee; the ARC; and the Aboriginal Studies Program. Initiatives taken by Indigenous (and non-Indigenous allies) students and organizations (ICSSA, ISA, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa) have brought the annual "Indigenous Celebration and Pow Wow" and the "Five Demands" (currently still in the

negotiation process). The fourth of the Five Demands (see Appendix B) focuses on recognizing the Algonquin nation in the physical aspects of the university campus. Specifically it recommends re-naming an Arts building after a prominent Algonquin person, the installation of a plaque acknowledging the non-ceded Algonquin territory upon which the university is built, the inclusion of the Algonquin language in prominent public spaces on campus alongside English and French, the inclusion of Algonquin art and symbols on campus, and that all such action be done in consultation with the Omàmiwinini Algonquin Nation and follow proper protocol.

Although my research participants share the desire to have greater and more appropriate levels of recognition on campus, they ultimately agreed that the University of Ottawa campus cannot be fully decolonized per se. Their critiques of current and future possibilities for recognition on campus reflect, in varying ways, Coulthard's core argument around the politics of recognition in that such initiatives do little in terms of changing the relations of power between Indigenous and settler populations. This is not to say that actions towards better and more recognition are for naught, for the participants do share the expressed desire to have Indigeneity acknowledged, desires that should not be taken lightly; nevertheless, it is important to remain critical of such actions.

In this section, I present the tensions that exist among the participants' ideas around recognizing Indigenous identities and cultures in and throughout the University of Ottawa campus space, including actions taken by ICSSA's and the ISA's decolonization campaign through "Demand Four." Their responses not only further highlight the complexity of spatial decolonization, but they also prompt us to unsettle the complex relationship between decolonization and the politics of recognition. In other words, what place does the politics of recognition have in decolonization processes? Further below, I present the arguments made by the participants outlining why the University of Ottawa campus cannot be decolonized in and through space.

Recognition at the University of Ottawa

In the past few decades there has been a noticeable shift in Canadian universities to make inclusion of Indigenous people/s and cultures a priority. Both settler and Indigenous peoples alike have driven such initiatives. A 2012 survey conducted by the

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) revealed that there are currently 286 programs designed specifically for Indigenous students at universities across Canada as well as 90 Aboriginal Studies programs (AUCC 2013, 8). Similarly, many Canadian universities have begun recognizing Indigeneity on their campuses through building naming, displaying “Indigenous”²⁶ art, and acknowledging the traditional land they occupy among other endeavours. In 2013, at the “flashmob” round dance at the University of Ottawa, ICSSA and the ISA launched their decolonization campaign listing “Five Demands”. Since then, driven by Demand Four, some initiatives have taken place involving better and more inclusion of Indigenous cultures and worldviews throughout campus. Here, I present the participants’ views on these types of initiatives carried out at the University of Ottawa. Themes emerged from their responses around land recognition, “Indigenous” spaces, and the re-naming of buildings and the inclusion of Indigenous art on campus.

Many universities in Canada acknowledge, in varying ways (i.e., through their website, public statements, plaques), the traditional territory upon which the institution rests. As part of Demand Four, ICSSA recommends that the University of Ottawa installs on campus a permanent plaque that acknowledges the unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin land. Chris shared his perspective on this initiative:

...the University of Ottawa is on unceded Algonquin territory, right? How about we call a spade a spade, let's be honest here, let's say the university is on unceded Algonquin territory. What harm is that going to do to the university? Some people might feel "well, you're a defeated people, it's our land now"; I've already heard that kind of thing from certain student interest groups, but it *is* on unceded land, so how difficult is it to admit or say openly that "yeah, we're on unceded Algonquin territory, we recognize the history, we recognize that this happened and we respect your culture and we respect the people here by recognizing such things", and that's part of the decolonization process, recognizing the past, recognizing the truths of the past, admitting to it and being informative; being informed yourself, but being informative as an academic institution, informing your students. So I think yeah, all universities should really. Will that happen? I'm not too sure...I think it's money, cost/benefit ratio than it is respecting traditions and respecting the culture that you're around. (Chris, Personal interview)

²⁶ I use “Indigenous” contentiously because the art is usually stylized in more traditional styles that are recognizable as “Indigenous” by settlers.

Chris explains the importance of such acts in acknowledging the land base, as he believes this form of recognition is a *part* of the decolonization process. He also shares his doubts around the University of Ottawa following through with such an initiative because he recognizes the capitalist and profit driven priorities of the University. Chris understands that decisions made by the University of Ottawa administration, and in this case to “decolonize” the campus, are driven by economics over a sincere desire to make respectful change, which is completely anti-Indigenous and totally colonial.

Another way the participants discussed recognizing Indigeneity in and through space on campus was by creating “Indigenized spaces.” By Indigenized spaces I am referring to spaces that are “Indigenous” (such as the ARC at the University of Ottawa), but function and exist in a settler environment. For example the University of British Columbia (UBC) has an Indigenous garden at the UBC farm called “the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Project” which grows food and provides meals for hundreds of people in need, a contemporary long house at the Faculty of First Nations called the “First Nations House of Learning,” and a Xxi7xwa²⁷ Library, the “only dedicated Indigenous university library in Canada” (First Nations House of Learning 2014) and which is architecturally designed to reflect a traditional “pit house,”²⁸ The University of Manitoba (UofM) has a Circle Room (an architecturally circular room) for classrooms, meetings, and ceremonies in their smudge-friendly and environmentally sound “Bald Eagle Lodge,” a space that’s marketed as “your home away from home.” Indigenous students also give traditional teepee building workshops to Indigenous and settler students. UBC and UofM are just two examples of what many Canadian universities have done to *recognize* Indigeneity on their campuses.

My research participants also discussed ideas related to creating Indigenous spaces on the University of Ottawa campus. While reflecting upon her spatial experiences at the ARC, Sophie suggested the need for a traditional lodge to be built on campus so that Indigenous students can practice their spirituality:

²⁷ Pronounced whei-wha.

²⁸ A “pit-house” is a Musqueam-style shed.

There should be a lodge built on campus cause it's definitely something that needs to be done. The new ARC is far; it's just an office. It looks like a little department, you know, one big room with computers. I think it's great for an office space when kids need to sit and study and do their homework, but a place to practice their spirituality, there's no space for that. That's why I think a lodge needs to be built, the lodges that are built are always so beautiful, they're always made out of wood, and they always have art [and] an alter. I find that I do a lot of peer counselling with my friends, and I think if somebody really needs to vent or needs some type of support, that a lodge would be a really great space to offer that. (Personal interview)

Sophie points out the limitations of the ARC and recommends installing a traditional lodge on campus to alleviate those limitations. Even though there is a multi-faith room at the University of Ottawa, Sophie argues that there is no space for Indigenous students to practice their spirituality and this is perhaps because an appropriate space would require it to be connected to the land, made of appropriate traditional materials such as wood. Sophie also finds herself counseling her friends and feels a lodge would be a space where that support could be better offered.

Other participants shared ideas about creating Indigenous spaces on campus. Leah places less emphasis on the spatial qualities of the space, but rather recommends developing a space for Indigenous students that is *run* by Indigenous students themselves in contrast to the ARC, which is a federally funded and run program and space:

It would be nice to have a more student-driven space where more social things can happen, [...] it's like a student study space and any social events or anything that go on are done by a few students who have the time, or don't have the time but are still doing it, *to bring [Indigenous] students together*, but it would be really nice to have like *a full time community space for students*, you know? (Leah, Personal interview)

Leah sees the need for a community space where Indigenous students can organize or participate in social events. Perhaps Leah sees the need for Indigenous students to take the reins in creating a space that more fully meets their needs.

In contrast, Mary is weary of Indigenous student spaces that emphasize spirituality because such spaces run the risk of being tokenized as well as excluding Indigenous students who do not identify with the forms of spirituality being practiced.

Indigenous students at the University of Ottawa come from diverse cultures and backgrounds and Mary sees the risk of such a space to essentializing and stereotyping what is a heterogeneous community.

I know some people enjoy smudging and stuff, but smudging isn't something we do on my reserve so to me I absolutely respect it's something that I've done a lot here at uOttawa and I enjoy doing it, but to me that doesn't resonate with me, but that's certainly what other Indigenous students enjoy. So I think getting away from the spiritual stuff, the tokeny stuff: "we smudge so now this is an Indigenous space and everyone is welcome here"... *The spiritual stuff isn't something that makes everyone feel included.* (Personal interview)

Mary discusses how providing an Indigenous space that emphasizes spirituality is a double-edged sword. She expresses how making Indigenous spirituality, in the form of smudging, not only makes her feel excluded from the space, but also re-enforces stereotypes mainstream society has that all Indigenous people are spiritual. Furthermore, it is “tokeny” because it presents to others, such as settler students, a romantic and soft image of Indigenous culture(s) without necessarily engaging their struggles.

Some commented on the re-naming of buildings and inclusion of Indigenous art. As part of their “Five Demands,” ICSSA and ISA demanded that the University of Ottawa administration re-name the Aboriginal and Canadian Studies Department building after the late Algonquin Elder William Commanda. After months of negotiations between the administration, ICSSA/ISA, and the Algonquin nation of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, the administration agreed to re-name the building, which occurred on September 24th, 2014 (see Figure 12). The sign presents Elder William Commanda’s name as well as his traditional Algonquin name. At the opening ceremony, Allan Rock, the President and Vice Chancellor of the University of Ottawa said, “By naming the building ... in honour of William Commanda, the University of Ottawa reaffirms its commitment to disseminating the Aboriginal knowledge, history, and cultures on which our country is founded” (in Powell, 2014).



Figure 23: Opening Ceremony of the William Commanda Hall

The ceremony took place on September 24th, 2014 with, from left, Antoni Lewkowicz (Dean of Faculty of Arts), Evelyn Commanda-Dawache (daughter of William Commanda) and Allan Rock (President and Vice Chancellor of the University of Ottawa). Photo: Bonnie Findley. Source: <http://www.gazette.uottawa.ca/en/2014/10/ceremony-says-meegwatch-to-william-commanda/>

Mary raised an interesting insight regarding the re-naming project. Though she sees re-naming the building after William Commanda as setting an important precedent at the University of Ottawa, she is also critical of what that precedent actually means in a settler context:

I think it's important to set that precedent. It means nothing [to me] but I know it means a lot to settler people and I'd rather at least permeate their consciousness through their own vessels. When we're going to have the Desmarais building and all these names named after these prominent French-Canadian or just Canadian people, I would love to see a building named after William Commanda because I know that that's how you get into the universities, that's how we stamp our name according to them. Grandfather William Commanda has a lot with uOttawa. Not only is it on their traditional territory but he got an honorary doctorate from them and he's given so many speeches. Claudette graduated from there and works there. To me it just seemed complete that they named a building after him. (Mary, Personal interview)

Mary makes the important distinction that the act of re-naming a building after an Indigenous Elder holds more significance for settlers than Indigenous people, indicating

that this is a settler practice. Her view reflects Coulthard's argument that this show of recognition is a "gift" granted by the oppressor to absolve themselves of their colonial guilt. However, Mary also acknowledges the significance and relevance of making visible a prominent Algonquin Elder from the land upon which the University of Ottawa campus occupies, within a sea of buildings named after prominent settler people. She appreciates the cultural value building (and place) naming has in Canadian settler society; so while it may not be decolonization, it may very well be an important step towards a new relationship.

James also addressed issues around re-naming a building on campus. In tandem with his critique, he also brought to light the tensions that exists with the possibility of displaying more "Indigenous" art on campus:

I've often thought, "would re-naming buildings help? Would having Indigenous art help?". And I think...ugh I keep struggling with that question... that's a hard one. In one way, I'd love to see Indigenous art around our campus, and it doesn't have to be, well the thing is, right now it's all in the ARC. I'd like to have that strewn about a little bit so that that way I'd feel more comfortable everywhere. We see all this student art, it's great, it's beautiful but its like, "where am I represented in this?", especially with the history of the University, let's bring light to that a little bit. [...] As much as I'd like to be able to say that I'm going to the so-and-so building and to be able to say an Indigenous word or an amazing Indigenous person, I feel like there's a lot of mixed feelings in that, and I know that some [Indigenous] people were approached to have their names used for things like the Living Wall,²⁹ and they refused and I understand because at the same time, this thing was *built through capitalistic means on sacred land that did not belong to them, with zero permission, without asking to be on the land. I don't want to be associated with that place either, this multi-million-dollar building built with support from fossil fuel companies. I don't want to have an Indigenous person's name associated with that.* So that's where I really struggle, with the naming especially. The art is kind of a better way to go about Indigenizing our community. (James, Personal interview)

With regard to re-naming the building, James raises some significant points. He is critical of such actions because they still occur within a settler framework. Coulthard (2014) articulates this issue well. He argues that efforts made by Indigenous people to engage

²⁹ The Faculty of Social Sciences Building at the University of Ottawa recently built a five-story tall indoor living wall composed of plants in order as part of the building's air filtration system.

colonialism often lacks “critical self-reflection, skepticism, and caution” (179). Rather, engagement demands that Indigenous people shift their efforts towards ‘a resurgent politics of recognition’³⁰ that seeks to practice decolonial, gender-emancipatory, and economically non-exploitative alternative structures” (179). What James and Coulthard suggest is that initiatives such as re-naming a building on campus are acts of recognition granted by settler people, institutions and administrations. Such acts do little to forge real change for Indigenous people because they do not address the structures of colonialism, rather they maintain the status quo. For James, re-naming the building is not grounded in Indigenous practices and values, which would demand for a non-economically exploitative and consensual endeavour in the first place.

James also takes a critical view on displaying Indigenous art throughout campus. First he notes that all the Indigenous art is located at the Aboriginal Resources Centre, gesturing to yet another reason Indigenous cultures and histories have little presence throughout campus. He expresses his desire for Indigenous art to be “strewn” around campus because it marks campus with Indigenous presence through representation (“where am I represented in this”?). Perhaps most importantly, James sees that the lack of Indigenous art on campus as especially problematic given the University of Ottawa’s “history.”³¹

The participants’ views highlight a number of important issues. First, they demonstrate a variety of ways and critiques of ways in which the University of Ottawa campus, and urban spaces more generally, may be transformed to be decolonized. Some participants focused on the land aspects of decolonization, while others stressed the cultural revitalization. Second, reflecting Coulthard’s arguments, these comments are heavily framed within the politics of recognition. All of the attempts at recognition raised here would require the permission and support of the University of Ottawa administration and thus become “gifts” from the oppressor. And while the students express the desire to be better recognized on campus, they are also weary of what such recognition *really* means in terms of advancing change for Indigenous students and peoples; they do little to

³⁰ I will come back to a “resurgent politics of recognition” further on.

³¹ James could be referring to the University of Ottawa’s association with Catholicism, a religion that has been heavily involved in the residential school system in Canada. He could also be referring to the University’s arguably illegal occupation of Algonquin territory.

disrupt the power relations between settler and Indigenous students at the University of Ottawa and furthermore, run the risk of tokenizing and essentializing Indigenous cultures. Finally, participants' ideas demonstrate how far behind the University of Ottawa is in terms of recognizing Indigenous students, histories and cultures in and through campus spaces compared to universities across Canada that have already implemented similar strategies.

The participants show that 1) there is not *enough* spatial recognition at the University of Ottawa, 2) some of the existing spatial recognition is deeply problematic and limited, and 3) they would like to see more spatial recognition in the future.

In spite of these criticisms, the participants still suggest that they would like to see more spatial recognition as it would make them feel more comfortable on campus. However, when it came to the question of decolonizing space, and more broadly decolonizing the University of Ottawa campus, their responses cut right through to the issue of power relations between Indigenous and settler peoples. Their reflections are rooted in perspectives that express the interconnection between the socio-political aspects of the institution and the material space it occupies; that everything is *relational*; that you cannot separate the land from the university. In her discussion of Indigenous worldviews, Leanne Simpson (2000) explains, "knowledge is holistic, cyclical, and dependent upon relationships and connections to living and non-living beings and entities" (Hart 2010, 2 referencing Simpson). This understanding of the interconnectivity and relationality of all things was reflected in the participants' analyses of how to decolonize the University of Ottawa campus. To start, Charlie linked processes of decolonization with the structures of settler colonialism and accessibility to post-secondary education by Indigenous people/s:

Well, just... there's a very small population at the University of Ottawa of Indigenous students and I don't think we can talk about decolonizing a university without increasing the Indigenous population at that university, but I think doing that involves systems like race, like class, like patriarchy, like heteronormativity even, ya know, *intersectionality*, *holistic system of domination* and stuff, but you can't really address increasing the size of an Indigenous population of a school without addressing those other factors, or these other overarching systems of power. (Follow-up interview)

Charlie discusses the barriers that prevent Indigenous peoples from thriving in a settler society at large, which are the same barriers that often prevent them from accessing post-

secondary education, and this is what is happening at the University of Ottawa. The University of Ottawa is a *product* or an *extension* of the very “holistic system of domination” that exists in Canadian society in the first place.

Mary elaborates on the problem of how to decolonize a space that is built on the foundations of colonialism:

I just don't think you can put tape on a house, or on the issue like the university as a whole and call that decolonization here and there, I think, I remember [an Indigenous professor], I was in her Indigenous Politics class in second year and she said it was like having an *un-sturdy foundation* for a house, and you can build the most beautiful house, but eventually it's going to start to crumble on itself because the foundation isn't *strong* and you can continue to invest thousands and millions of dollars into this beautiful home but you have to tear down the home and the foundation and work from the ground up. So I don't know what you can do to decolonize a university but you have to at least try. I think ultimately, you can't decolonize universities, just from my perspective [...] So long as the university is inherently western and colonial it can't be decolonized. (Personal interview)

Mary illustrates the inherent colonialism that exists at the University of Ottawa. Her use of the house metaphor provokes us to think about the land, the foundation upon which the University of Ottawa exists. She shows that the University of Ottawa's relationship with its (land) foundation is unstable and until that relationship radically changes, the University cannot truly be decolonized. Mary's analogy of economic investment further defines the University of Ottawa's inherently capitalistic relationship with the land. As she points out, the University attempts to fix (or make more beautiful) its problems through means that are inherently colonial and exploitative of that very foundation (and its people). Her reference to beautifying a decaying house speaks directly to Coulthard's politics of recognition. While it is important for the Indigenous student participants that the campus be more spatially inclusive of them, these initiatives are often superficial repairs of deeper wounds that would need a more radical intervention.

Leah and Sophie also raised the issue of the relationship between colonialism and capitalism that characterizes the University of Ottawa as an important obstacle to decolonization:

I can't picture the university as decolonizing it because it's so colonial [...] if you think about the history, and how inclusive it should be about Indigenous

people. [...] A lot of us are starting to lose faith in post-secondary education because it's just another colonial, it's a corporation, just another money making tactic, there are lots of other ways for learning about things, the tuition fees are crazy [...] (Sophie, Follow-up interview)

I think of colonialism and capitalism as the same thing, so as soon as you strip down capitalism and stop doing stuff for the purpose of money and gaining things, then you're coming closer to being decolonized because, if you think of how Canada was colonized, it was all about property, who has the most stuff. The Indigenous way of thinking is what's best for the people and the land, how can we keep this going safely for everyone and nobody gets hurt sorta thing, so as soon as you start going towards that way, on all levels of everything, once every action that you do is going towards "how can I help the people around me, how can I not damage the land" and all that, rather than trying to gain stuff and trying to be the best university or, have nice big buildings, then you start doing that...It just starts trickling down, so every student there is taught to think "you need to get this piece of paper, give us your money for 4 years, so that you can have more money and build a house and you'll be safe" to start thinking "what are you studying for? How can we make sure the information that you're learning here, how can we make sure your time here will be worth it, right?" so "what are you doing to take away from this university, how are you going to be able to help your community when you go back? If everyone thought that way, we'd be less colonized [...], just the whole university physically itself, is built for efficiency so, how many students can we pack into here that's safe for fire hazards of course, not safe for learning. (Leah, Personal interview)

Sophie and Leah show that because the university was built through colonialism and capitalism, it reproduces and sustains them in and through all its functions (knowledge production, power relations, curricula). Leah employs a house metaphor (again) to illustrate the differences between an Indigenous relationship and a settler relationship of a house to its (land) foundation. Sophie and Leah also convey how knowledge and the experience of acquiring and consuming it has been commodified to further enable the capitalist agenda rather than encourage collaborative, community-oriented and non-exploitative learning. Interestingly, Leah blurs the lines between "decolonization" and "Indigenization" perhaps suggesting that Western society and "culture" may not be inherently colonial but rather capitalistic. Geographer Adam Barker (2009, 341) articulates this notion, arguing that Western society:

...should not be misconstrued to assume that imperialism is a solely Western pursuit or that all Western culture is concerned with imperialism. Rather, it is in recognition of the incredible amount of influence that Western imperialism has had on the contemporary global realities and the obvious connections between political imperialism and other aspects of Western society. [...] There remains in Western culture a choice between imperialism and emancipation, and that means that imperialism and colonialism are social states, not cultural tenets or imperatives.

Barker (2009, 344) argues that settler Canadians on some level chose to “accept overarching imperial control in exchange for ‘peace and order’”. Similarly, writing about settler worldviews, Alfred (2005) argues that “in reality, the injustices we live with are a matter of choices and behaviors committed within a worldview defined by a mental framework of Euroamerican arrogance and self-justifying political ideologies set in opposition to” Indigenous worldviews. He goes on to say that “the basic substance of the problem of colonialism is the belief in the superiority and universality of Euroamerican culture” (109). In other words, settlers have the *choice* of whether to “relent in their hegemonic pursuit of Western norms” (Barker 2009, 340) and challenge Western/settler culture.

Emily also alluded to a relationship between decolonization and Indigenization. She discussed how she sees the “trickling down” of capitalist/colonial imperatives as impacting the students around her at the University of Ottawa:

...we don't see people [at the University of Ottawa] open their minds and say "well, I always thought this way whenever I was in high school, my parents taught me this way, but is that it?". People aren't opening up their minds, they're very close-minded and I think that's where there's that *detachment* because we don't bother to look into other people's perspectives, perceptions and all that kinda stuff. I think that's one of the major problems I find. *That wouldn't just be Indigenous to me, I think that was just on campus in general.* If we [Indigenous people] can open up ourselves to them we can attain that, and that cultural sensitivity won't be such a problem. (Sharing Circle)

Emily's reference to the detachment of a lot of settler students echoes Barker's (2009) argument that “the question of what Canadian society would look like should hegemonic control be relinquished is rarely, if ever, engaged with in mainstream Settler discourses” because settler people have the privilege of ignoring the all-encompassing power of

settler hegemony, or what I call settlernormativity, “by virtue of their relative position in the Canadian hierarchy”(330), a privilege Indigenous peoples do not access. While Emily did not specifically refer to settler ignorance when discussing student “detachment,” she calls attention to the antithetic behaviours and attitudes that exist at the University, symptoms of colonial and capitalistic system and culture. Emily also remarked that closed-mindedness in students at the University of Ottawa is not “just Indigenous” but a problem with “campus in general” suggesting to me that the detachment is not just towards Indigenous peoples, it is a detachment to anything that challenges the perceived norm. Emily went on to reflect on Canadian settler society echoing Barker’s (2009) notion of choice, but also adding nuance to his argument by highlighting Canadian society’s lost spirit:

Canadian society also has a spirit, and sometimes they don't always have ties back to where they came from, they're so mixed with so many things. Everyone has a spirit, I don't care where you're from, and I think that Canadian society is missing that spirit as well. I think that's where we need to be open. Indigenous people don't realize that. I think a lot of Indigenous people are so hurt by their past, to what's been done to them, that they don't realize that either. So I think that's a downfall of Indigenous people, because we're so hurt and some of us are so stuck in the past that we put up a wall against anything, it's very hard to be open or to trust someone [...] then a true relationship can start from that, but I truly do believe that Canadian society is missing something in their souls just as much as we are, it's just that we were so in touch with the land, we're still holding onto that, whether they know it or not, it's there from the moment we're born to the moment we die. [...] I think Canada needs to realize that too. (Sharing circle)

Emily reveals the fundamental issues underlying the difficulties with decolonizing the University of Ottawa campus. She expresses how settler Canadians have lost their spirit, but because of their position of privilege sustained by colonialism and capitalism coupled with their Western worldviews, they are unable (or perhaps choose not to) to build equal and respectful relationships with Indigenous people/s and land. She echoes Ashis Nandy’s (1989, xi) description of colonization, as a ‘shared culture’ for the colonizers and the colonized. Moreover, while the power dynamic between Indigenous and settlers peoples is deeply unbalanced, this imbalance is sustained through colonialism and

negatively impacts everyone. Thus, settler people/s must also take on the work of decolonizing themselves and the very structures that maintain settler colonialism.

Emily also discusses the deep pain caused by on-going colonialism and how it presents major barriers for Indigenous people to be “open” to creating relationships with settlers. Perhaps most importantly, Emily suggests that meaningful decolonization of settler spaces must have as a starting point, a decolonized relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples. Decolonizing this relationship means that settlers must find their spirit, which will reconnect them to the land and remind them of the obligations they have “to other people and the other-than-human relations that constitute the land itself” (Coulthard in Walia 2015). Currently, “the colonial relationship is structured by profound dependency, inequality and hierarchy” Coulthard (in Walia 2015) which means there is “no moral equivalency between the colonizer and the colonized” (Coulthard in Walia 2015). Drawing on the 17th-century Haudenosaunee Two-Row wampum treaty as an analogy for the nation-to-nation model of “sharing the river,” (an analogy often used by settler allies), Coulthard (in Walia 2015) illustrates this notion further:

...[it] assume[s] the legitimacy of the ship -- of the state's economic, legal and political institutions that have destroyed the river and eroded the riverbank. Under such conditions, "recognizing" the legitimacy of the colonial ship's right of travel is an impossibility and we need to start orienting our struggles toward a different goal. The conceptions of reciprocity that inform many Indigenous peoples' understanding of land and relationship cannot be established with, or mediated through, the coercive *institutions of state and capital*. These constitutive features of Canada need to be radically transformed for an authentic relationship of peace, reciprocity and respect to take root. In order to build a truly decolonized set of relationships grounded in respect and reciprocity we need to sink the ship.

Coulthard’s analogy emphasizes what Emily gestures to: settlers must decolonize themselves. Settlers must decolonize themselves by turning away from the state and its “coercive institutions of state capital” (in Walia 2015) upon which they too are dependent, and find their spirit, their connection to the land. They, we, must abandon ship.

The participants’ reflections show how past and on-going attempts by the University of Ottawa administration and the Five Demands campaign to decolonize the

campus fall within a framework of the politics of recognition in that they do little in terms of destabilizing the oppressive and colonizing relationship that continues to exist between Indigenous and settler populations. Their dis-trust of the administration and perhaps the ever-present settler culture and attitudes that infuse campus, is re-enforced by the presence of names of buildings, their funding, and events occurring on campus.

On October 4th, 2004 for example, Husky Energy, one of Canada's largest oil companies, donated \$500,000 to the University of Ottawa in order to create the Faculty of Sciences "living classroom." The living classroom is the very space James shared with us in Chapter 3 as being his favourite place on campus. Similarly, the University of Ottawa's Telfer school of Management was named after the (at the time) president and CEO of Vancouver-based Goldcorp Inc., the world's second-largest gold mining company. With mines located across the Americas, Goldcorp has been, and continues to be accused of contaminating major areas with cyanide, arsenic, mercury, and lead, harming the environment and livestock through intense deforestation, and the use of private security to assault any protest (which in a few instances has caused deaths) (Yagenova & Rocío 2009; Garibay *et. al.* 2011). Finally, there have been informational events on campus to promote the development of the tar sands (located in the province known of Alberta). For example, on March 18th, 2015, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Products (CAPP) set up an information table to do so for one day, giving out pucks made with tar sand bitumen to students, shrewdly located near the Green Wall at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Given the visible influence of capitalism on the University of Ottawa campus, it becomes clearer why many of the participants express (often critical) weariness of the possibility of decolonizing the campus space. Through their responses, it becomes clear then that recognition by the University of Ottawa could, for some, facilitate a feeling of inclusion, but it does not necessarily enable a feeling of equity and equality. Mary summarizes this notion aptly: "so long as the University is inherently Western and colonial it can't be decolonized [...but] that doesn't mean that we can't try to make it a safer space for Indigenous people, and just a better education, harmonizing Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, and other learning methods." Thus, while my participants express the value in having their identities recognized in and through campus

space, they are also critical of what such processes and initiatives to recognise Indigenous identities and worldviews would entail and achieve. Further, if campus cannot be decolonized, perhaps we can engage in processes that disrupt the settlernormativity of the University of Ottawa and its campus space. In the next section, I argue that such disruptive processes could take place in the form of *acts* of decolonization in space-time.

Round Dancing the Rotunda: Acts of Decolonization In Space-Time

Building on Coulthard's work on the "politics of resurgence," I suggest that settler spaces such as the University of Ottawa campus can be challenged and transformed most effectively through momentary *spatial* acts of decolonization, or as Leanne Simpson writes "decolonizing one moment at a time" (Simpson 2011, 41).

I began this thesis talking about the round dance at the Rotunda of Tabaret Hall during the Idle No More movement in Winter 2012-2013. Throughout this research process, I have always come back to the same question: why was the round dance at the Rotunda so powerful? There are some obvious reasons. First, there is the symbolic impact of occupying the University of Ottawa's administrative building. The Rotunda's neo-classical architectural style and administrative function impose on campus through material and social signifiers its Western dominance over knowledge. Second, there are the (on-going) outcomes of ICSSA's Five Demands. In less than three years, a tiny but fierce student association managed to draw the attention of the University of Ottawa administration and further, summon their participation in ICSSA's decolonization campaign. In this relatively short period, we have seen on campus, a building re-named after an Algonquin elder with the permission of the Algonquin community and the commencement of the Annual Pow Wow. In the works are plans to implement a "traditional medicine garden" and a plaque acknowledging the unceded Algonquin land upon which the university rests. These are significant victories for a group of students who are at the negotiation table with an institutional giant. Third, the round dance brought together Indigenous and settler students through drumbeat and dance around issues that impact both groups. However, the round dance at the Rotunda made an impression in a much more profound way. Though the event was part of a larger Indigenous, pan-Canadian movement, Idle No More, it was grounded in principles of

inclusion and solidarity. Without anyone's permission, the round dance was an *act* that decolonized the Rotunda *space* at least momentarily.

Coulthard (2014) argues that decolonization requires Indigenous peoples to “turn away” from state engagement (particularly from the macropolitics of land negotiations),³² “and instead putting our efforts in bottom-up nation-building and land defense” (in Walia 2015) and moving towards a politics of Indigenous *resurgence*. Such a turning away will re-define Indigenous peoples' relationship with the state. For Anishnaabe feminist scholar Leanne Simpson, decolonization requires that Indigenous communities reorient their collective struggles from attempts to transform “the colonial outside into the flourishing of the *Indigenous* inside [...] without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or the opinions of Canadians” (Simpson 2011, 17). Coulthard draws upon the Idle No More movement to exemplify what ‘on the ground’ Indigenous resurgence *can* look like. It was through direct actions in the form of “flashmob” round dances and drumming in public spaces across Canada such as “shopping malls, street intersections, and legislature grounds” (Coulthard 2014, 161), as well as the use of train and traffic blockades, paired with an educational campaign organized in the form of “community-led conferences, teach-ins, and public panels” (161). Such initiatives are what characterize the Idle No More movement as a productive politics of Indigenous resurgence because they privilege and are grounded in “the best of Indigenous legal and political traditions” (157) which are “gender-emancipatory and economically nonexploitative” (157), and are “very much tied to that intimate and close relationship with the land” (Simpson in Klein 2013). They also disrupt the well-oiled machine of capitalism; Coulthard (2014, 168), referencing the language used by Canadian media to describe the Idle No More movement, writes, “to my mind, the apparent fact that many non-Indigenous people are upset” or feel “alienated” by the aims of decolonization movements like Idle No More simply means that we are collectively doing something right.” Finally, such direct actions “are the affirmative *enactment* of

³² I highlight “macropolitics of land negotiations” because as Coulthard explains (in Walia 2015), “Not all forms of engagement with the state can be understood in the same way. For example, there is a very important qualitative difference in state engagement when it comes to land claims, [...] than gendered and sexual violence. A Native mother who has to call the cops to get an abuser out of her house and leadership negotiating land surrender under the current comprehensive claims process are two different scenarios; there is a difference in the character of violence that is being reproduced.”

another modality of being, a different way of relating to and with the world. [...] They *embody* through *praxis* our ancestral obligations to protect the lands that are core to who we are as Indigenous peoples” (168). Thus, resurgence, unlike recognition, are Indigenous values embodied through action, on Indigenous terms.

Leanne Simpson’s reflection on a performance piece done by Anishnaabe artist Rebecca Belmore in Peterborough helps illustrate and *ground* Coulthard’s conceptualization of resurgence:

Belmore drew me into a decolonizing space where my presence and attention became completely focused in a similar fashion to what happens during natural childbirth, or ceremony. I lost *sense of time and space*. I was transported into a world that Belmore as the artist/storyteller had envisioned – a world where Nishnaabeg flourished and where justice prevailed, a world where my voice and my meanings mattered. Downtown Peterborough, like any other occupied space in the Americas, is a bastion of colonialism as experienced by Nishnaabeg people. But for twenty minutes in June, that bastion *was transformed into an alternative space that provided fertile bubble for envisioning and realizing Nishnaabeg vision of justice, voice, presence and resurgence*. [...] *She has altered the landscape in my memory and in the memory of everyone who witnessed her performance*. (97,98).

Simpson shows how a temporary act can transform the space in the moment and alter its meaning thereafter. The performer’s embodiment of the space opened up for Simpson, new possibilities for the meaning of that particular settler *space*. And while the performance was temporary, her story remained in the memory of all those who witnessed it. Writing in the context of asserting citizenship rights, citizenship studies scholar Engin Isin (2009, 378-379) explains that:

acts make a difference. We make a difference when we actualize acts with actions. We make a difference when we break routines, understandings and practices. That is why the common term ‘making a difference’ puts its emphasis on ‘difference’. That means the order of things will no longer be the way it was. Making a difference introduces a break, a rupture. Thus, to make a difference is to act; to act is to make a difference.

Isin further highlights how acts such as performances, not only “disrupt” dominant norms, values and practices, they also make a difference, suggesting that they have long-

lasting effects beyond that moment in time. Moreover, Isin shows that acts are inherently spatial. That is, acts are in space-time.

The round dance at the Tabaret Rotunda was such an act in space-time. For a moment, it ruptured the order of the space. As winter boots pounded the floors and demands were read, the dancers and the audience were transported into a world where “justice prevailed” and where marginalized voices mattered; it was decolonized. If we were unable to attend the round dance or had not known about it, the local radio, YouTube and newspapers kept the round dance alive in our imagination. In my mind and in those of others, the Rotunda at the University of Ottawa is no longer a lackluster administrative space; it is now a space that has been challenged. It is a space of resurgence.

By the end of January 2012, Idle No More’s direct actions began to decline. Mi’kma’ki lawyer Pamela Palmater explained, “We’re in this for the long haul. It was never meant to be a flashy one month, then go away. This is something that’s years in the making... You’ll see it take different forms at different times, but it’s not going away anytime soon” (Palmater in Stechyson 2013). This is true for the round dance as well. While the act was temporary, its traces live on at the negotiations tables, the Annual Pow Wow, and the William Commanda Hall, among others.

Métis Elder Maria Campbell (in Simpson 2011, 145) encapsulates best the impact of such acts in space-time in a story she shared with Leanne Simpson. In her story, Campbell likens acts of resistance and resurgence to throwing a stone in the water:

The stone makes its initial impact in the water, displacing it and eventually sinking to the bottom. There is the original splash the act of resistance makes, and the stone (or the act) sinks to the bottom, resting in place and time. But there are also more subtle waves of disruption that ripple or echo out from where the stone impacted the water. The concentric circles are more nuanced than the initial splash, but they remain in the water long after the initial splash is gone. Their path of influence covers a much larger area than the initial splash, radiating outward for a much longer period of time.

Like a stone hitting the water, the round dance at the Rotunda effectively struck many of us, permitting us to search within ourselves a spirit that is so often contaminated by the influence of settler colonialism.

Conclusion

This thesis drew on Indigenous and critical qualitative geography traditions to examine Indigenous experiences of urban settler space and possibilities for the decolonization of urban space. Specifically, the three main aims of this research were to examine (1) how Indigenous students experience and perceive settler spaces such as the University of Ottawa campus, (2) how the built and social environment of the University of Ottawa campus is imbued with settlernormativity and its impacts on Indigenous students identity, and (3) how Indigenous students envision the decolonization of the University of Ottawa campus space. I used a syncretic approach combining decolonizing methodologies with critical qualitative methodologies in collaboration with the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Students Association (ICSSA), and data collection through semi-structured sharing circles, personal interviews, and reflexive journals. The findings contribute empirical evidence and theoretical reflections to Indigenous conceptualizations of decolonization and feminist geographical approaches to identity and space. Specifically, my findings link the two fields by focussing on the *spatial*. By spatial I mean drawing attention to how for Indigenous people/s, space and identities are rooted in the land (which is inherently spatial), and for feminist geographers, space and identity are not only co-constitutive, but that the built environment (space) is imbued with dominant, oppressive norms. Empirically, my decolonizing approach centres (and documents) the experiences and perceptions of my research participants as Indigenous people/s. The thesis also makes an important theoretical contribution because it privileges the land as an integral and consequential aspect of identity formation in and through space. As such, we are able to identify urban spaces as settler spaces that embody settlernormativity. In the following, I outline the key findings, contributions, and suggestions for future research.

Key Findings

- **Indigenous students experience and perceive the built environment of the University of Ottawa campus as imbued with settler colonial values and norms.**

The participants' everyday experiences of the University of Ottawa campus space demonstrate that the campus space in general as well as specific micro spaces within it (buildings, green spaces, classrooms, ARC) are informed and shaped by relations of power that are characterized by settler colonial values. Their perceptions of campus are distinct from others' because many of the participants embody an Indigenous worldview that values a holistic relationship with the land; the University is built on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin land and as such, the institution and its settler community benefit from the on-going dispossession, exploitation, and settlement of Indigenous lands. In addition, the naming, organizing (urban planning), structuring (through architecture) and taming (domesticating the wild) of the land according to European values and norms, further reproduces settler colonial values to the (often) exclusion of Indigenous students. As such, Indigenous students experience and perceive the University of Ottawa campus space as a distinctly settler space.

- **The University of Ottawa campus space projects and sustains settlernormativity.**

As Indigenous students, my participant's' *social* experiences of the University of Ottawa campus space reveal that the built environment projects, sustains, and therefore normalizes settler behaviour, attitudes and values. Settlernormativity is characterized by entitlement, and internalized (by both settler and Indigenous populations) racist assumptions about Indigenous peoples. Due to their foundational sense of self as being Indigenous, my participants are forced (both consciously and unconsciously) to navigate and negotiate settlernormativity in and through campus space in order to avoid negative experiences. I drew on feminist geographical conceptualizations of agency of performativity in order to analyze the co-constitution of identity and space from an

Indigenous perspective. This approach revealed that there are various kinds of processes at play depending on the individuals: some of my participants feel forced to behave and act “white,” others attempt to “un-do” their Indigeneity, and most of them feel pressured to adhere to “professional” behaviour. These differing processes were evident in my participants’ self-conscious attempts to discipline their dress and behaviour. Employing a feminist geographical approach also unearthed other significant and consequential processes: the out-dated yet thriving assumptions about race (rooted in blood-quantum), identity, and (cultural) authenticity that are born out of settler colonialism and sustained through on-going internalization by both settler and Indigenous people/s. Through the lens of “passing” (visually as “white”), I demonstrated how participants who are racialized by others (both settler and Indigenous) as white, experienced campus differently (and distinctly) than participants who are racialized as non-white and/or Indigenous. Processes of racialization become ever more complex as contemporary Indigenous youth world-wide are re-asserting their identities by simultaneously challenging and adhering to notions of cultural authenticity. Not only did the participants’ racialized experiences make visible the many ways in which settler colonial presumptions of race are internalized, normalized, and reproduced, their experiences also exposed some of the distinct characteristics that underpin Canadian settler identity. My participants articulated the particular sense of entitlement, privilege, and arrogance many settler students at the University of Ottawa embody as they evaluate, question, and label Indigenous students around their cultural and racial authenticity. Many of my participants agreed that while stereotypes about Indigeneity have been internalized by both settler and Indigenous people/s, their experiences of being racialized by other Indigenous individuals are markedly different. Moreover, it becomes clear that the settlernormative environment of the University campus, which already feels entitled to occupy Indigenous land, favours, and as one participant noted, encourages settler students to unwittingly “ask questions”; settler people/s have the *privilege* of ignoring their privilege “by virtue of their relative position in the Canadian hierarchy” (Barker 2009, 329-330), while Indigenous people/s *cannot*.

- **Decolonizing the University of Ottawa campus requires acts of decolonization that move away from a politics of recognition and shifts toward a politics of resurgence.**

Many research participants discussed the value in recognizing Indigenous cultures and worldviews in and through the space of the University of Ottawa campus (for example through building renaming, Indigenous art and various types of Indigenous spaces) and how it may make them feel more comfortable on campus. Nonetheless, most of them are weary of the processes and impacts behind such processes because they embody ‘a politics of recognition’ that reproduces the status quo rather than challenging and transforming the structural bases of unequal settler colonial power relations. Based on the contested nature of the land upon which the campus is built, and the University of Ottawa’s association with projects that severely impact Indigenous communities across Canada and even beyond (e.g., Husky Energy and Goldcorp Inc. after whose former CEO the Telfer School is named among others), my participants express critical views around recognizing Indigeneity through mere spatial manifestations (building names, plaques, teepees, etc.) at an institution that is inherently colonial. Based on my findings, I propose that rather than decolonizing the University of Ottawa campus space through various forms of spatial recognition, which requires sanctions from the University administration, acts of decolonization in space-time, like the round dance of the Tabaret Rotunda in January 2013, more effectively, at least for momentarily can serve to decolonize spaces because they are grounded in resurgence. Acts of decolonization not only temporarily disrupt the built and social characteristics of a space, they also present its witnesses a resurgent and transformative alternative. It will be of utmost importance for critical analysis around settler participation in acts of decolonization as this concept develops further. Geographers Adam Barker and Jenny Pickerill (2012) have contributed to this space by calling upon settler/Indigenist scholars and activists engaging in decolonization to understand “Indigenous peoples’ roles in, and connections, to place” (1718) because they offer “a necessary challenge to settler colonial values by espousing mutual care, obligation and reciprocal relations” (1706). They argue that “Accepting this place-based

ethics enables a clear recognition of the settler colonial society's dependence on the continued dispossession of Indigenous land and place.”

Major Contributions

- **Paying closer attention to the settler colonial and colonizing forces imbedded in the built environment of urban spaces in decolonization research.**

The majority of decolonization research has focussed on decolonizing the law, education (including research), and the child welfare system among others, and there remains limited research on decolonizing spaces, particularly urban settler spaces. In light of large-scale Indigenous migration to Canadian cities, understanding how Indigenous people/s experience urban settler spaces is not only relevant but especially urgent. My research builds on decolonization scholarship to show how the built environment of the University of Ottawa campus, a defined urban space, reproduces settler colonial behaviours, values and norms. Understanding the spatial implications of decolonization is aligned with Indigenous worldviews which privilege holistic and grounded knowledge.

- **Paying closer attention to the Indigenous relationship to the land in feminist geographical research on the co-production of space and identity.**

Feminist geographers have significantly contributed to feminist, queer, anti-racist, post-colonial, and other critical fields by examining the complex intersections and dynamics between identities and space. Their work shows how the structures of oppression that actively work to normalize certain identities over others, are also projected in and through space. My research builds on this scholarship by accounting for the land upon which spaces and identities co-produce, interact, and intersect, in settler colonial contexts. My findings demonstrate that when we include the role of the land in analyses of space and identity, it becomes clear that spaces are also imbued with settlernormativity. Not only does focussing on the land broaden and nuance feminist geographical conceptualizations

of space and identity, it also works to decolonize Western geographical research as a whole.³³

- **Providing empirical evidence from Indigenous students at a settler institution and space.**

My research contributes empirical results that could be useful for both scholars and activists, and university administrators.³⁴ My findings benefit scholars because they shed light on the need for more future research into decolonizing urban settler spaces. My findings are also useful for activists involved in decolonization efforts because they present the every-day experiences of Indigenous students at a settler institution from their own perspectives. Specifically, student associations such as ICSSA and ISA who are actively engaging decolonization can draw on these findings can help them better develop strategies to make meaningful claims (e.g., struggle less for some things and more for others. Finally, university administrators who are interested in transforming their associated institution to become more inclusive and culturally safe for Indigenous students may seek to understand how Indigenous students experience and perceive universities both as institutions and as spaces in the first place.

Recommendations for Future Research

I would like to preface this section by expressing that since I formally began this research project in the fall of 2013, research on decolonization in settler colonial urban settings has grown rapidly, in various fields. Particularly, during the 2014 annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) held in Tampa, Florida, there were a handful of panels (and presentations) critically engaging urban Indigenous research. In 2015, the annual meeting of the AAG (held in Chicago, Illinois) hosted dozens of panels regarding decolonization and settler cities. Panels of note (but not limited to) were: “Settler Colonialism and the City I: Gentrification, Urban Dispossession, and Indigenous sovereignty”; “Settler Colonialism and the City: Spatial Narratives of Erasure”;

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“Geographies of Indigenous-settler relations I: Envisioning futures, addressing pasts”; “Geographies of Indigenous-settler relations II: Solidarity and activism, or active opposition?”; and “Geographies of Indigenous-settler relations III: Transforming the ties that bind”. These contributions demonstrate that not only is there growing recognition of and concerted work towards the relationship between decolonization and settler cities, which give further grounding to my thesis, there are also new theoretical and empirical developments that could have further strengthened my research. Thus, I make the following suggestions with the awareness that many scholars (may) have already begun this work.

Empirical and Theoretical Directions

Due to the scope of this research, along with limited time and resources, I was unable to recruit as many participants as I would have liked. It would have been useful to recruit more Indigenous students from other faculties and programs outside of the faculties of Arts and of Sciences in order to have a broader range of experiences. In the future, it would be especially useful to have comparative studies of Indigenous student experiences at universities across Canada. Given that Canadian universities are making efforts to recognize Indigenous cultures and worldviews on their campuses, programs, and services, and at varying degrees of commitment, a comparative study could give us a wide range of data to better understand Indigenous students’ experiences at Canadian universities. With regard to the latter, it would be particularly useful to examine differences in institutional contexts (administration processes, programs, Indigenous spaces on campus), student population (rate and range of Indigenous students) as well as differences in the local/urban context (e.g. city size, size of various local ethnic/immigrant/minority/Indigenous groups) in order to account for the complex specificities of each case. Moreover, I suggest examining more closely issues of intersectionality, including gender differences (i.e. Indigenous women vs. men) as well as different Indigenous groups (e.g. First Nations, Metis, Inuit; those of urban origin vs. remote and/or rural communities/reserves; those who are passing vs. not-passing, among others). Such studies could further advance more nuanced understandings of Indigenous

identities in relation to land, race, and settler space. This would advance a more theoretical contribution to the study of identity and space from an Indigenous perspective.

I also suggest for more research to be developed on settler-Indigenous relations in urban space more generally with careful consideration of the various types of urban spaces. Using the University of Ottawa is a useful case study, but because universities are one specific type of space among many, and because many urban Indigenous people do not necessarily migrate to cities for the purpose of going to university, it is important to understand how other settler spaces are experienced daily by Indigenous people. Additionally, it would be useful to consider both micro-spaces and macro-contexts (e.g., the urban/local context, including city size, make up of local populations groups, among others).

Finally, there is the need to further study acts of decolonization, both empirically – by documenting Indigenous experiences of other urban spaces – and theoretically – by developing different *types* of acts for and within different contexts.

Methodological Directions

While I am hesitant to praise the use of reflective journaling as a decolonizing method, for it was a method that did not generate a considerable amount of participation (perhaps out of disinterest or the level of commitment required), I do not want to dismiss the few yet incredible insights this process prompted. From two participants, I was presented with deep and critical insights on the impact of the built environment of the classroom. Their descriptions and drawings inspired a major turning point in my conceptualization of spatialized classroom dynamics because they offered a perspective that challenged my taken-for-granted experience of Western classrooms. By making visible the differences between circular and rectangular classroom spaces, the participants helped me realize the subtle yet profound influences the built environment has on the power relations between students and the professor, but also on the production of knowledge. Thus, despite its lack of success in my research project, I remain optimistic of the usefulness and value of introducing reflexive journaling as a decolonizing method for generating knowledge. Moreover, I suggest for more research that works to further develop this method so as to be more effective.

Directions for Policy and Practice

More research could also be done on how to improve Indigenous-settler relations on University campuses – many participants expressed the need to encourage more dialogue between Indigenous and settler populations, especially at the University of Ottawa. Student, staff, and administrators could all play a greater role at Canadian universities by implementing strategies that require a respectful dialogue between Indigenous and settler students, faculty and administrators. This type of dialogue is already underway by ICSSA and ISA. These students associations have been hosting “decolonization” workshops for various settler groups on campus in order to better educate the settler population at the University of Ottawa on both Indigenous issues and Indigenous and settler relations.

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Appendix A:

The ICSSA and the ISA's Five Demands

1. That Omàmiwininimowin (the Algonquin language) and Kanien'kéha (the Mohawk language) be taught every semester, and that this lead to the creation of a minor in both these languages in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures.
2. A substantial increase in scholarships for Indigenous students by the administration of the University of Ottawa, in recognition of the treaty right of Indigenous nations to higher education.
3. An Indigenous portal on the University of Ottawa website, including a statement recognizing that our campus is built on non-ceded Algonquin nation territory.
4. A commitment to the recognition of the Algonquin nation in the physical landscape of our campus, for example through the naming of buildings.
5. The immediate and substantial increase in the allocation of resources to the Aboriginal Studies program in the newly-created Institute of Canadian and Aboriginal Studies in the Faculty of Arts, leading to the creation of a Department of Indigenous Studies.

Appendix B:

Demand 4: Detailed Version

4. A commitment to the recognition of the Omàmiwininì nation in the physical landscape of our campus, for example through the naming of buildings.

The ISA and the ICSSA recommend:

- i. the naming of a major university building after a prominent member of the Omàmiwininì Nation³⁵.
- ii. the permanent installment in a prominent public place on campus of a statement of recognition of the non-ceded Omàmiwininì Nation territory on which our university is built
- iii. the inclusion of Omàmiwininìmowin³⁶ in prominent public places throughout our campus alongside English and French.
- iv. that art and other symbols be installed in various prominent parts of the campus, expressing the Omàmiwininì presence and the recognition of Omàmiwininì territory.
- v. that the administration compensate competitively any artist that is commissioned to undertake any work recommended in Recommendation 4.iv.
- vi. that all recognition in the physical landscape of our campus be undertaken only with the utmost commitment to consultation with representatives of the Omàmiwininì Nation.
- vii. that the administration competitively remunerate any representative of the Omàmiwininì Nation that is engaged to consult with University as recommended in Recommendation 4.vi .
- viii. that all recognition in the physical landscape of our campus be introduced and dedicated through a ceremonial event in collaboration with representatives of the Omàmiwininì Nation
- ix. that the administration competitively remunerate any representative of the Omàmiwininì Nation that is engaged in the organization of the events recommended in Recommendation 4.viii .

³⁵ Often referred to in English as the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation.

³⁶ Commonly called Algonquin in English, this is the language of the Omàmiwininì Nation.

x. that all changes to the physical landscape of our campus in recognition of the Omàmiwinini Nation be undertaken through a permanent and ongoing process of collaboration and input between the administration and both the ISA and the ICSSA.

xi. that as part of the processes of collaboration recommended in Recommendations 4.vi and 4.x, the administration remain amenable to future recommendations from the collaborating groups.

Appendix C:

Second Sharing Circle Guide

Theme: Introduction to the research project

- ICSSA launched a decolonization of UOttawa campaign in the form of “Five Demands”. These demands have been put forth to the administration and ICSSA is currently in negotiation with the administration to put these strategies into action. My research is interested in demand #4 which seeks to decolonize the spatial aspect of campus. This research will be used by ICSSA as they continue to negotiate with the administration
- Introductions: we would like to invite each of you to introduce yourselves, and share with others where you come from, what you’re studying, and why you’re interested in participating in this focus group

Theme: Experiencing campus

- In order to come up with strategies for decolonizing campus, we need to understand how Indigenous students experience campus
- Do you think there is a strong Indigenous presence on campus?
- Do you think Indigenous students experience campus differently than other people?
- Do you feel included on campus? Do you feel excluded? How?
- Where do you feel comfortable on campus, why?
- Where do you feel the uncomfortable on campus, why?
- Do you conduct yourself differently on campus than in other spaces? How? Why?

Theme: Reflexive journaling

- I am giving each of you a journal in which to record and document your experiences of campus for seven days. Attached is a template you follow in recording your responses. You are welcome to include supplementary work such as sketches/drawings, poetry, take photos.

Appendix D:

Reflexive Journal Guiding Questions

Write a minimum of 1 page per day and respond to the following questions:

- Where on campus did you go today?
- How did you feel on campus today?
- Describe your experience of campus. Use your senses.
- Did you interact with anyone?

Appendix E:

Personal Interview Questions

- Do you think there is a strong Indigenous presence on campus? (I leave the meaning of “Indigenous presence” up to you, feel free to define it and interpret it how you want)
- As an Indigenous student, do you think your experience of uOttawa is different than other students? Why? How? And in general, do you think Indigenous students experience university differently? Do they face different challenges?
 - o Are there places on campus you feel included? Excluded? Why?
 - o If you do feel excluded, how would you change the University to make you feel more included?
 - o How do you feel when uOttawa puts a teepee up on Tabaret lawn with its logo on it?
 - o Do non-Indigenous students (faculty, or staff) assume you’re Indigenous? If so, do they treat you differently
- Through my research, I am proposing that uOttawa, like many spaces, is a “settler” space (through its architecture, its contested use of land, naming, ect), that it produces and maintains settler cultures and I am wondering what kind of impact this has on Indigenous students. Does your behaviour change when you are on campus?/Do you conduct yourself differently?
- Do you feel like your identity is recognized on campus? Does it change once you’re on campus?
- Do you think Indigenous interests are equally represented in comparison to other identity groups? Why? Why not? And *should* they be equally represented? (This question is open to interpretation)
- How do you feel about the ARC?
 - o Is this an important space? Would you change it? Do you think it should be controlled/under the responsibility of Indigenous students? Do you feel included in this space?
- What does decolonization mean to you? How would you define it?
- Do you think uOttawa can and/or should be decolonized?
 - o If yes, how?
 - o If no, why?
- Do you think settler people are colonized? Should they be part of the decolonization process (decolonize themselves)? How so?
- Do you think Indigenous worldviews/values can co-exist with western academic traditions? (What I mean by this is, are Indigenous students being colonized while getting their degrees at Canadian universities? Or are they going “behind enemy lines”)
- Do you think Canadian universities (and especially uOttawa) are safer spaces than others for cultural expression and exchange? (I’m asking this because I read a report that said racialized students experienced less racism on campus at Canadian universities than in the cities themselves) So in other words, does uOttawa/Canadian universities offer a space for Indigenous voices to be heard?

Appendix F: Participant Recruitment Poster



Decolonizing uOttawa



Are you an Indigenous student?

If yes, you are invited to take part in my focus group on how to decolonize the UOttawa campus.

Duration: 2-3 hours

When: TBD

Where: My house in Sandy Hill

Who: Carla Sullivan, MA Candidate in the Geography Department

Refreshments and dinner will be offered to participants.

We will be discussing the following:

Do you think Indigenous students are well-represented on campus?

Do you feel included and/or excluded on campus?

How could campus be transformed in order to be more inclusive?

The focus group will be co-facilitated by an elder and conducted in English. Participants will be accepted on a first-come/first-serve basis.

For more information, please contact:



Appendix G:

Participant Recruitment E-mail

Hello all!

I finally got the go ahead from the ethics board to commence my fieldwork. My research investigates how to decolonize settler spaces. If you are an Indigenous student attending the University of Ottawa, I would like to invite you to participate in two sharing circles (you must commit to both). I am looking for 8 participants for this study. The sharing circles will be conducted at my house, **603 Besserer St. Apt. 2**. The first circle will be held on **Saturday February 22nd 11:00am-2:00pm**, and the second on **Saturday March 1st, 11:00am-2:00pm**. Delicious food and beverages will be provided at both events. The circles will be co-facilitated by myself, Carla Sullivan, and my friend and local Indigenous community member from the Northern Plains Cree Nation, Mista Wasis. Please confirm your commitment via email to **csull061@uottawa.ca** or by phone **613-915-0412** by **February 8th**. If you can't attend the sharing circles but are interested in contributing to this project, contact me and we can discuss some ideas. If you need childcare in order to attend the circles I will accommodate (either through providing childcare or covering the cost of a babysitter of your choice).

About my research:

I am a master's student in Geography investigating settler culture and decolonization. I am working in collaboration with the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Students Association (ICSSA) as part of their "Five Demands" decolonization campaign. Specifically, I am exploring how urban spaces such as the University of Ottawa re-enforce settler culture to the exclusion of Indigenous students. In order to understand how these spaces can be decolonized, I will ask my participants how they feel included and excluded on campus. The first sharing circle will resemble a workshop in which Mista Wasis and I will train the participants in locating "spatial exclusion". The participants will then be asked to document and record their experiences of campus for one week in the form of a journal. Following the week of documentation, we will gather for the second sharing circle to discuss the results. During the second second circle I will ask the participants how they foresee campus being more inclusive to Indigenous students. Once I have analyzed the data collected from these sharing circles, I will provide ICSSA with a "findings" and "recommendations" report to support their decolonization campaign.

Thank you!!!

Appendix H:
Data Coding Tree

Participant	Settler student identity	“Passing” vs non-“passing”	Strategies for inclusion

Appendix I: **Data Coding Tree 2**

Participant	Experiences of campus		Decolonization		Settler student identity	
	Spaces of inclusion	Spaces of exclusion	Indigenous presence on campus	Strategies for inclusion	Non-Passing	Passing