

**A Moment of Reckoning:  
Reconciliation Through Decolonial Prefiguration in a Food Movement Organization**

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## **Abstract**

### **A Moment of Reckoning: Reconciliation Through Decolonial Prefiguration in a Food Movement Organization**

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There is an increasing recognition that settler colonialism is a root cause of food insecurity for Indigenous Peoples, and that it is also a contributor to the food insecurity of Black people and people of colour. Recent research reveals stark racial disparities, with food insecurity 4.3 times higher in Indigenous households and 2.6 times higher in Black households compared with white households (First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2017). Food movements are a forum through which multiple groups seek to address the lived experience of inequity. However, as predominantly white/settler-led, food movement organizations fail to adequately address the unequal impacts of food injustice and may even be complicit in perpetuating colonial and racist structures and processes. In this research, I examine a specific “moment of reckoning” at Food Secure Canada’s 2018 Assembly, arguably the largest food movement event in Canada, and its aftermath through the analysis of 124 qualitative questionnaires, ten interviews and participant observation. Using two foundational treaties as a conceptual framework, this case study demonstrates how by refusing settler processes and structures to make space for resurgence, Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour are creating the conditions needed for reconciliation as transformation, rather than assimilation. This study also shows the importance of white/settlers responding by taking on the work of personal (un)learning and making concrete organizational change to governance and procedures in order to enact their distinct responsibilities to decolonize in order to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour. The lessons learned apply widely across community organizations, advocacy groups and social movement spaces as well as public and private institutions working towards reconciliation and decolonization.

## Gratitude

A big part of my return to the academic sphere to do this research was tied to my desire to surround myself with mentors and colleagues who would not only share some of their knowledge with me, but support me in finding my own particular ways to contribute, my own medicine. I have been blessed on this learning journey with many wise, kind and patient people who have offered intellectual guidance, as well as emotional and logistical support. I name some of these people here, while I hold all in my heart and thoughts.

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I want to express gratitude to my elders and ancestors who have lived their lives to allow me to do this work. In particular I want to name my grandfather, Clifford Elliott, the first in this lineage of farmers to attend university, who, along with my grandmother Maxine Elliott (née Reed), have instilled the value of education, as well as the means for self-reliance, among their children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren.

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### **Dedication**

To the Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour who have for centuries resisted colonization and racial capitalism and whose surviving and thriving is testament to the resiliency of human spirit and collective strength, and which shows that another way exists for all of us.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AFI: Alternative Food Initiative

CFS: Community Food Security

FSC: Food Secure Canada

IFS: Indigenous Food Sovereignty

PAR: Participatory Action Research



## Glossary of Terms

**Food Security:** In this work, I make use of the common understanding of food security, developed by the World Food Summit (1996), as existing “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.

**Food Sovereignty:** My use of the term food sovereignty is based on the concept developed by La Via Campesina and brought to the public debate during the World Food Summit in 1996, defined as “the peoples’, Countries’ or State Unions’ right to define their agricultural and food policy” (La Via Campesina, 2003). However, I use the term expansively, moving beyond the original focus on rights, and policy to include also the cultural, spiritual, participatory and self-determining practices inherent to the lived reality of food sovereignty that has been practiced by Indigenous Peoples for millennia, in North America and across the world (Morrison, 2011).

**People of colour:** Where possible, I use the racial identity used by participants themselves. However, I use the term “people of colour” for situations involving people of differing racial identities (who self-identify as being “non-white”) to acknowledge a shared experience of racism. In recognition of the prevalence of anti-Black erasure and the separate history of Indigenous Peoples, I specifically name Black people and Indigenous Peoples outside of this term.

**Settler Colonization:** For the purposes of this research, settler colonization is understood as a structure that “facilitate[s] the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their land and self-determining authority” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 7). It is important to highlight that settler colonization in Canada, as elsewhere, is ongoing, for as Patrick Wolfe (2006) asserts, “settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event” (p.388).

**Settler:** For my purposes here, I follow Lowman and Barker (2015), Lawrence and Dua (2005) and Kepkiewicz and Dale (2019) in using the word ‘settler’ inclusively to refer to all non-Indigenous peoples living in North America. However, I refer primarily to white settlers in recognition that the intersection of white supremacy and settler colonialism grants certain economic, social and political privileges to white settlers, but not to Black people or people of colour (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; Lowman & Barker, 2015; Snelgrove et al., 2014). Whether new immigrants, Black people and people of colour are settlers in North America is a complex question that has been thoroughly debated elsewhere: see, for example Amadahy and Lawrence (2009); Lawrence and Dua (2005); Sharma and Wright (2008); Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel (2014).

**Turtle Island:** Turtle Island is a term used to refer to the Indigenous lands currently occupied by the Canadian and American settler states, making reference to Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe creation stories. Because I am writing in unceded Kanien’kehá: ka territory (part of the Haudenosaunee confederacy), I use the term here with the intent to shift the focus from colonial narratives of erasure to ongoing Indigenous presence and ontologies.

## A Note on Names

Unless specified otherwise, I will use the common local Indigenous names for Peoples, places, documents and concepts that I reference, followed by the European name in parentheses. I adopt this approach to make visible the understanding that so-called Canada is situated on Indigenous lands<sup>1</sup> and within Indigenous sovereignties and ontologies. This is consistent with Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2009) call to name the world according to Indigenous worldviews, not western concepts.

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term land inclusively to refer to territory, soils, air, waters and all the life that they support.

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Research Problem

The ability to access sufficient healthy food in line with one's own cultural traditions is a basic human right (United Nations, 2020). However, this right has not been upheld equally among the different peoples of and on these lands. Recent research reveals stark racial disparities, showing food insecurity to be 4.3 times higher in Indigenous households and 2.6 times higher in Black households compared with white households (First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2017). With this reality, food movements are a forum through which multiple groups seek to address the lived experience of inequity (Holt-Giménez & Wang, 2011).

There is an increasing recognition in food movement literature that settler colonialism is a root cause of food insecurity for Indigenous Peoples in North America (see, for example, Leblanc and Burnett 2017; Matties 2016; Turner and Spalding 2018; Tait Neufield 2020; Daschuk 2013; Thompson and Pritty 2020; Kepkiewicz 2017). Though studied to a lesser extent, it is also largely responsible for the food insecurity of Black people and people of colour (Penniman, 2018). Being predominantly white/settler-led, many claim that food movements fail to adequately address the unequal impacts of food injustice in Canada. Some go further, arguing that food movements are complicit by enacting the social, political and economic structures and processes on which settler colonialism in Canada depends (Corntassel, 2012; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Kepkiewicz & Rotz, 2018). Within any social movement, there is usually one or several organizations that provide the movement with leadership, coordination and even a sense of identity (Killian et al., 2020). Examining the strengths and challenges of influential social movement organizations can provide valuable insight into wider movements they support. This research examines the ways in which one influential food movement organization in Canada is reckoning with its entanglement with structures of settler colonialism in order to realign with wider struggles for the decolonized futures at the heart of food sovereignty for all.

### 1.2 Positionality

I have been actively engaged in food movement work since 2003, during which time I have worked on five vegetable farms, co-founded a cooperative mixed-production farm that I co-managed for four years, coordinated networks of collective gardens and co-managed a cooperative farmers' market, as well as being involved in various food movement associations and advocacy groups. I have also worked with the Kuna People in Kuna Yala (Panama) to identify the impacts of globalization on traditional agro-forestry and diets. These experiences have shaped my understanding and appreciation of food work and I am committed to food movements as one of many sites of struggle for justice and community well-being.

The entanglement of food work with settler colonization is also central to my background. My family history is tied to settler occupation of Indigenous lands for agriculture, through which myself and my family have and continue to benefit. On both my maternal and paternal sides, my family came to what is now the province of Ontario, Canada as farmers of Scottish, Irish, English and Swiss heritage during the first waves of settlement in the regions they claimed as their new home. My father's family has been living on the lands of the Mississauga and Attawandaron (Neutral) Nations since the late

1700s, arriving as the first treaties were signed in what is now known as the Niagara Peninsula. My mother's family has been living on the lands of the Ojibway People, now occupied by Bruce and Huron Counties, since the time of the signing of the Saugeen Treaty 45 ½ in 1836, which removed the original inhabitants from their lands to make way for the agricultural settlement of incoming Europeans. I myself was raised in the territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Attawandaron (Neutral), Lenape (Delaware) and Wendat Nations in so-called Southwestern Ontario. There I lived next to the reserves of the Chippewa of the Thames and the Munsee-Delaware as well as the Oneida Settlement, with no contact or real knowledge of these neighbours until years after I had moved downriver to Tio'tia:ke (Montreal). The place I now call home is on the unceded lands of which the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) are the traditional custodians, which is also where most of my food movement involvement has taken place. Through this personal and family history, I have been socialized as a white settler, and through unearned advantage benefit from the white supremacist society it promulgates.

I understand the identity of 'settler' meaning more than simply 'non-Indigenous', carrying with it a specific set of responsibilities in line with the treaties I have inherited from my ancestors. It is therefore with appreciation, care and humility that I offer this unsettling and personally-invested research as part of my attempts towards accountability. I inhabit the communities I have researched, as opposed to doing 'fieldwork' in them (TallBear, 2014); examining their contradictions, failures and strengths is also examining them in myself. Furthermore, I recognize that the change needed is both personal and societal and hope that both will come out of this work in some small way transformed.

### 1.3 Research Approach and Conceptual Framework

This research is grounded in two foundational treaty agreements, one from the territory where I was raised- the Gdoo-naaganinaadish- and one from the territory where I have lived and worked for 18 years- the Teioháte Kaswenta. Onondaga scholar Adrienne Lickers Xavier, who helped guide the early stages of this research, brought the two treaties into conversation at Food Secure Canada's 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly (2018). She explained that when considered together, they make explicit the relevance of addressing settler-Indigenous relations through food, as it has always been done. Together, these treaties give direction to right relationships between settlers and Indigenous Peoples on shared land.

Created in 1613 between representatives of the Dutch government and the Haudenosaunee confederacy (which includes the Kanien'kehá: ka, in whose territory I currently reside), the Teioháte Kaswenta, known in English as the Two-Row Wampum, outlines a relationship of two nations coexisting side by side without interference, but with mutual respect, peace and friendship. Onondaga elder Chief Irving Powless (2000) describes the treaty and its significance:

The Two Row Wampum belt is made of white and purple beads. The white beads denote truth. Our record says that one purple row of beads represents a sailboat. In the sailboat are the Europeans, their leaders, their government, and their religion. The other purple row of beads represents a canoe. In the canoe are the Native Americans, their leaders, their governments, and their Way of Life, or religion as you say it. We shall travel down the road of life, parallel to each other and never merging with each other. In between the two rows of purple beads are three rows of white beads. The first row of white beads is 'peace,' the second row, 'friendship,' and the third row, 'forever' (p. 23-24).

Since its creation, this treaty has held an enormous cultural, spiritual and political significance that extends far beyond the Haudenosaunee to represent more broadly the framework for right relationships between settlers and Indigenous Peoples. As part of the 2013 campaign to renew the Teioháte Kaswenta, Onondaga Chief Tadodaho Sidney Hill released a press release in which he explained that the Teioháte Kaswenta was the “Grandfather of all treaties as it established protocol for future agreements and recognition of two distinct separate peoples” (Hill, 2013, p. 1, cited in Hansen & Rossen, 2017). Bringing this framework of right relations to the academic sphere, Richard W. Hill, Sr. and co-author Daniel Coleman (2018) propose the Teioháte Kaswenta as a guide for Indigenous-university research partnerships. In this research I use this treaty as a conceptual guide in acknowledgement of the land on which this research has taken place, and to honour its particular history. The Teioháte Kaswenta oriented the focus of this research to organizational change and guided my analysis by asking what this ethic of separate but aligned might look like in practice.

Bringing in a second foundational treaty to this framework, the Gdoo-naaganinaadish (known in English as the Dish with One Spoon wampum, or simply One Dish), centers this cross-cultural relationship in a shared responsibility to steward the land to ensure enough food for all. Established between the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee Peoples in 1701 as part of the Great Peace of Montreal, the Gdoo-naaganinaa acknowledged that both nations were metaphorically eating out of the same dish through shared hunting territory and through the ecological connections between their territories. As Anishinabekwe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2008) explains,

The dish represented the shared territory, although it is important to remember that sharing territory for hunting did not involve interfering with one another’s sovereignty as nations. It represented harmony and interconnection, as both parties were to be responsible for taking care of the dish. Neither party could abuse the resource. It was designed to promote peaceful coexistence and it required regular renewal of the relationship through meeting, ritual, and ceremony (p.36-37).

Simpson explains that the Gdoo-naaganinaa gives insight as to the Anishinaabeg expectation of sharing territory based on food with settler society while continuing to maintain political autonomy. This treaty gives direction to the proposed research by centering the discussion on the land and showing the possibility of responsible coexistence of distinct nations on shared land without one subsuming the other. It oriented this research towards food movements as a site of reconciliation.

As Hill, Sr, Simpson and others have insisted, these are living treaties which represent ongoing relationships and are meant to be renewed (Hill, Sr, 2014; Simpson, 2008; D. Turner, 2006). As Tuscarora historian Richard W. Hill, Sr. (2014) states, “a treaty is not solely words of agreement on parchment but rather an ongoing relationship in which both parties continue to have their concerns openly discussed and considered” (p.38). In using these treaties as the conceptual framework for this research, I hope to honour these ongoing relationships and, as Onondaga Chief Tadodaho Sidney Hill urges, “polish the Covenant Chain” that binds them (Hill, 2013, p. 1, cited in Hansen & Rossen, 2017).

## 1.4 Research Objectives

This research sought to understand how food movements can come to terms with their entanglement with the ongoing reality of settler colonization in Canada in order to more effectively address the root causes of food injustice. By focusing on a particular “moment of reckoning” at Food Secure Canada’s 2018 Assembly, I examined the opportunities, challenges, and constraints related to addressing settler colonization within and through white/settler-led food movements in support of Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) and food justice. Practically, this research had three objectives:

- To understand some of the specific mechanisms through which food movements participate in settler colonialism;
- To inquire into the specific responsibilities of white settlers in contending with the failures of food movements to adequately address the disproportionate levels of food insecurity experiences by Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour; and
- To provide context and analysis to FSC in support of their work to understand and respond to concerns raised by Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour at their 2018 Assembly.

## 1.5 Research Question

*How can white/settler-led food movements disrupt settler colonialism in so-called Canada and within food movements themselves in support of Indigenous Food Sovereignty and food justice?*

## 1.6 Organization of Thesis

This thesis follows a manuscript-based format and is comprised of six chapters and seven appendices. Chapter One introduces this work by identifying the research problem it seeks to address and explaining the conceptual framing that was used to achieve its objectives, stemming from my own positionality and relationship to the topics at hand. Chapter Two introduces the key bodies of literature that I consulted to contextualize this research and inform my analysis, and explains my process for selecting and reviewing them. In a thesis of this format, the majority of the literature reviewed is outlined in the individual manuscripts themselves; however, in Chapter Two I provide greater background and breadth to the most central themes (food movements, IFS, settler colonial and critical whiteness studies) beyond the specifics presented later on, pointing throughout to the later sections where more detail can be found. Chapter Three outlines the methodological frameworks that guided this research and details how they informed the specific methods used. Chapter Four presents the first manuscript, focused on the relationships between Indigenous resurgence and settler-Indigenous reconciliation, as playing out in a food movement organization in Canada, which has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*. Chapter Five presents the second manuscript, which uses the lens of theories of change to explore how decolonial prefiguration can support food movements in addressing their Eurocentric bias through personal learning and organizational change. This manuscript is intended for publication in the journal *Settler Colonial Studies*. Chapter Six concludes by situating this research as aligned with and emergent from the current uprising of Indigenous resurgence and Black rebellion, while pointing to future directions to expand upon this work. Throughout, I have taken care to avoid redundancy, and rather than repeating information, I point to where it is taken up more completely elsewhere in this thesis.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### 1.1 Methods of Review

The literature review for this research was conducted in three phases. The initial phase was conducted between September of 2018 and February of 2019, casting a wide net to do a general survey of food movements and IFS with the goal of identifying a direction for this research that would contribute new insights to their intersection. Once the focus of this research was identified and the majority of data was collected, a second phase of the literature review was conducted between November of 2019 and May of 2020. By then, the initial analysis of data collected pointed to more specific topics that needed to be addressed through the literature, in particular the literature on Indigenous resurgence and reconciliation theory, settler colonial studies and critical whiteness studies. The third and final phase of this review was carried out between May and August, 2020 with the goal of updating the various sections with recent publications and bridging the different bodies of literature reviewed in earlier phases. This phasic approach ensured that the literature consulted was sufficiently focused to show how the present research responds and expands upon current thought, while also being broad enough in scope to provide context and an understanding of the wider implications of this work. This three-stage approach also ensured that I drew on the most up-to-date sources, which was particularly important as this research occurred during a period of massive uprising against racism and colonialism across Turtle Island (as discussed in Chapter Six, Conclusion).

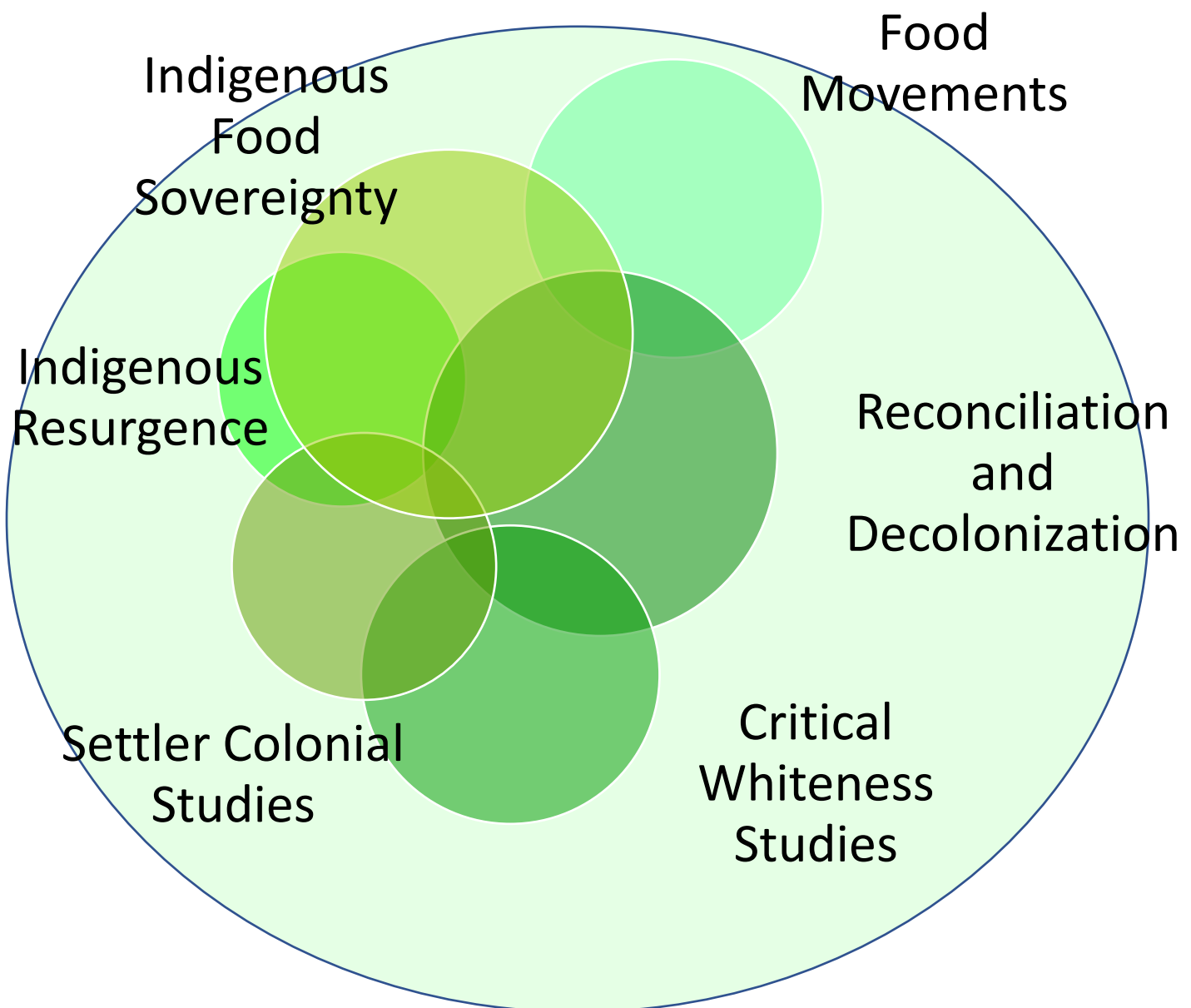
During Phase One, I principally searched for relevant literature using the EBSCO-hosted Sociological Index (SOCIndex), a large, multidisciplinary and easy to use platform with a focus on sociological literature. After experimenting with different keywords, the combinations that turned up the most relevant articles were: 1) “Food movement\*” AND justice OR race OR colonial\* OR equity\*; 2) noft(“food movement”) AND noft(justice OR race OR colonial\* OR equity\*) AND noft(land OR territory); and 3) “Food movement\*” AND “Indigenous food sovereignty”. Following these searches, I followed the citation trail of the articles closest to my topic and in this way was able to find a satisfying range of articles. During Phases Two and Three, I moved away from keyword searches and followed the literature referenced by the articles closest to the focus of this research, as well as literature that was suggested to me by research participants, research mentors, colleagues and friends.

This research looks at the intersection of racism and settler colonialism in a specific social movement, positioned from a white/settler social location. As such, the relevant literature is inherently cross-disciplinary and my review needed to be bounded by clear criteria in order to ensure that the most relevant literature was consulted while not getting lost in the many different bodies of literature that could be considered pertinent. I have prioritized relatively recent, well-cited articles from well-known journals, particularly those focused on Canada and North America. This review principally covers academic, peer-reviewed journal articles and books, with a particular focus on food movement praxis, that is to say where theory is grounded in action. Indeed, there is a close relationship between food movement policy and advocacy associations on national and international levels on the one hand and academic researchers on the other, providing a rich literature grounded in practice. Recognizing the limitations inherent in my own white/settler positionality, I focused on the work of Indigenous and racialized authors. Figure 1 expresses visually the different bodies of literature consulted in this review. The size of the circles represents the relative importance of each body of literature to this study. The position of the circles shows the relationship between the different bodies of literature, with the degree

of overlap indicating the extent to which the one engages the other. With the wide range of literature relevant to this study, I bounded my scope to the various intersections among the different bodies. The large circle encompassing all small circles represents the contribution of this study in bringing these different conversations together through a case study exploring the way that they engage each other in practice.

**Figure 1**

**Relationships Between Literature Consulted**





Following this discussion of the methods used to conduct the present literature review, I now point to where in this manuscript-based thesis the particular sections can be found. In the present section, I present a general overview of food movements and their literature, discussing some of the most common approaches and goals that these multi-faceted movements adopt to provide the overall context for this work. While many authors argue that IFS is not a food movement approach, per se, but rather a strategy of Indigenous resurgence, I provide here an introduction to its framing here, and the way IFS connects to food movement literature and settler colonial studies. A more thorough exploration of the particular approaches to IFS that connect it to the larger project of Indigenous resurgence is presented in section 4.2 of Manuscript One. The literature on Indigenous resurgence as well as Indigenous – settler reconciliation and the related concept of ethical space is examined in section 4.4 of Manuscript One, while section 5.1.3 of Manuscript Two provides an introduction to the related literature on decolonization. In section 4.2 of Manuscript One, I also provide examples of the way that resurgence and reconciliation are being broached in food movements in North America. After this introduction to IFS, I then set the scene for the societal context of these movements through a brief review of the literature in settler colonial studies, with a deeper examination of the particular implications for settler decolonization found in section 5.1.3 of Manuscript Two. How to get there from here implies a theory of change - an understanding of how change happens - and the literature on the use of theories of change as a framework for social action is examined in section 5.1.2 of Manuscript Two.

## 1.2 Food Movements and Their Literature

Despite being enshrined in multiple international instruments which Canada has signed and ratified (United Nations, 2020), the right to food has not been upheld equally among the different peoples of and on these lands, and Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour experience food insecurity at rates far higher than white people (First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2017, described more fully in section 5.1 of Manuscript Two). Food movements are thus a forum through which multiple groups seek to address the lived experience of inequity (Holt-Giménez & Wang, 2011). Food movements are social movements mobilizing for change in food systems, described by sociologists Jeffery Haydu and Tad Skotnicki (2016) as any “collective challenges to the cost, fairness, safety, or healthfulness (personal and social) of the foods we eat” (p. 348).

Ranging from local to international spheres, food movements take on different shapes in different places. In Canada, they have largely been focused on agrarian reform and access to nutritious, local food (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Morrison, 2011). While the literature focusing on the different concerns that are assembled under the “food movement” umbrella and describing specific food initiatives is vast, there is very little scholarship on food movements themselves or the way that these individual initiatives may be connected (Haydu & Skotnicki, 2016; C. Z. Levkoe, 2014). A thorough review of this siloed literature would include such topics as local food, nutrition, environmental sustainability, workers’ rights, agrarian reform, food access, land rights and alternative distribution models, just to name a few.

Despite their diversity, these various food initiatives and approaches are not acting in isolation. In his 2014 study of Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs) in Canada, Charles Levkoe (2014) found that there has been increased collaboration between individual AFIs and provincial food networks since the 1970s. Contrary to commonly held assumptions, he found that AFIs do not act in isolation but are part of wider mobilizations through robust social movement networks. As such, he describes the food

movement as a network of networks: multi-scaled and cross sectorial. As an alliance of food movement actors in Canada, this description applies well to Food Secure Canada – the organization at the heart of the present case study - which Levkoe names as a leader of food movements at the national level.

Collaboration between AFIs may be increasing, however a thorough analysis by influential food justice activist Eric Holt-Giménez and human geographer Yi Wang (2011) of the main approaches to food systems change shows that food movements are by no means coordinated or even necessarily coherent and are segmented along racial and class lines. They conclude that the various approaches to addressing various food movement goals have contradictory political stances, with some proposing small tweaks to the dominant food systems, while others call for a total dismantling and reconstruction from the ground up. The most influential of these approaches have been food security, food justice and food sovereignty.

### ***1.2.1 Food Security***

The term “food security” was introduced in 1974 at the World Food Conference, though it was only brought into common usage in the 1980s. It is commonly defined as existing “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (World Food Summit, 1996). White settler food justice researcher and activist Anelyse Weiler and coauthors (2015) explain that since its conception, the concept of food security has been used as a guide for many neoliberal international and state interventions and has been used to justify trade liberalization policies by the likes of the World Trade Organization and the World Bank. According to them, food security is reformist, proposing limited changes within a dominant capitalist framework.

White settler food researchers Michael W. Hamm and Anne Bellows (2003) analyze the application of the food security approach to the community level. They find that at this level, the discourse around food security emphasizes solutions at the community scale, rather than at the individual level, a departure from standard neoliberal levels of intervention. They propose the following definition to community food security (CFS): “CFS is defined as a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (p. 37). In addition to shifting the scale from individual to community, Hamm and Bellows argue that CFS incorporates a focus on human and economic rights, empowerment and an attention to the sustainable use of natural resources in food production. Nevertheless, Holt-Giménez and Wang (2011) argue that despite the increased range of concern of CFS, the food security approach remains largely reformist, with partnerships often formed between community organizations and government and industry, which have a stake in maintaining the status quo. They support their argument by showing that the solutions envisioned by community food security are largely market-based (for example, farmers’ markets and community-supported agriculture buying programs) and tend to try to teach individuals to make good food choices and to learn food skills rather than address the underlying causes of food insecurity. As such, Holt-Giménez and Wang conclude that CFS activism is largely aimed at increasing food aid, rather than challenging the root causes of food insecurity.

### ***1.2.2 Food Justice***

According to scholar of urban and environmental policy Robert Gottlieb and food activist Anupama Joshi (2013), food justice is concerned with “ensuring that the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten, are shared fairly” (p.6). Holt-Giménez and Wang (2011) situate food justice as politically located between reformist calls for food security and radical calls for food sovereignty. They show once again the impact of origins on theory and practice. They describe the food justice approach as emerging from environmental justice movements, working-class communities of colour organizing around diet-related diseases, critiques of racism in the food system and within food movements themselves. Indeed, despite the disproportionate burden of food injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour, and the ongoing structural racism in food systems, food movement organizations and the discourses they shape lack the diversity of the communities they are supposed to work for and are by and large dominated by white settlers (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Billings & Cabbil, 2011; Guthman, 2008; Moore & Swisher, 2015). Many authors argue that the potential for food system transformation has been hampered by white-dominated movements that have been ineffectual at addressing the root causes of food insecurity in Canada- settler colonialism, racial capitalism and the concomitant exploitation of labour and land (Cidro et al., 2015; Annette Aurélie Desmarais & Wittman, 2014a; Gilpin & Hayes, 2020; Matties, 2016; Penniman, 2018; Skinner et al., 2016). Some go further, indicting white/settler-led food movements as being a colonial force themselves by reproducing the very colonialism and white supremacy behind food injustice (Corntassel, 2012; Côté, 2016; Grey & Patel, 2015; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; Kepkiewicz & Rotz, 2018). While some food justice scholars and activists call for greater inclusion of racialized people in food movements and food organizations as a response to these critiques (Moore & Swisher, 2015), most authors identify a need to move beyond inclusion in white-dominated spaces to work instead to “dismantle the cultures that oppress communities of color on a daily basis” (Garzo Montalvo, 2015, p. 128). Alkon and Guthman (2017) explain that when whitestream food movement organizations reach out to racialized groups, seeking to make their movements more inclusive, they encounter long-standing struggles for equity that they have ignored that are “led by farm and other food workers, by marginalized farmers, and by communities lacking geographic and economic access to healthy food. . . . work(ing) to change not only the way we eat, but the ways we live, work, and govern ourselves’ (2). A more thorough discussion of these critiques and the responses is found in section 5.1.1, of Manuscript Two.

### ***1.2.3 Food Sovereignty***

In opposition to the limited scope of change addressed within food security approaches and the limits to inclusion as a response to food injustice, the concept of food sovereignty has taken root. In their analysis of the different approaches used by food movements, Holt-Giménez and Wang (2011) situate food sovereignty as being far more radical than food security and an appropriate response to critiques of food (in)justice through its assertion that food, land and water are inalienable human rights and its support for the dismantling of the current global food system. Indian American scholar of social justice movements, Raj Patel (2009) takes the framework of ‘rights’ one step further, arguing that it is so central to food sovereignty that it can be conceived to be largely about the right to the right to food.

The concept of food sovereignty became popularized after it was introduced in 1996 at the World Food Summit by peasant farmers belonging to La Via Campesina, an international peasant

movement based largely in the Global South. Settler scholars of reconciliation and decolonization theory Sam Grey and Raj Patel (2015) argue that La Via Campesina's roots in peasant land movements means that food sovereignty has very different origins from food security's neoliberal base and make it much better suited to challenge the structural roots of food insecurity, in particular for Indigenous Peoples. As Desmarais and Wittman put it (2014), "La Vía Campesina's notion of food sovereignty emerged in the international public space that peasants, Indigenous peoples and farmers created and consolidated as a transnational community of resistance" (p.1157). The food sovereignty approach has expanded upon food security by bringing previously ignored considerations to the fore, such as access to land, the right to not only consume but also produce, and an increased focus on the role of women. Desmarais and Wittman go so far as claiming that "food sovereignty proponents seek fundamental social change, a transformation of society as a whole that can be achieved through the vehicle of food and agriculture" (p. 1156).

Despite the promising features highlighted by the above authors, others focus on the limits of food sovereignty's conceptualization, especially when applied to settler colonial contexts like Canada. White settler Lauren Kepkiewicz is a leading scholar on the entanglements of food movements with settler colonialism in Canada. Embodying the collaboration between academics and practitioners, she has been involved with prominent national food movement organizations in Canada and her criticism comes from an insiders' perspective. Kepkiewicz and co-authors (2015) show that the discourse around food sovereignty in Canada focuses on settler agriculture, largely ignoring Indigenous rights to traditional foodways and the lands upon which they depend. They use several policy examples to make explicit the ways by which food movement discourse in general, and at FSC in particular, normalize settler colonization to the detriment of Indigenous food systems. Taking this one step further, Grey and Patel's (2015) discussion of the anti-colonial potential of the food sovereignty approach points to an inherent contradiction to the definition of food sovereignty proposed by La Via Campesina: food sovereignty is described as a country's or a people's right, but peoples are not countries and these are often in conflict, especially in systems of settler colonialization. Nevertheless, they argue that food sovereignty is the food movement approach most compatible with Indigenous priorities, an argument also supported by others (Bagelman, 2018; Delormier et al., 2017).

Through this exploration of the literature theorizing the three major approaches within food movements, we see the limits within which they are bounded. While each has helped address parts of food injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour, none are positioned to address settler colonialism or racial capitalism, which continue to disrupt their food systems today. Faced with these limitations, we now turn to a brief introduction to Indigenous understandings of food sovereignty, which will be fleshed out further in section 4.2 of Manuscript One. The literature on IFS has not fully explicated its potential for addressing the food injustice experienced by Black people or people of colour. However, through its contribution to the wider project of decolonization, which I will argue in Manuscript Two to be necessary to counter the exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour and their lands that contributes to their food insecurity, in this thesis I position IFS as the most appropriate path to challenging the impacts of settler colonialism on food systems on Turtle Island and opening up space for the decolonized futures at the heart of food sovereignty for all peoples.

### 1.3 Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Although the language and concept of food sovereignty is relatively new to food movements, this has been the lived reality of Indigenous Nations for millennia. The diverse Indigenous Nations living on Turtle Island have developed a wide range of hunting, gathering, fishing and cultivation practices that “have shaped supported and sustained [their] distinct cultures, economies and ecosystems... [and are] based on [their] responsibilities to uphold [their] distinct cultures and relationships to the land and food systems” (Morrison, 2011, p. 97). Despite centuries of colonial intervention and the devastating impacts these have had on Indigenous Peoples- described in detail in section 4.2 of Manuscript One- many elements of Indigenous food systems have been maintained (First Nations Health Council, 2009), and Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island are investing in their revitalization. Instead of adapting the language and priorities of non-Indigenous food movements, Indigenous scholars and activists outline a framework for IFS along very different lines. While IFS is described more thoroughly later, I provide a short introduction here as it is central to understanding the particular context for this research.

The British Columbia Food Systems Network Working Group on IFS, coordinated by Secwepemc author and activist Dawn Morrison, has outlined four principles of IFS, all of which distinguish it in form and focus from food sovereignty as it is generally conceived in food movements:

- 1) Food as sacred: Food is understood to be a sacred gift from the Creator, the right to which cannot be restrained by colonial law or policies. Indigenous food sovereignty is thus achieved through the continuance of sacred relationships of reciprocity to the land, plants and animals.
- 2) Participation: Food sovereignty is achieved and maintained through day-to-day actions that renew and reaffirm these sacred relationships with the land, plants and animals that become food.
- 3) Self-Determination: Indigenous food sovereignty requires the freedom and ability to decide what and how much to harvest (hunt, fish, grow, gather) to meet needs for healthy and culturally-adapted foods. It also requires the freedom from dependence of market foods and corporately-controlled food system.
- 4) Legislation and Policy: Indigenous food sovereignty requires policy reform in forestry, fisheries, rangeland environmental conservation, health, agriculture, and community development to reconcile colonial policies with Indigenous food and cultural values. (Morrison, 2011, p. 100–101).

Despite the many concerns they share (Kepkiewicz & Giacomini, 2019), settler scholar Agnes Pawlowska-Mainville (2020) argues that IFS does not fit the agrarian structure through which *La Via Campesina* understands food sovereignty, aligning with Indigenous authors and activists who identify IFS as being distinct from other food movement approaches and not merely a subset of ‘food sovereignty’ understood more broadly (Corntassel, 2012; Kamal et al., 2015; Morrison, 2011). Given that disproportionately high levels of food insecurity and chronic disease in Indigenous communities are a direct result of colonial disruption to traditional food systems (Grey & Patel, 2015; Skinner et al., 2016), some argue that IFS cannot be conceived within the colonial paradigm central to food movements, particularly on Turtle Island (Leblanc & Burnett, 2017). Many authors argue that even the more radical approaches within settler-led food movements have failed to address settler colonialism and its impacts on Indigenous food systems in a meaningful way, often tending to marginalize Indigenous voices and concerns (B. Elliott et al., 2012; Kepkiewicz et al., 2015).

Cherokee academic Jeff Corntassel writes extensively about self-determination and shows the limits of the settler food sovereignty approach. He asserts that rights-based approaches, so central to conceptions of food sovereignty at large “do not offer meaningful restoration of Indigenous homelands and food sovereignty” (2012, p. 93) and as such do not go far enough. Settler food movement scholars Annette Aurélie Desmarais and Hannah Wittman (2014) clearly establish the differences in goals between IFS and the state- and agriculture-centric food sovereignty dominant within the food movement:

Rather than building a new ‘localized’ (and agriculture-centric) food system as an alternative to the global, industrial system – the language of many of the civil society food networks referenced above – Indigenous communities seek to honor, value and protect traditional food practices and networks in the face of ongoing pressures of colonization (p.1165).

Faced with these considerable differences in approach, the literature situates IFS outside of settler dominated food movement discourse in Canada and as more closely tied to larger projects of Indigenous resurgence. Indeed, several authors argue that Indigenous efforts towards food sovereignty often present a challenge to the foundational assumptions of food movements (Corntassel, 2012; Grey & Patel, 2015), and even indict food movements themselves as reifying settler colonialism through their structures and processes (Coté, 2016; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; Kepkiewicz & Rotz, 2018).

#### 1.4 Settler Colonial and Whiteness Studies

There is a growing literature documenting the deliberate disruption of Indigenous foodways in the service of settler colonialism, discussed thoroughly in the section 4.2 of Manuscript One. There is much less written about the impact of settler colonialism on the foodways of Black people and people of colour, which I take up in section 5.1 of Manuscript Two. As I expand upon there, the exploitation of racialized labour and the exploitation of Indigenous land are understood to be at the core of settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2016), as well as at the heart of food systems (Penniman, 2018). These paired forms of exploitation, claimed to be necessary for Canada’s food security (Weiler et al., 2017), contribute to what Sherene Razack (2013), Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi (2011), and Dua (2007) call the perpetuation of white settler nationalism in Canada. Indeed, Canadian settler colonialism is deeply invested in a white state (Ellis, 2018; Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Walia, 2015). From Canada’s first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald’s 1867 declaration that Canada was to be a ‘white man’s country’ (Dua, 2007, p. 446), Mi’kmaq Indigenous studies scholar Bonita Lawrence and feminist and antiracist scholar Enakshi Dua (2005) insist that ‘the Canadian nation-state project was one of white settlement. It displaced Aboriginal peoples and targeted them for physical and cultural extermination to open land for settlers, while marginalizing and restricting the entry into Canada of people of color’ (p. 134). They take anti-racist movements to task for their failure to challenge colonialism, tending to position Indigenous Peoples in a pluralist framework as one more group seeking the recognition of their rights, thus reifying the settler state as arbiter of those rights. Instead, they argue that ‘the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples [needs to be] foundational to their agendas’ (p.137). An important exception to this critique is described by South Asian activist and writer Harsha Walia (2015), who draws on her experience with the migrant rights movement ‘No One Is Illegal’ in Canada to show how justice for migrants can align with decolonization through efforts to challenge the legitimacy of and dismantle the settler colonial structures that oppress both racialized and Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

This deep entanglement of settler colonialism with white supremacy and the resultant disruption to the foodways of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and communities of colour in Canada shine a light on the necessity of drawing on critical whiteness studies to understand white peoples' roles in addressing this racialized oppression. This new field of study is described by Barbara Applebaum (2016) as the "field of scholarship whose aim is to reveal the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege", and that "presumes a certain conception of racism that is connected to white supremacy" (para. 2). This emergent literature will be further explored in section 5.1.3 of Manuscript Two.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### 3.1 Methodological Framework

In this section, I begin by presenting an overview of the methodological approaches that have informed my research process, followed by a description of how these have shaped the specific methods used. My methodological framework is rooted in two complementary approaches to social justice research: decolonizing methodologies and participatory action research, to which I bring a critical feminist orientation. I bring in my own positionality in seeking to understand what a decolonizing methodology might look like for a white settler researcher.

#### 3.1.1 *Decolonizing Research by Settlers?*

When initially designing this project, I was well away of the critiques of white researchers doing extractive research with Indigenous communities. I was familiar with several Indigenous scholars who have articulated what it might look like to decolonize the research process, and these were the starting point I used to orient the research questions and case study approach. The two authors whose work most influenced these early directions are Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson.

In her book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*, Smith (2009) insists that decolonizing research is necessarily politically invested and must be situated within and alongside Indigenous Peoples' struggles for self-determination. She conceptualizes the decolonizing research agenda "as constituting a programme and set of approaches that are situated within the decolonization politics of the indigenous peoples' movement. The agenda is focused strategically on the goal of self-determination of indigenous peoples" (p. 115). In asking how food movements can challenge settler colonization, this research follows the lead of Indigenous efforts towards food sovereignty and within the wider project of decolonization on Turtle Island.

In his book *Research as Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Wilson (2008) describes decolonizing research as being relational, with knowledge being co-created and therefore belonging to everyone involved. In this way, the research process itself seeks to be generative and enriching for participants, who then co-own the knowledge produced and can use it in their lives and with their communities. This sense of relationality was present in interviews, when in addition to asking for the ideas and experiences of the participants, I shared my own in order for the interviews to be a two-way exchange of ideas, a collaboration rather than a simple extraction of their knowledge. This value was brought into this work as well when I returned transcripts to participants after interviews, affirmed that the transcripts were their own property, to be used as they saw fit, and committed to asking for permission before using direct quotes in any of my work. Finally, the value of co-creation informed my sharing of early and late drafts with research participants and several FSC staff and members of its Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as the "Board") in order to enable their participation in not just providing data, but in its analysis and framing as well.

Despite the important guidance these authors provided, both write specifically for Indigenous researchers. As a settler, I can't fully make use of Indigenous methodologies because, as Plains Cree and Saulteaux author Margaret Kovach explains, "Indigenous methodologies require situational



appropriateness, which means that they can only be actualized when the whole context is relevant... situation appropriateness then asks the questions: Do you have an Indigenous worldview, history and experiences? Can you position your process in an Indigenous worldview and framework?' (p.13). In my case, although I have tried to learn from Indigenous Peoples and build relationships with local communities, the answer to both of Kovach's questions is no. I recognized that I needed to imagine what an anti-colonial research methodology might look like for settler researchers.

For this, I turned to settler social work scholar Elizabeth Carlson, who has developed a clearly articulated methodology for settlers attempting to do anti-colonial research (2017). She claims that "settler colonial research which would promote anti-colonial, decolonial, and solidarity content and aims must occur in relationship and dialogue with Indigenous peoples, involve meaningful consultation with and oversight by Indigenous scholars and knowledge keepers, and draw upon work by Indigenous scholars" (p.6). She enumerates eight principles of anti-colonial research methodology for settlers: 1) Resistance to and Subversion of Settler Colonialism; 2) Relational and Epistemic Accountability to Indigenous Peoples; 3) Land/Place Engagement and Accountability; 4) Egalitarian, Participatory, and Community-based Methods; 5) Reciprocity; 6) Self-Determination, Autonomy, and Accountability; 7) Social Location and Reflexivity; and 8) Wholism.

Throughout this research, I have struggled with keeping myself present in the process. By that I mean that I attempted through self-reflexive journaling and discussions with colleagues and friends to be continually aware of the ways that my own positionality, my own socialization and experiences in the world influenced the research design, the data collection and the analysis that came out of it. Rather than trying, from a Eurocentric positivist perspective, to reduce the impact of my specific position in order to try to make this research more easily generalized, I attempted instead to consciously call this influence in, to work with it rather than to bury or deny it. I follow Carlson in her assertion that as a resident and treaty partner occupying Indigenous lands, I am "responsible to learn local Indigenous protocols and to seek to understand Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, languages, and teachings" (p.3) in order to do research in a good way. However, like her, I recognize that because of my socialization as a white settler in a white supremacist society, my ability to see settler colonialism is limited. As Ghana-Canadian anti-racist researcher George J. Sefa Dei (2006) puts it, "the site from which we oppress is the site on which we least cast our gaze"(p.5). This acknowledgement meant for me that it was important to use the wealth of resources already shared by Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour to guide this work, as well as be in conversation with Indigenous and racialized friends and colleagues to readjust along the way. Additionally, in January, 2019, just as this research was beginning to find direction, I co-created a circle for white accountability with a small group of other white people. The group was initially formed to work through Robin DiAngelo's book *White Fragility: Why it's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (2018), however it grew to become a caucus space for us white folk to challenge each other to identify our unconscious racism as it plays out, and to work through discomfort this engenders without relying on the emotional labour of racialized people. This space, though faced with its own limitations, was helpful in expanding the range of the "sites from which I oppress" upon which I was able to "cast my gaze".

### **3.1.2 Participatory Action Research**

The second methodological framework orienting this research is participatory action research (PAR). PAR centers on the collaboration of the researcher and research participants with the explicit

goal of co-creating engaged research leading to action that can contribute to social change (Dudley, 2010). As Wadsworth (2006) describes, in PAR, the researcher become the facilitator of the research process rather than its director: the research question comes from participants; research design and methods are developed together with participants who are considered to be co-researchers; disparities of power are addressed so that all may both speak and be heard accurately; and desired results include new insights that are gained by all relevant parties and are put into practice.

The roots of PAR can be found in Paulo Freire's work with oppressed people in Brazil, where he makes the link between education and political transformation. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005), first released in 1970, Freire introduces the concept of "praxis," a cyclical process of planning, action and reflection. The term PAR was proposed by Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda in the 1970s, drawing on Paulo Freire's work in order to develop a new approach to research that might allow it to actively strengthen political and democratic movements. Action is indeed central to PAR, as can be summed up in German social psychologist Kurt Lewin's famous maxim "No research without action, no action without research (cited by Adelman, 1997, p. 81)."

As a methodological framework, PAR is complementary to the decolonizing methodologies described above. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2009) explains that the two are compatible in that both seek to make a positive difference to lives of people, and in that both assume that the people in a community have skills, priorities, questions, etc. that can enhance (or undermine) any community-based project. PAR's co-researcher approach echoes Wilson's (2008) assertion that decolonizing research is co-created. Furthermore, Freire (2005) claims that research is not neutral, but by transforming the research process itself through praxis, it can be made into an act of solidarity, very much in line with Smith's (2009) assertion that decolonizing research is inherently political.

The framework of participatory action research has guided the design of this research in several ways:

- The research questions that I initially developed were considered to be a work in progress that presented overall themes to the partner organization and research participants, but were adjusted and refined based on collaborators' input and priorities;
- The research design is based on a collaborative process that began in action (a protest and a walk-out at the Assembly), continued with a collective design for data collection (post-Assembly questionnaires designed by FSC Board, and the design of additional data collection methods developed with FSC Board members), and has the explicit goal of creating social change (within FSC itself, in the Assemblies that FSC convenes, within food movements on Turtle Island, and more broadly in settler colonial societies);
- Research participants and the partner organization participated in defining the methodology for the data analysis and framing through presentations and discussions of early findings to both the organization's staff and Board, as well as sharing early drafts of both manuscripts with both research participants and select staff and Board members;
- New insights that emerge from this work will support the organization's ongoing work in addressing racism and colonialism in food systems, food movements, and in the organization itself;

- The research is grounded in the practical constraints and opportunities of doing decolonizing work in the real world, with, for example, the not always compatible expectations from diverse stakeholders and the limits of project-based funding.

Despite the relevance of the PAR framework to the present research, the research process did not embody the full scope of the PAR approach. In particular, the idea of reducing the difference of roles between the researcher and the research participants was aspirational, but not easily translated into practice with the organization's staff and Board already stretched thin. Instead, I saw my role as contributing labour in the form of a research project that was guided, if not enacted, by participants and the partner organization.

### ***3.1.3 Studying Across***

A final guiding influence for this work is Kim TallBear's (2014) discussion of what she calls 'studying across.' For her, studying across brings an ethic of care to feminist anthropologist Laura Nader's call to 'study up' by studying the colonizer rather than the colonized. She argues that "if what we want is democratic knowledge production that serves not only those who inquire and their institutions, but also those who are inquired upon (and appeals to "knowledge for the good of all" do not cut it), we must soften that boundary erected long ago between those who know versus those from whom the raw materials of knowledge production are extracted' (p.2). She describes her own turn away from studying those in power to "standing with" the communities in which she is invested, for which she cares through orienting her research questions to uplift their work and ease their struggles. Following TallBear's suggestion, I treated the research process as an opportunity to build relationships with others in my field, as "a professional networking process with colleagues (not subjects), as an opportunity for conversation and sharing of knowledge, not simply data gathering" (p.2). She insists that for a researcher to "stand with" their research participants, they must risk learning and, even, "being altered" right along with them, a practice which contrasts greatly with the ethic of "giving back", and instead reifies the researcher/researched divide through well-intentioned liberalism. With these concerns in mind, I centered this project on my own community of practice, food movements, in which I feel invested, where the long-term relationships might be possible, and where I feel best positioned to contribute to change. In "reversing the gaze" in this way, I have wrapped myself up in the critical analysis I bring, for my own struggles are no less than others in my position doing food movement work.

### **3.2 From Methodology to Methods**

In order for this research to be consistent in both its practices and outcomes, I did my best to adapt standard research protocols to better reflect the anti-colonial and decolonial aims of the study. This was not always successful, and inevitably the methods used influenced the data itself, for example through a certain self-selection of folx already familiar with academic research (see below). I received ethical approval from Concordia's Office of Research in February, 2019 through certificate number 30010746, which was subsequently renewed in August, 2019.

### 3.2.1 Questionnaire Analysis

This stage of the research began in December, 2018. In the days following the Assembly, and before we entered into partnership, FSC sent out an online qualitative questionnaire to the 794 registered Assembly participants with hopes of gathering the full range of feedback and experiences (see Appendix 1 for the English-language questionnaire). After the significant concerns raised at the Assembly, the standard post-Assembly questionnaire used in previous years was completely revised by Board members before being sent to Assembly participants, making space for more open questions.

A series of 16 questions was developed by the FSC Board and included in the online questionnaire before I became involved. Nine questions sought to unpack personal experiences and suggestions regarding the Assembly and seven questions sought to understand the respondents' identities and background experiences with FSC and food movements. While respondents were invited to identify themselves and leave contact information if so desired, the majority of identity questions were optional, and questionnaires were anonymized before I accessed them for analysis.

Accompanying the questionnaire was a letter from the Board to Assembly participants in which the Board acknowledged the impacts of systemic racism, colonialism and oppression within food movements, and reflected that many felt the Assembly was not a safe or welcoming space for them. In this letter, the Board stated their commitment to addressing these issues in a transparent way, and that the questionnaire was seen as a first step. In total, 124 questionnaires were completed (103 in English, and 21 in French).

Once the deadline for questionnaire completion had passed, I signed a research agreement with FSC (see Appendix 2) and sought ethics approval by Concordia's Office of Research. When ethics approval was granted (see Appendix 3 for ethics certificate), I joined a team of researchers with longstanding relationships to FSC and a research assistant hired on a short contract (see Table 1 below), to develop a consistent methodology for sorting and summarizing the survey responses. Along with the hired research assistant, I was responsible for reading, sorting and summarizing the responses in order to produce a report for FSC staff and Board members.

**Table 1**

#### **Research Team for Post-Assembly Questionnaire Analysis**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institutional Affiliation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Heather Elliott	Concordia University <i>Graduate student</i>	Research Collaborator: Questionnaire coding and summarizing.
Joyce Liao	University of British Columbia <i>Undergraduate student</i>	Research Collaborator: Questionnaire coding and summarizing.

Susanna Klassen	University of British Columbia <i>PhD student</i> <i>FSC Board member</i>	Research Advisor: Conceptualization of questionnaire with FSC Board, development of methodology for questionnaire coding, liaison with and representative of the FSC Board.
Charles Levkoe	Lakehead University Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Food Systems  <i>Associate Professor</i>	Research Advisor: Development of methodology for questionnaire coding.
Amanda Wilson	Saint-Paul University <i>Assistant Professor</i> <i>Co-lead for the Community Academic Collaborative for Food Sovereignty</i>	Research Advisor: Development of methodology for questionnaire coding.

Using NVivo software, themes were identified based on the interests of the FSC Board and staff, as well as information emerging from the questionnaires themselves. Responses were categorized within one or more of these eleven themes, as well as classified as either ‘Positive’, ‘Negative’ or relating to ‘Change’. For a more detailed description of the themes and how they were identified, please refer to section 5.2 of Manuscript Two.

Following this sorting process, Joyce Liao and I summarized the responses in each theme, noting the frequency with which the response was made to identify key trends. This detailed information was assembled in a *Summary of Responses by Theme*, intended for FSC staff and Board members with specific mandates related to a theme, as well as for those who want to understand the results in more depth and detail. In addition to the detailed summary by theme, a more concise *Executive Summary* was prepared in order to bring forward the key themes that emerged from the questionnaires (which can be consulted in Appendix 4). These two documents were submitted to FSC Board and staff members on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Although it was ultimately a decision of the Board, I, and other researchers on the design team urged the Board to share the report with Assembly participants to align with the ethic of accountability outlined earlier as part of Carlson’s anti-colonial research methodologies, and as a way to reciprocate the efforts respondents had made in filling out the questionnaire. The *Executive Summary* was made available to all Assembly participants on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

### 3.2.2 Interviews

In complement to the questionnaires, I performed ten interviews with past and present FSC staff (n=3), members of FSC’s Board (n=5), other academic (n=2) and community partners (n=2) and one active member of another national food movement organization but not directly involved with FSC (the above categories are not mutually exclusive). Interviewees were initially selected based on their involvement with Assembly organizing and the events in question, and then through snowball sampling

as we were referred to others (see Appendix 5 for a template of the recruitment emails sent). Although it was not intentional, or even noted at the time, I have realized the extent to which the methods used and the selection process have privileged participants who are familiar with academia: of the ten interviewees, five either hold PhDs or are working towards one, three have master's degrees and two either have or are working towards bachelor's degrees. This is certainly not representative of the range of experiences and education of those involved in food movements, but has facilitated the process of informed consent and has certainly provided for insightful conversations! Although the high degree of education of most research participants may impact my results, there is a strong presence of academics at FSC's Assemblies, and the interviews are not at odds with the questionnaire responses obtained from a broader sample of Assembly participants. A consent form approved by Concordia's Office of Research was shared with participants and signed prior to the interviews.

While these interviews were conducted with the knowledge and support of FSC, they were designed and coordinated by me in order to add more depth and nuance than the questionnaires had allowed and respond more directly to the focus of this project. In order to respect their self-determination and autonomy, interviewees were given the option of keeping their identities confidential (which eight of ten chose to do) and were able to choose the time and space (in-person or virtual) that suited them. Because interviewees were located across the country, only two interviews were done in person- one in a bar and one at the interviewee's office- while four were done using online teleconference software (Zoom) and four via the telephone.

The interviews were semi-structured, lasting between 1h and 1h45, and while some basic questions were common to all interviews, the majority of the questions were specific to the interviewee's positionality (i.e. identities, roles at FSC). See Appendix 6 for a draft interview guide. The interviews with FSC staff and Board were focused on understanding the efforts made to engage with Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour and respond to their concerns both at the Assembly and in their advocacy and movement-building work in general. In line with the tenets of anti-colonial research, I put particular care in reaching out to Indigenous people and people of colour involved in FSC in different capacities in order to better understand their specific racialized experiences with the organization in particular and with food movements in general. In total, I spoke to four Indigenous people, two people of colour and four white people between April, 2019 and January, 2020. Three people to whom I reached out for an interview refused the invitation. I offered gifts or compensation (\$50/hour including preparation time) to all interviewees for both our interviews and subsequent reviews and other follow-ups.

I recorded audio from the interviews on my telephone or computer. Following each interview, I did a verbatim transcription of the recording using InqScribe software and returned the transcription to interviewees. To respect the interviewee's intellectual property and self-determination, I informed them that they could at all times remove or edit anything that they had said, and that the transcription belonged to them and they could do with it as they willed. I assured interviewees that I would ask for their permission before I quote them (directly or indirectly) in published material, and offered to share draft manuscripts for their review, and so that they could participate in the resulting analysis. Five research participants and three FSC staff reviewed and shared comments for the first manuscript, and five research participants and one FSC Board member reviewed and commented on the second. Both manuscripts and the thesis body itself have been approved for publication by FSC, as per our research agreement. For a description of the methods used to analyze interview data, please refer to Section 4.3 of Manuscript One.

### ***3.2.3 Participant Observation***

An important third element to this research process was participant observation. This was done in order to provide more context in terms of the processes internal to the organization and its public messaging. As I had access early on to questionnaire responses, I was tuned in to the racialized dynamics at play at the Assembly, and sought to understand how these played out in the organization beyond that particular instance.

For the purposes of this project, my participant observation at FSC consisted of three levels: 1) Participating in several FSC events in person and online; 2) Meeting and discussing with various staff and Board members outside of interviews; 3) Reading newsletters and other public communications (Facebook, blog posts); 4) Reading internal notes and summaries of staff and Board meetings; and 5) Participating in food movement events outside of FSC for context and comparison (see Appendix 7 for a table of events attended). Although more recent conversations and feedback on drafts of my writing have certainly contributed to the overall context from my analysis, the formal participant observation was performed from September, 2018 through December, 2019. When attending events, I took several key notes discretely to avoid the at times awkward feeling for other participants of being studied. These sparse notes were fleshed out shortly after the event, as well as for other online or textual observation, where I took care to note not only the relevant action or information that was shared, but also who was present, the general feeling at the event and my own feelings. While I did not perform a formal analysis of these notes, I have referred back to them many times as the direction of this research came into focus and to make sure that analyses developed later on in the process align with observations made earlier. Importantly, these notes also served as a tool for self-reflection, as again and again I questioned how to do this work in a way that would be appropriate to my position, respectful of the discomfort- mine and others- of receiving difficult feedback, and constructively forward-looking.

I realized mid-way in that although I was still subscribed to receive FSC's monthly newsletters, my yearly membership had been expired for several years. I rejoined as an individual member in June, 2019. Although this was largely a symbolic act- there is little difference between subscribers and members outside of voting at the Annual General Assembly- it was important to me to show my support for FSC's work, to "stand with," despite taking a (constructively) critical stance.

## Chapter Four: Manuscript One

### Resurgence, Refusal and Reconciliation in a Food Movement Organization: A Case Study of Food Secure Canada's 2018 Assembly<sup>2</sup>

#### *Abstract*

Indigenous food systems have been sites of deliberate and sustained disruption in the service of the settler colonial project on Turtle Island. The revitalization of traditional foodways is a powerful and popular means through which Indigenous Peoples are practicing cultural and political resurgence. At this crucial moment of societal reckoning reinforced by recent anti-racist uprisings and Indigenous Land Back actions, food movements have an important role to play in addressing ongoing colonial impacts on Indigenous food systems in support of Indigenous Food Sovereignty and as a way to advance reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous Peoples. Since its founding in 2005, Food Secure Canada (FSC) has become a national leader in food movements in Canada and its biennial Assembly is arguably the largest food movement event in the country. Despite its sustained engagement with Indigenous Peoples and significant efforts towards inclusion, its 2018 Assembly saw Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour expressing important concerns, culminating in a walk-out on the last day. To understand how these events might guide transformative reconciliation in and through food movements, we analyzed 124 post-Assembly qualitative questionnaires, held 10 interviews, and analyzed organizational archives, in addition to participant observation throughout the following year. This research shows the actions taken at the Assembly to be a refusal of settler structures and processes, and the creation of a caucus space for Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour as an act of resurgence. Engagement with FSC by a number of those involved with the protests throughout the year that followed, and the resultant commitment to center decolonization in FSC's work, reveal the intimate connection between resurgence and reconciliation. These acts of generative refusal and resurgence are an essential part of efforts towards reconciliation without assimilation, aligned in a shared struggle towards the decolonized futures at the heart of food sovereignty for all.

#### *Keywords*

Food movements; Social Movement Organizations; Reconciliation; Resurgence; Refusal; Settler colonialism; Indigenous Food Sovereignty; Ethical Space; Organizational development.

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Food systems are networks of relationships, connecting different peoples to each other and to the land (Whyte, 2017). Because all food systems are inherently land-based<sup>3</sup>, they have been powerful sites

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<sup>2</sup> This manuscript was prepared following the guidelines of the *Journal for Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*, where it was accepted for publication on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> We use the term land inclusively to refer to territory, soils, air, waters and all the life that they support.



of interference and disruption in the service of settler colonialism (Leblanc & Burnett, 2017; Matties, 2016; Turner & Spalding, 2018). Food systems build interdependence across communities and as such, they are also places where both resurgence and reconciliation come to life in practice (Coté, 2016; Delormier, Horn-Miller, McComber, & Marquis, 2017; Hoover, 2017; Jäger, Ferguson, Huntington, Johnston, & Johnston, 2019; Kamal, Linklater, Thompson, Dipple, & Ithinto Mechisowin Committee, 2015; Levkoe, Ray, & McLaughlin, 2019; Martens, 2015; Morrison, 2011). Food activist and scholar of community sustainability, Kyle Whyte (Potawatomi) (2017), describes this property of food as being “hub-like, in the sense of a centripetal force pulling certain people, nonhumans and ecosystems together in ways that promote collective action” (p.10). His work on Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) movements shows that food systems engage Indigenous peoples and settlers<sup>4</sup> in relationships of interdependence with each other and with the Earth.

The social movements that coalesce around food engage these cross-cultural relationships in support of many social and environmental goals. Food movements bring together a diverse collection of actors, practices and discourses which food systems scholar, Gail Feenstra (2002), describes as “a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies—one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption [are] integrated to enhance the economic, environmental, and local health of a particular place” (p.100). While they have long sought more sustainable ways of relating to the land (Blay-Palmer, 2010; Feenstra, 2002), in the past decade food movements have increasingly begun to address social inequalities reproduced in movements that have been dominated by White, middle-class actors (Garzo Montalvo, 2015; Guthman, 2008; Kepkiewicz & Rotz, 2018; Matties, 2016; Moore & Swisher, 2015; Slocum, 2006).<sup>5</sup> Food movements provide particularly poignant sites for the work of reconciliation for two reasons. Firstly, we believe that the long history of colonial interventions in Indigenous food systems has left a legacy for which settlers must take responsibility. Secondly, food movements’ paired goals of working for sustainability on the land and justice between peoples parallels what political scientist James Tully (2018) calls the two interrelated projects of reconciliation: reconciling Indigenous Peoples and settlers to each other and reconciling all peoples to the land.

In this article, we examine how relationships of interdependence between Indigenous peoples and settlers make food systems a potentially powerful site of transformative reconciliation, despite a long history of colonial interference. As White settlers – a graduate student and food movement activist and two academic researchers, working for food sovereignty, we focus on communities of which we are a part, and to which we ourselves are accountable, focusing on a particular “moment of reckoning” that occurred at Food Secure Canada’s 2018 Assembly and the subsequent response elicited. Food Secure Canada (FSC) is an influential national food movement organization in Canada. Although many, if not most, of the 124 Assembly participants who completed the post-Assembly questionnaire (out of about 800 total participants) shared positive experiences of the Assembly, a number of Indigenous people,

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<sup>4</sup> We use the word “settler” inclusively to refer to all non-Indigenous peoples living on Turtle Island, as proposed by Regan (2010) and developed by Lowman and Barker (2015). In using this term, we do not wish to reproduce a binary that centers whiteness to the exclusion of recent immigrants, Black people and other people of colour; rather, we want to highlight that unless these peoples are subscribing to Indigenous laws and protocols, they are citizens of the settler state.

<sup>5</sup>It is to make space for the diverse sites of struggle of those most often excluded from white-dominated food movements that we refer to food movements in the plural.

Black people and people of colour<sup>6</sup> raised significant protest, ranging from the disruption of a prominent public plenary to a walk-out of the final day, followed by two separate letters of concern sent by groups of food movement practitioners (Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour).

At FSC's 2018 Assembly, protesters refused what reportedly felt like settler-oriented structures and processes. In this article, we use this particular moment of refusal to gain insight into the challenges, tensions and disconnects of doing the work of reconciliation. We understand refusal not only as the refusal of colonialism, but as the concomitant generation of a reality which centers the material and spiritual needs of Indigenous communities (Simpson, 2014) and, as such, part of the movement of Indigenous resurgence. By resurgence we broadly refer to practices of Indigenous self-determination and cultural revitalization (Asch et al., 2018; Corntassel, 2012). Our use of reconciliation is in relation to the reconciliation of settlers and Indigenous Peoples, as well as the reconciliation of all people with the land (Asch et al., 2018). In doing so, we examine the dynamic tension between resurgence and reconciliation in practice at FSC. We accomplish this by first situating this particular moment in the context of food movements and IFS. We consider the theoretical framework of resurgence (Alfred, 2009; Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2017) and how it is being enacted through the revitalization of Indigenous food systems, as well as the frameworks of reconciliation (Asch, Borrows, & Tully, 2018; Regan, 2018) and ethical space (Ermine, 2007). To show how this is happening in practice, we share case studies of the few food movement organizations who have, like FSC, attempted to bring reconciliation to and through their work. After establishing this groundwork, we describe recent protests at FSC and their context, as well as FSC's ensuing response. In our discussion, we identify resurgence and its assertion of difference as necessary to create the ethical space needed for reconciliation to be transformative and avoid the pitfalls of assimilation, for which frameworks for reconciliation are often critiqued (Alfred, 2009; Ladner, 2018; Simpson, 2017). Settler colonialism undermines the foodways of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour, albeit in different ways (Penniman, 2018; Wolfe, 2016), and the protests at FSC's Assembly involved all groups. However, the limited scope of this paper and the distinct histories of and impacts upon each group limit our focus primarily to the concerns of Indigenous Peoples and, as settlers, our distinct and treaty-bound responsibilities with them<sup>7</sup>.

For this research, we took guidance from the Teioháte Kaswenta, known in English as the Two-Row Wampum, a treaty created in 1613 between representatives of the Dutch government and the Haudenosaunee confederacy (which includes the Kanien'kehá:ka, in whose territory the events analyzed here took place). The Teioháte Kaswenta outlines a relationship of two nations coexisting side by side without interference, but with mutual respect, peace and friendship (Powless, 2000). Since its creation, this treaty has held an enormous cultural, spiritual and political significance that extends far beyond the Haudenosaunee to represent more broadly the framework for right relationships between settlers and

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<sup>6</sup> Where possible, we use the racial identity used by participants themselves. However, we use the term "people of colour" for situations involving people of differing racial identities (who self-identify as being "non-white") to acknowledge a shared experience of racism. In recognition of the prevalence of anti-Black erasure and the separate history of Indigenous Peoples, we specifically name Black people and Indigenous Peoples outside of this term.

<sup>7</sup> Numerous Indigenous scholars and activists argue that early treaties between European nations (and later, the Canadian State) and Indigenous Peoples should form the foundation for renewed political relationships, a concept known as "treaty federalism" in Canada (Asch, 2018; Hansen & Rossen, 2017; Ladner & Dick, 2008; Simpson, 2008; Starblanket, 2019; Turner, 2006).

Indigenous Peoples in North America (Hansen & Rossen, 2017; Hill, Sr. & Coleman, 2018). We use it here as a conceptual framework that makes space for both resurgence and reconciliation to coexist.

The protests at FSC's 2018 Assembly illustrate the importance of working towards reconciliation in food movements; they also bring to light the discomfort and fundamental challenges of doing so. Because of FSC's history of sustained, if fraught, engagement with Indigenous Peoples, the events at FSC's 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly and the response thereafter provide a compelling opportunity to understand the challenges and potential of reconciliation within and through food movements in Canada. The concerns brought forward reveal the intimate connection between resurgence and reconciliation, showing that the refusal of settler processes and structures to make space for resurgence can create the conditions needed for reconciliation as transformation, rather than assimilation. From this perspective, settler-led initiatives may need to make space for Indigenous resurgence not as conflicting with, but as part of the work of reconciliation. The lessons learned apply widely across community organizations, advocacy groups and social movement spaces as well as public and private institutions working towards reconciliation and decolonization.

## **4.2 Literature Review**

### ***4.2.1 Background and Context***

Indigenous Peoples around the world have been practicing their own versions of food sovereignty for millennia. They have developed a wide range of hunting, gathering, fishing and cultivation practices that “have shaped, supported and sustained [their] distinct cultures, economies and ecosystems... [and are] based on [their] responsibilities to uphold [their] distinct cultures and relationships to the land and food systems” (Morrison, 2011, p. 97). According to Indigenous Food Sovereignty activist Dawn Morrison (Secwepemc) (2011), there can be no single definition of Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS), because it is based on processes specific to each nation:

Indigenous food sovereignty describes, rather than defines, the present-day strategies that enable and support the ability of Indigenous communities to sustain traditional hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and distribution practices, the way we have done for thousands of years... In this context, an Indigenous food is one that has been primarily cultivated, taken care of, harvested, prepared, preserved, shared, or traded within the boundaries of our respective territories based on values of interdependency, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility.” (p.97-98)

This description emphasizes relationships and processes, rather than end products. Through this lens, the devastating impact of the disruption of Indigenous food systems on Indigenous Peoples can be understood: while end products can be substituted, relationships must be nurtured, are specific to place, and are central to nationhood. Kyle Whyte (2017) gives the examples of *Manoomin* (wild rice) and sturgeon for Anishinaabek and corn for the Diné to explain the difference between relational and commodity foods. He argues that the long relational history of these foods/relatives empowers them to convene these nations for cultural, political and ecological renewal in a way that other, imported foods such as commodity cheese or microwave meals cannot. He shows that food has value “that extends beyond its taste and nutrient content. For communities with comprehensive practices associated with particular foods, immediate threats to those foods are also threats to the fabric of the communities” (p.8).

From the earliest settlement on Turtle Island<sup>8</sup>, through to the creation of the Canadian state and its 175+ year history, colonial powers have disrupted Indigenous food systems in support of the settler colonial project. Insisting on the relevance of this history to Indigenous food insecurity today, scholar and self-described “actionist” Joseph Leblanc (Anishinaabe) and historian Kristin Burnett (2017) point to some of the most damning colonial policies. The relocation and forced sedentarization of many communities, often on reserves distanced from their traditional territories, cut off or reduced their access to the lands they had cared for and which had supported them for centuries. The Indian Act of 1876, and its 50 major amendments over the next century banned important traditions central to Indigenous food systems, in particular the potlatch, and other giveaway ceremonies. Turner and Spalding (2018) emphasize that:

an under-recognized function of the potlatch is its role in regulating resource use, production, and dissemination. In other words, the potlatch embodied a political institution that oversaw and directed people's land use and occupancy, and their proprietorship over lands and resources (p.274-275).

Residential schools, operating from the 1870s through to 1996, sought to restrict the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and practices, including language and foodways, and replace them with Euro-Canadian ways (Tait Neufeld, 2020). Although residential schools are now closed, this intergenerational disruption continues, with more Indigenous children currently in the child welfare system than at the height of residential schools (Kassam, 2017). To Leblanc and Burnett’s list, we add the explicit policy of Canada’s first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, to extirpate the buffalo population (Daschuk, 2013). Buffalo were a key food source for many Indigenous Peoples of the Plains and central to their way of life; this policy had the express purpose of ‘clearing the plains’ of Indigenous Peoples to make space to expand settlement. For more recent forms of colonial disruption, we point to the impacts of large-scale development projects on Indigenous lands and foodways. For example, Thompson and Pritty (2020) document the impacts of hydro development megaprojects on the ability of the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation to practice food sovereignty, with significant impacts on their food security. Author Lee Maracle (Sto:lo) (2017) highlights how the genocide of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people continues to undermine IFS, as they have traditionally been, and continue to be central to food systems. Priscilla Settee (Cree) (2020) expands this list beyond

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<sup>8</sup> Turtle Island is a term used to refer to the Indigenous lands currently occupied by the Canadian and American settler states, making reference to Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe creation stories. Because we are writing in unceded Kanien’kehá: ka territory (part of the Haudenosaunee confederacy), we use the term here with the intent to shift the focus from colonial narratives of erasure to ongoing Indigenous presence and ontologies.

the borders of the Canadian state, arguing that the ongoing disruption to IFS stems from “the larger neoliberal socio-political systems that gave rise to the many free trade agreements that currently dominate and set the terms and conditions for trade, resource extraction, and human rights the world over” (p. 215).

The impacts of these policies and actions weigh heavily on Indigenous Peoples. The recent First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (2019), conducted as a collaboration between the University of Ottawa, the Université de Montréal and the Assembly of First Nations, found that a full 48% of Indigenous households were food insecure, compared with only 12% as the Canadian average, with 77% of Indigenous households unable to access as much traditional food as they would like. Indigenous people also suffer from significantly shorter life expectancies and a disproportionate burden of chronic and acute diseases compared with non-Indigenous people in Canada (National Collaboration Center for Indigenous Health, 2013). The impacts on spiritual and community well-being as well as Indigenous nationhood have been particularly devastating. As foodways “form the basis for Indigenous individual and community well-being- physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual- as well as Indigenous identities” (p.94), Leslie Dawson (2020) connects the disruption of Indigenous food systems to social, mental and spiritual intergenerational trauma. Despite this heavy history of colonial oppression, Indigenous Peoples have maintained their foodways and continue to adapt to changing realities (Beaudin-Reimer, 2020; Morrison, 2011). Indeed, foodways have become a major site of investment in the wider project of Indigenous resurgence (Kamal & Ithinto Mechisowin Program Committee, 2020), as we explore further below.

#### ***4.2.2 Resurgence, Refusal and Reconciliation in Canada***

Resurgence and reconciliation are the two major schools of thought with respect to Indigenous-settler relations in Canada today, describing different pathways to relational futures on shared land (Asch et al., 2018). Over the last two decades, these terms have become popularized- and criticized- in many fields, in theory and in practice. For some, resurgence requires self-determination outside of settler structures and paradigms and is seen as a form of refusal: refusing the politics of recognition of the settler state (Coulthard, 2014). This refusal allows Indigenous Peoples to turn inward for renewal and revitalization on their own terms instead of responding to settler agendas, structures and processes (Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2014; Simpson, 2017). Political scientist Taiaiake Alfred (Kaniien’kehá:ka) is a strong proponent of the return to traditional Indigenous values and governance with a clearly articulated separatist view: “If we are to emerge from this crisis with our nations intact, we must turn away from the values of the mainstream of North American society and begin to act as self-determining Peoples” (2009, p. xii). In her “radical resurgence project,” author and activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Anishinaabe) (2017) describes resurgence not only in the negative terms of refusal, but also as being generative in its own right. According to her, refusal can shift energy away from Indigenizing the structures of settler colonialism to instead invest in the place-based values and ontologies of Indigenous nationhood. This rejectionist resurgence thesis may not be accepted by the majority of Indigenous people - Alfred claims that only 5% of Indigenous people embrace it (cited in Poelzer and Coates, 2015, p.45) – however, it levels an important counterweight to the theories of reconciliation.

While resurgence must self-evidently be led by Indigenous Peoples, reconciliation is primarily a settler responsibility (Antoine, Mason, Mason, Palahicky, & France, 2018; Asch, 2018). The framework of reconciliation has received significant national attention through the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada (TRC). Coming out of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement in 2008, the TRC published its final report in 2015, and has defined for many - Indigenous Peoples and settlers alike - what reconciliation should look like in Canada. The TRC defines reconciliation as “coming to terms with the events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people moving forward” (TRC, 2015, 6:3,11-12). Paulette Regan (2018), a settler scholar and Commissioner for the TRC, describes how the TRC expanded the scope of how it viewed reconciliation beyond the dark history of residential schools to “encompass the whole settler colonial project” (p.211), as well as “reconciliation with the natural world” (TRC, 2015, 6:13, cited in Regan, 2018).

The framework of reconciliation has been adopted widely by public, private and community institutions and the differences in how it is applied has been a source of much contention (Asch et al., 2018; Regan, 2010). Some proponents of resurgence argue that state-centered approaches seeking to reconcile Indigenous Peoples within the settler state are just another face of assimilation and ongoing colonialism, and seek to reconcile Indigenous people to the settler colonial status quo (Coulthard, 2014; Ladner, 2018; Simpson, 2014; Simpson, 2017; Starblanket & Stark, 2018). Others suggest that reconciliation is a continuation of a long history of relationality between settlers and Indigenous Peoples and as such, congruent with Indigenous ontologies and practices and not necessarily at odds with resurgent approaches (Asch, 2018; Borrows, 2018; Ladner, 2018; Mills, 2018). Indeed, Native Studies scholar Gina Starblanket (Cree/Saulteaux) and political scientist Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (Ojibwe) (2018) insist that reconciliation comes from the “resurgence of relational modes of being” (p.178). Law scholar Aaron Mills (Anishinaabe) (2018) goes further to say that in their refusal to engage in relationships with settler society, those who espouse the resurgence paradigm can reproduce an ontological settler form: disconnection. In their recent volume (2018), Asch, Borrows, Tully and contributors argue for a “transformative” reconciliation, “empowered by robust practices of resurgence” (p.5). They seek to do away with the binary between reconciliation and resurgence to show that resurgence is necessary for reconciliation to be able to meaningfully address the ongoing violence of settler colonialism and change the status quo.

To deepen our understanding of transformative reconciliation, we draw on ethicist Willie Ermine’s (Cree) (2007) concept of ethical space as a framework for enabling cross-cultural engagement. Relevant to our discussion is Ermine's insistence that ethical space requires the recognition of difference without one trying to subsume the other. Ethical space, he writes, “is initially conceptualized by the unwavering construction of difference and diversity between human communities. These are the differences that highlight uniqueness because each entity is moulded (*sic*) from a distinct history, knowledge tradition, philosophy, and social and political reality” (p.194). This insistence on upholding difference explains in part the importance of resurgence for the project of reconciliation: resurgence strengthens nationhood, generating a place of strength from which to establish relationships while resisting efforts at assimilation.

#### **4.2.2.1 Indigenous resurgence through food systems.**

Indigenous Peoples are practicing cultural and political resurgence across North America. One key form that this resurgence has taken is the revitalization of Indigenous food systems (Kamal & Ithinto Mechisowin Program Committee, 2020). The popularity of this approach is widespread, manifest

in the growth in associated scholarship over the past decade, principally led by Indigenous scholars (see, for example Bagelman, 2018; Coté, 2016; Cyr & Slater, 2019; Delormier et al., 2017; Hoover, 2017; Kamal et al., 2015; Martens, 2015; Rudolph & McLachlan, 2013; Settee & Shukla, 2020). Two studies provide a particularly helpful survey of the field. For her Master's research, food activist Tabitha Martens (Cree-Métis) (2015) describes 24 Indigenous food initiatives in Western Canada. She uses a circle metaphor to describe four elements that she found to be key to IFS: history, connection to the land, relationships, and identity, all of which situate IFS very much in line with Indigenous resurgence. Scholar and food activist Elizabeth Hoover (Kanien'kehá:ka/Mi'kmaq) (2017) similarly describes 34 IFS projects across the United States, linking resurgence of Indigenous political sovereignty with the revitalization of Indigenous food systems. She cites food activist Winona LaDuke (Anishinaabe) as saying: "you can't say you're sovereign if you can't feed yourself" (p.62). LaDuke's assertion aligns with Simpson's (2017) insistence that cultural resurgence is always tied to political resurgence. Simpson argues that the separation of the two is a colonial construct seeking to limit the threat that this resurgence presents to the settler state. She argues that "within Indigenous thought, however, the cultural and the political are joined and inseparable, and they are both generated through place-based practices - practices that require land" (p.49-50).

There are many examples of cultural and political resurgence in IFS initiatives. Michelle Daigle (Mushkegowuk Cree) (2019) examines everyday acts of resurgence used by Anishinaabe in Treaty 3 territory (Ontario) to protect and renew their food harvesting grounds, waters and foodways. She finds that this resurgence centers "Indigenous political and legal orders that, in one way, shape everyday practices of protecting and regenerating Indigenous foodways and, in another way, are simultaneously cultivated through food practices" (p.2). Charlotte Coté (Nuu-chah-nulth) (2016) describes her people's efforts to develop food policies that actively restore and strengthen their spiritual and cultural bonds with their *ha-huulhi* (ancestral homelands) as decolonization and sustainable self-determination in practice. Aligned with Daigle and Coté's work, Whyte (2017) shows that using food systems as a site for resurgence is common practice among Indigenous communities, describing the revitalization of Indigenous food systems as a strategy of negotiating settler colonial erasure for political, cultural and ecological renewal. In applying Simpson's lens to IFS work, these examples show that the revitalization of Indigenous foodways is both cultural and political resurgence in practice.

#### **4.2.2.2 Reconciliation through food systems.**

Compared with the rich scholarship on the revitalization of IFS, our literature review found the publications addressing reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and settlers through food systems to be fairly thin, generally consisting of case studies co-authored by the settler and Indigenous scholars and practitioners involved. Influential author and activist Dawn Morrison (Secwepemc) (2011) shares her experience developing the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty in response to the need to create space for Indigenous voices within the largely settler-led B.C. Food Systems Network. Morrison sees food sovereignty as a potential site for reconciliation by providing a "restorative framework for identifying ways that social and political advocates from the settler communities can work to support IFS in a bottom-up approach" (p.104). Levkoe, Ray and McLaughlin (2019) provide another example of the creation of such a 'restorative framework' by sharing their experiences with the creation of the Indigenous Food Circle as separate from, but supported by, the Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy:

Considering the ongoing strain on Indigenous-settler relationships in the Thunder Bay area, the Indigenous Food Circle presents a unique opportunity to demonstrate ways that food can be used as a tool for reconciliation and resurgence. The Indigenous Food Circle was built on the idea that Indigenous peoples should have control of their food systems and is rooted in the theory and practice of food sovereignty, emphasizing self-determination and a re-connection to land-based food systems (p.11).

A third example of a promising approach to reconciliation through food is found in the Indigenous Foods Knowledges Network (IFKN). This network connects Indigenous communities to researchers across the Arctic and the U.S. Southwest to focus on research and community capacity-building related to IFS, basing their approach to working together upon the concept of relational accountability (Jäger et al., 2019). According to Shawn Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree) (2008), relational accountability reflects the centrality of relationships to Indigenous ways of being and knowing, and the responsibility of upholding good relationships based on respect, reciprocity and responsibility. For the IFKN, relational accountability guides the ways that they gather (placed-based, hosted to the benefit of local Indigenous communities) and the ways that they work together (emphasis on storytelling, Indigenous ways of knowing, and Indigenous languages). Though their work is far from over and consensus on the way forward has not necessarily been reached by all involved, these three examples help give shape to what transformative reconciliation might mean for food movements.

In this context of colonial disruption to Indigenous food systems and its ongoing impacts, as well as the resiliency and revitalization of Indigenous food systems and Indigenous Peoples, we see the importance of transformative reconciliation through food, and by extension, food movements. We also see the challenges to doing this in a good way that this fraught legacy carries forward. As settler food movement activists and scholars, we turn to our own communities to take on the responsibility to address this colonial context in the present and work to make our movements accountable to Indigenous Peoples as a foundation for reconciliation moving forward.

### **4.3 Methodology and Methods Used**

This research emerges from our own positionalities as White settlers working for food sovereignty each in our own ways. Heather has been doing food movement work over the past fourteen years, during which time she has co-founded and co-managed a cooperative vegetable and meat farm, coordinated networks of collective gardens and co-managed a cooperative farmers' market. This research was done as part of her Master's thesis at Concordia University. Monica has supported the creation of community-led protected areas in Eeyou Istchee through her research as a strategy to enhance Eeyou (Cree) authority over decisions about development while also fulfilling Cree responsibilities to care for their lands and waters. An ethnobotanist and researcher, Alain has worked to support the revitalization of Indigenous medicines in Cree and Inuit communities, amongst others.

From these social locations, we follow settler social work scholars Susan Strega and Leslie Brown (2015) in their suggestion for academics to "reverse the gaze", by shifting the focus from



Indigenous Peoples themselves to the settler society and movements of which we are a part. Our methodology is based on participatory action research (Adelman, 1997), informed by Elizabeth Carlson's (2017) work on anti-colonial methodologies for use by settlers. We follow Kim Tallbear's (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate) (2014) call for academics to study the communities in which they are invested, for which they care in a process that she names "studying across". This is very much true of food movements for us. We ourselves have struggled to do our work in a good way and have been confronted time and again by our own Eurocentric blind-spots. It is therefore with appreciation, care and humility that we offer this uncomfortable and personally-invested research.

Within this framework, we established a research agreement with FSC in the fall of 2018. FSC has encouraged this work from its conception and participated with transparency throughout in order to gain a better understanding of the concerns raised and how to move forward. Our research received ethical approval from Concordia University's Office of Research in February 2019, with certification number 30010746. Shortly after establishing the research agreement, the primary author analyzed the 124 responses to the post-Assembly qualitative questionnaires designed by the FSC Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as the "Board") and sent to all registered Assembly participants (794 people in total) the week following the Assembly. Of the sixteen questions in the questionnaire, nine sought to unpack personal experiences and suggestions regarding the Assembly and seven sought to understand the respondents' identities and background experiences with FSC and food movements. We explain our methods in detail here in order to establish our method of thematic analysis as being trustworthy, that is to say credible, transferable, dependable, confirmable, according to Nowell and coauthors' (2017) definition.

Questionnaire responses were anonymized and coded using NVivo software according to a modified grounded theory (Perry & Jensen, 2001) in which we used both deductive codes supplied by the FSC Board for their own evaluative purposes and inductive codes generated through the analysis itself. Eleven of the fourteen codes used focused on specific themes (*subcodes in parenthesis*): Advocacy, Communication, Convening, Logistics (*Space & Location; Schedule*), Membership, Organizational Governance, Representation, Sessions (*Facilitation, Format, Content*), Sharing, Social, Safety (*Accessibility, Accountability, BIPOC, Decolonization, Gender, Microaggression, Racism, Tokenism*). The remaining three were qualifiers based on the researchers' subjective interpretations - Positive, Negative, and Change- in order to get a broad sense of the strengths and difficulties of the Assembly, as well as where respondents felt change was needed at future Assemblies. This initial analysis was the basis of a report produced for FSC's Board, co-authored by the primary author and Joyce Liao (2019), which was shared with all Assembly participants in November of the same year.

To gain depth and a background perspective to Assembly events, we used the initial questionnaire coding, as well as the lead author's participant observation, to guide ten semi-structured interviews with past and present FSC staff, members of FSC's Board and other academic and community partners (whom we will refer to here inclusively as "participants" to protect confidentiality). Interviewees were selected initially based on their involvement with Assembly organizing and the events in question, and then through snowball sampling (Reid, Greaves & Kirby, 2017) as we were referred to others. Consent forms were shared with interview participants, who were offered full confidentiality (which most participants requested) as well as full ownership of their transcript and its use in accordance with our research ethics protocol. We recorded and transcribed all interviews, then read and sorted the relevant data into five codes and eight subcodes that we established inductively: Organizational accountability (*Stakeholders; Process of accountability*); Relational accountability

(*Enacting values; Personal work; Conflict; Consultation*); Policy; Convening (*Leadership; Capacity-building*); Solidarity across movements. We finished with a second reading to ensure consistency in the coding process.

From this process of sorting both the questionnaire responses and interview transcripts into codes, we moved on to a thematic analysis to identify themes and patterns with which to structure our analysis. Guided by Aronson's (1994) description of how themes can be identified from disparate data, we combined and catalogued the data previously sorted into various codes into recurring themes. The lead author's own participation in the Assembly enabled us to begin with several pre-identified themes, but most were established inductively from similar experiences showing up across codes. After themes were identified, we grouped them into what Aronson calls "patterns", which we triangulated to our literature review and by checking back with research participants for feedback. These patterns are the three overarching concepts that structure the analysis we share below: refusal, resurgence and reconciliation.

In addition to these two sources of data, the primary author conducted participant observation consistent with what Adler and Adler (1994) call an "active-member researcher" at the 2018 Assembly and other public food movement events (22 events from October 2018-October 2019). Her observations were informed by concomitant analyses through her various involvements as participant, organizer, or volunteer. In addition to public events, participant observation at FSC consisted of three levels: 1) Meetings and discussions with various staff and Board members outside of formal interviews; 2) Reading newsletters and other public communications (Facebook, blog posts); and 3) Reading internal notes and summaries of staff and Board meetings. We used the observations noted at these events and from these documents to triangulate the questionnaire and interview data and the resultant analyses. In line with our constructivist orientation – that is to say, our understanding that "concepts, models, and schemes [are invented] to make sense of experience" (Schwandt, 2021, p. 38)- we understand the themes as insights generated through our own interactions with research participants, with the partner organization and with the events themselves. To validate our interpretation of events, we shared drafts of this article with research participants and representatives of the partner organization, with 5 participants and 5 FSC staff and Board members contributing to the analysis presented here. Although when combined, the questionnaires and interviews represent a meaningful proportion of Assembly participants (approximately 15%), the many complex experiences of Indigenous Peoples and settlers working together at FSC cannot be fully described in a study of this scope. Nevertheless, this research points to important if often hidden dynamics to which we draw attention to help guide the unsettling work of transformative reconciliation.

#### **4.3.1 Food Secure Canada.**

Food Secure Canada is a pan-Canadian alliance of food movement actors and organizations in Canada, and its biennial Assembly convenes producers, community organizers, activists, industry and governmental representatives, amongst others, from across the country in the largest food movement event in the country. The groundwork for FSC's creation was laid in 2001 at the Civil Society Input for Food Security in Canada conference hosted by Ryerson University in Toronto, where the need for a

national Canadian Food Security Network was identified (Food Secure Canada, 2018a). After hosting its first Assembly in 2004, FSC was officially launched at the 2005 Food Security Assembly with the goal of bringing together “all the very different perspectives of groups working on food issues...to create a coherent food movement in Canada that could strengthen local projects and support a national food policy for a just and sustainable food system” (Kneen, 2011, p. 80). FSC’s strategic plan seeks to mobilize and build the capacity of food sovereignty movements in order to engage decision-makers and affect policy at the national level. Throughout its sustained history of engagement with Indigenous Peoples and its significant efforts towards inclusion, tensions around governance, representation and the sometimes-competing interests of stakeholders, complicated by interpersonal conflicts, have co-existed with productive collaborations in an uneasy balance. These tensions came to the fore at FSC’s 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly in November, 2018, forcing the organization to contend with colonialism internal to the organization and to the food movements it convenes.

#### **4.4 Results: A Moment of Reckoning at Food Secure Canada**

Although FSC is a predominantly settler-run organization, it has prioritized working with Indigenous Peoples from its very beginnings. At its first Annual General Meeting in 2005 there was consensus to focus on building relationships with Indigenous Peoples (Kneen, 2011). In 2009, an informal circle of Indigenous leaders, thinkers and activists got together in order to convene discussions and ceremonies about food sovereignty, often in conjunction with FSC’s biennial Assemblies, and served in an informal advisory role to the organization for almost a decade. While this group, known as the Indigenous Circle, was active, FSC provided logistical and occasional financial support. At a 2016 strategic retreat of the Circle, some of the Circle’s leadership made moves to “constitute itself as an independent body, the Indigenous Food Sovereignty Learning Circle, with the aim of moving beyond an advisory role in FSC to an autonomous equal relationship” (Food Secure Canada, n.d.), although we were told by one participant that this was not a consensus decision held by all present. However, due to lack of financial resources, divisions within the group related to internal governance and estranged relationships between some Indigenous leaders and FSC, the Circle has been more or less inactive from 2017 until recently.

FSC played an active role in the People’s Food Policy Project (PFPP) from 2008-2011, a grassroots process - initiated by members of FSC, but remaining independent - to develop a food sovereignty policy for Canada that mobilized approximately 3,500 people across the country (Kneen, 2012). The PFPP emphasized Indigenous partnership through a distinct, parallel process led by the Indigenous Circle. Through this process, the Circle contributed the first chapter - on Indigenous Food Sovereignty - in the resulting policy document entitled “Resetting the Table: A people’s food policy for Canada” (2015). The PFPP was a positive experience of engagement for several of the Indigenous participants we consulted. FSC subsequently formally adopted the PFPP’s proposals in their entirety as its policy platform. During the 2013 visit of the United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, one participant shared their appreciation for FSC’s efforts to uplift Indigenous voices. More recently, FSC has focused on improving the representation of Indigenous Peoples in the organization by specifically recruiting Indigenous Board members, by hiring Indigenous consultants to curate and increase Indigenous content at its Assemblies, and by forefronting Indigenous concerns in its public communications and articles.

#### ***4.4.1 Food Secure Canada's 2018 Assembly***

Inclusion and diversity were explicit goals held by both FSC staff and its Board for their 2018 Assembly. The Assembly is a major event- arguably the largest food movement event in Canada. The 2018 edition hosted around 800 people, with a total of 127 activities spread over 4 days of events<sup>9</sup> and three scheduled blocks where 8-10 sessions were offered concurrently, grouped into twelve thematic streams. To enable participation from more diverse attendees for whom the cost might otherwise have been a barrier, a full 30% of the Assembly budget was reserved for bursaries, with at least 52% of total bursaries going specifically to Indigenous participants. The stream of sessions and events focused on IFS was the largest of the twelve Assembly streams, and the only one for which a specific curator was hired (an Onondaga food activist and scholar). The Assembly also began with a Kairos Blanket exercise, an experiential workshop teaching the history of colonialism in Canada, and Indigenous presenters had an exclusive space reserved for a full day of networking. In addition to these efforts, linguistic diversity was and continues to be a priority for FSC, at least as far as colonial languages go. Indeed, 55% of programming at the 2018 Assembly was either bilingual or in French, with the balance offered in English.

In many respects, these efforts were successful, with several participants describing it as the most diverse Assembly to date; seven questionnaire respondents noted appreciatively this diversity. One research participant insisted that it was actually because the efforts towards inclusion and diversity were so successful that longstanding tensions erupted to the surface at this particular Assembly. They told us that though present ubiquitously in food movements, “these tensions don’t come up very often because Indigenous people and BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and people of colour] just don’t show up because it’s not a safe space.” (Participant\_02). For them, the very fact that these tensions came up is a good sign, showing that FSC’s efforts to increase diversity had been effective, so effective, in fact, that it was no longer acceptable to run an Assembly in the same ways as for a mostly White, settler audience.

The post-Assembly questionnaire showed that many respondents had overall positive experiences of the Assembly (52 of 124 respondents). Appreciation was shared for the opportunity to network with others from across the country and to share strategies and hear different perspectives (10 respondents). Many participants (14 respondents) noted that the Assembly helped them understand the impacts of systemic racism in food systems and increased their awareness about Indigenous food issues (10 respondents). Alongside these positive experiences, a significant number of respondents shared experiences of feeling unsafe, racism and marginalization (23 respondents). Five respondents decried the exhausting and extractive experience of Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour presenting at the Assembly who felt that they were expected to retell their painful experiences with food and colonization to a mostly White audience. Four respondents commented that there was a siloing of Indigenous concerns and that most panels tended to ignore how their content intersected with colonialism. Five respondents expressed concern that communities were being discussed without the opportunity to represent themselves. One participant denounced the refusal to accommodate Indigenous diets by offering entirely vegan meals (chosen by staff in recognition of the environmental impact of meat), causing at least three Indigenous people to source more culturally appropriate foods (i.e. meat) elsewhere.

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<sup>9</sup> Program available at <http://archives.foodsecurecanada.org/2018.resettingthetable.ca>

The ways in which racism and colonialism were present at the Assembly are in no way unique; as two participants pointed out, they were a specific manifestation of systemic patterns present across food movements in their experiences. A member of Meal Exchange's Racialized Student Caucus told us that in their experience, "the tokenizing of BIPOC folks [in food movements], it's a continual thing. I think because it was bigger- I mean it was gathering people on a national scale- that it [tokenism] was painfully obvious to some people, but not a rare occurrence I would say." (Participant\_04). Another participant shared a related experience of tokenism and told us that "we deal with this on a daily basis at work. I work for an environmental organization- it's a constant problem. We're still a mostly White organization doing White environmentalism which is based on settler colonialism. I deal with agriculture which is fundamentally about land. This is all over the place" (Participant\_07).

The Assembly was a valuable space of learning for settlers in particular; this learning became unsettling - in both the sense of emotional discomfort as well as in the sense of challenging to settler colonization - for some through two significant public protests. In the first, an Indigenous woman interrupted the public plenary on IFS to insist that the long-seated conflict between settler farmers and Indigenous Peoples needed to be addressed before these groups could work together as part of a same movement. While this was a very impactful intervention, it did not represent an approach that all Indigenous Assembly participants supported. Two Indigenous research participants described how much effort went into organizing that plenary in order to hold that very conversation in a way that non-Indigenous Assembly participants could receive. As one told us, "to come out in this call-out framing to say 'You all, how dare you?'... You know, people were already in tears during the panel. We'd already gotten to that space in a more articulate way" (Participant\_03).

In the second significant protest, a group of about 15 people- food movement leaders that were Indigenous, Black and people of colour, and their allies- walked out on the final day of the Assembly. After three days immersion in what protesters described as a white settler-oriented event, these food movement leaders refused to offer their scheduled workshops or talks, they refused to participate in the day's schedule, and they refused to continue to bear the burden of change. Leaving the Assembly in protest, they reconvened elsewhere to create a caucus space to connect to others who shared some of their experiences and build relationships of support with mentors and allies in a way that they felt the Assembly had not enabled.

#### **4.4.1.1 Marginalization at the Assembly and in the organization.**

The creation of this alternate space responded to the sense shared with us by five research participants that despite the diversity of Assembly participants, elements of the event still catered to a White, settler audience. Accordingly, we were told that this spoke to a wider tendency by FSC to marginalize Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour in their work. One Indigenous participant put it this way: "If they're only going to represent the food movement of upper middle-class White neighborhoods, then just say so. Stop telling people that you're representing people who are hungry in my community" (Participant\_01). Another Indigenous participant explained that, in their experience, it seemed that FSC prioritized their relationship with federal officials over them and other Indigenous people and dismissed concerns that they raised. They went on to insist that making space for the concerns of Indigenous Peoples is necessary for the organization: "It's these relations that empower

that organization to even come close to saying ‘We’re the voice for the movement’ or ‘We’re a legitimate community entity’” (Participant\_03).

This perceived dismissal of concerns by FSC and the conflicting interests of some of its stakeholders have undermined relations with the Indigenous Circle, contributing to feelings of marginalization. Listing four Indigenous leaders doing food sovereignty work, one participant told us that “all of those relations are strained, from that act of respecting our knowledge base when it was comfortable and then when it was something uncomfortable, seeing it as conflict.” (Participant\_03). One Indigenous participant told us how this pattern leads them to self-censor and not bring up their concerns: “It’s painful and I just have to shut my mouth and not look like an irate Indian.” (Participant\_05).

In the context of these estranged relationships, although the walk-out during the Assembly’s final day was unexpected, it was understandable to every research participant we consulted. For some participants with a long-term involvement in FSC, it was consistent with past dynamics; for some new to FSC, their experiences at the Assembly were enough to explain the need to walk-out. The protests at the Assembly brought these issues up in a way that could not be ignored; the public nature of these protests insisted on a public reckoning. One participant told us that in order to maintain legitimacy as a national food movement organization, FSC needs to contend with the limits of their approach of inclusion and reorient to center reconciliation and anti-racism at the heart of all of its work.

#### ***4.4.2 Centering Reconciliation***

In numerous communications and events since the Assembly, it appears that FSC is indeed in a process of reorientation. For example, in a letter written to all Assembly participants immediately following the event, FSC’s Board wrote that ‘dismantling systems that perpetuate inequality and discrimination should not be understood as additional work for the food movement; as a Board and organization we recognize that this *is the work*.’” (Food Secure Canada, 2018, emphasis in original). It is notable that refusal and resurgence were not named explicitly by any research participants, nor addressed in any events we attended, reconciliation was discussed by three participants and named explicitly as a goal at FSC’s 2019 Annual General Assembly.

Getting to this point has been a process that has evolved throughout our research timeframe and is still in evolution. In a second letter, sent to all Assembly participants exactly one year after the first, FSC’s Board and Executive Director offered an explicit apology ‘for creating an assembly where people felt unheard, hurt, and unsafe’ (Food Secure Canada, 2019) and shared some of the work being done to address the issues raised. This work has included meeting individually with many of those who raised concerns and in wider stakeholder meetings to document and unpack issues stemming from the Assembly, and from collaboration with FSC more broadly. This work has also included several Board meetings to explore using reconciliation and responsibility to relationships as a guide for all their work, as outlined by the Indigenous Circle in the People’s Food Policy Project (2015). Education at both personal and organizational levels are a key component of the work, and FSC has begun more dedicated anti-oppression trainings for staff, as well as continuing to learn through readings, discussions, and events.

Structural changes to the organization are also in the works. Board members and staff have insisted that the 2018 Assembly will be the last of its kind, and that going forward the organization will

prioritize gatherings that are smaller, more regional meetings, including appropriate gatherings focused on Indigenous concerns. Additionally, these gatherings would seek to provide more space for discussions, rather than the academic panel format that has previously dominated not only FSC Assemblies, but many conferences in the West<sup>10</sup>. There is also a commitment to restructure the organization's governance to center the experiences of, and relationships with, Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour. FSC has proposed the creation of an Anti-Racist Advisory, subject to available resources, and is supporting the re-emergence of the Indigenous Circle; both initiatives are part of a larger exploration into the possibility of a new cross-cultural governance framework for the organization. Since the 2018 Assembly, FSC has been supporting leaders from Indigenous communities in their efforts to reconvene the Circle, bolstered by the renewal of relationships and new connections that the walk-out enabled. In addition to personal engagement with a number of those involved, FSC's support for the Circle has included funding to send its Indigenous Board members (as well as potentially other members of the Circle) to participate in regional IFS gatherings. Two Indigenous members of the Board are also supporting the Circle in convening a formal gathering, that was slated for August 2020. The Board acknowledges the need to shift power in its governance model and is working to understand what ethical space could look like in this context. Rather than rush to bring in "settler solutions-oriented thinking" (Participant\_08), the Board is taking the time to restore relationships with the Indigenous Circle in order to seek guidance on how governance could be shared in a good way.

For one Indigenous participant, co-governance with Indigenous people is the change that will allow FSC to meaningfully translate its talk of reconciliation and decolonization into action. This participant suggested that co-governance of the organization would be a recognition of and commitment to "the primary relationship that gave birth to the sharing of the land. And that, of course, is the Indigenous-Western relationship" (Participant\_06). They told us that the creation of ethical space is needed as a foundation for co-governance: "If you have two disparate societies, ethical space is the way that you negotiate, that's part of it." This participant went on to insist that "if you're calling yourself a Canadian organization, all governance should be developed with Indigenous Peoples and built to respectfully share those responsibilities of the governance of the organization.... I call it a polishing of the wampum belt... So that's where FSC ultimately has to go."

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<sup>10</sup> In November 2020, after this paper had been submitted for publication, FSC hosted its first major gathering since the 2018 Assembly, which the primary author attended, along with over 1200 other participants - 50% more than in 2018. It was held entirely online and consisted of 19 events spread over five days. According to Gisèle Yasmeen, FSC's current executive director, the gathering had three objectives: 1) Build consciousness and capacity for anti-racist and decolonized approaches in food systems work; 2) Strengthen allyship within the food movement; and 3) Showcase the work of Indigenous, Black and racialized food leaders. Although an evaluation by participants and a formal analysis of the event's impacts remain to be done, the organizational learning and structural and procedural change underway at FSC was evident. Rather than two isolated streams among many in 2018, racial justice and decolonization were central to every event, whether it be the specific topic of discussion or the lens through which food system issues and practices were discussed. Although the gathering events mostly retained a panel-discussion format, opportunities for personal reflection were built into the program, separate spaces were created for Indigenous and Black people to debrief and discuss, and individual therapy sessions were offered to all. A number of those involved with protests in 2018 were present, including one who expressed gratification, saying that although she has worked with FSC for over 15 years, FSC has finally "stepped up" and "did a great job in organizing this gathering in a way that meaningfully centers our experiences". She insisted, however, that there is still more work to do at the organizational level, in particular, adhering to the terms of reference for engagement created by the Indigenous Circle in 2016. For this person, FSC could show a path to the rest of society as to how ethical engagement could go.

## 4.5 Discussion

*“People seeking harmony and balance must embrace the process of contention.”*

Taiaiake Alfred (2005, p. 76)

The protests at the 2018 Assembly, and the walk-out in particular, were a rejection of settler paradigms and practices in food movements in general and at FSC in particular. Although research participants did not explicitly refer to it in this way, we interpret the Assembly protests as a refusal in the sense described by author Audra Simpson (Kanien'kehá:ka) (2014) as the rejection of the terms of engagement set by colonial authorities. To this we apply Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's (2017) conception of “generative refusal,” linking the act of refusing settler paradigms and practices to that of resurgence, although this term was also not used explicitly by research participants. In our interpretation of the Assembly protests, this small but impactful action fits what Daigle (2019) calls the “everyday acts of resurgence” (p.1). She argues that these day-to-day cultural practices- in the case of the Assembly making space to honour the relationality integral to IFS- renew Indigenous political and legal orders because they are “based on Indigenous ontologies and respectful and reciprocal relationships with the human and non-human world” (p.2). The cultural space created outside of the Assembly has been connected to Indigenous political resurgence at FSC through the resultant re-invigoration of the Indigenous Circle. From this resurgence, and the position of increased strength it has generated, we see the possibility of reconciliation, which was named explicitly as a goal by staff and Board members at FSC and discussed by three research participants. FSC's Board has committed to shifting the organization's governance model to create the ethical space needed to work across Indigenous and settler ways of being, doing and knowing. According to one research participant, co-governance between the FSC Board and the Indigenous Circle is the practical framework that would create the ethical space in which both of these constitutive groups' histories and practices could co-exist and enrich each other. This appears to be in line with the Circle's intention in 2016 to re-establish itself as the Indigenous Food Sovereignty Learning Circle, independent of FSC, in order to move to an “autonomous equal relationship” (Food Secure Canada, n.d.) with the organization.

The refusal at the Assembly, as conflict-laden as it may have felt, did not represent the cutting of ties with the organization. While not all those who raised concerns have maintained a relationship with FSC, many people have continued to engage through phone calls, the exchange of letters, stakeholder meetings, and even as Board members. This commitment to engagement with FSC is consistent with the relationality that Morrison (2011) and other have described as integral to IFS, and also the basis for transformative reconciliation (Asch et al., 2018). This ongoing engagement demonstrates that despite Mills' (2018) warning that resurgence can reproduce the settler ontology of disconnection, refusal to engage with settler structures *on settlers' terms* can also create space for renewed relationality from a place of Indigenous strength, on terms that make transformative reconciliation a possibility.

As of this writing, almost two years since the 2018 Assembly, FSC is still in the midst of an ongoing journey towards understanding and enacting what reconciliation means for their work in supporting not just IFS, but food sovereignty for all. But perhaps the journey is part of the work, perhaps, as FSC has suggested, it is itself the work. Indeed, as Hoover (2017) found in her survey of IFS projects in the United States, for Indigenous Peoples, food sovereignty is a process, not an end result. The experiences described here have outlined the importance of care and attention to relationships in



attempting to do this work together. As Morrison (2011) has described, at the heart of Indigenous food systems are the values of interdependency, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility- the very same values Wilson (2008) attributes to relational accountability. Starblanket and Stark (2018) maintain that reconciliation depends on this “resurgence of relational modes of being” (p.178). As described by one of our research participants, upholding these values by being accountable to the many relationships inherent to foodways is a way to uphold our shared treaty responsibilities. In describing this relational accountability as “polishing the wampum belt,” he uses symbolism derived from the oldest known treaty (1613) between Europeans (the Dutch) and Indigenous Peoples (the Haudenosaunee confederacy) in North America, the Teioháte Kaswenta (known as the Two-Row Wampum in English). Polishing the wampum belt is another way to describe reconciliation and a poignant metaphor, particularly for those of us doing food movement work in Haudenosaunee territory. This participant powerfully reminds us of our treaty commitments and gives an example of what honouring these commitments could look like in practice: co-governance of our organizations and institutions.

Through this examination of the “moment of reckoning” sparked by FSC’s 2018 Assembly, and the resulting engagement in the years that followed, we glimpse at what *resurgence and reconciliation*, together, might look like in practice. As Asch, Borrows, and Tully (2018) argue, “robust resurgence infuses reciprocal practices of reconciliation in self-determining, self-sustaining, and inter-generational ways” such that “transformative reconciliation” cannot exist without robust practices of resurgence” (p.5). We are hopeful that the resurgence through Assembly 2018 events will strengthen the efforts toward reconciliation at FSC, enabling FSC to avoid the pitfalls of the dominant narrative of reconciliation that Kiera Ladner (Cree) describes as “predominantly a settler project and one that is typically grounded in denial” (Ladner, 2018, p. 246). With Caroline Dick (2008), Ladner has argued that “true reconciliation” must begin with recognition of Indigenous Peoples as partners in Confederation – the process by which early colonies united to form one country in 1867: Canada – and that this relationship continues to this day. As one research participant insisted, establishing co-governance with Indigenous food movement leaders at FSC would be a way to recognize this ongoing treaty partnership with Indigenous Peoples, and the work of apology, engagement, learning and gathering differently will provide the groundwork needed to support this fundamental shift. We support the Board’s intention to start by rebuilding relationships with Indigenous leaders, allowing for the terms of engagement to be established by Indigenous Peoples themselves.

While the focus of this research has been on the particular relationships and responsibilities of settlers and Indigenous Peoples, important concerns were raised at FSC’s Assembly by Black people and people of colour that must also be attended to and which are being addressed in a parallel process at FSC. We extend this analysis elsewhere (Elliott, 2020) by discussing settler colonialism as a root cause of the disproportionate food insecurity experienced by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour and examine the particular responsibilities of White settlers in food movements in taking it on. We hope that others will expand the analysis presented here to address the overlaps and differences in experiences of Black people and people of colour in future work. We suggest bringing the lenses of organizational change and management studies to examine if and how meaningful change takes root at FSC. These perspectives could add a valuable contribution to understanding the longer-term potential of the strategies for change, used by both protesters and the organization, that we have described here.

## 4.6 Conclusion

*“Food will be what brings the people together.”*  
*(Secwepemc Elder Jones Ignace, cited in Morrison (2011))*

Revitalization of their foodways is a powerful and popular way that Indigenous Peoples are practicing cultural and political resurgence across North America. As Indigenous Peoples continue to invest in the restoration of their nationhood and relationships to their homelands through the revitalization of their foodways, settlers have the responsibility of reconciling their food systems and movements to the reality of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. The revitalization of Indigenous foodways and tending of the relationships of interdependency, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility they put forward can be the basis for reconciliation, not just for Indigenous Peoples, but for all inhabitants of North America- Indigenous, settlers and all of our non-human relations as well.

To get there, some will choose resurgence as refusal and invest their energies towards their own nations outside of the often-contentious relationships with settler society. This is understandable, and for some, the way to honour and restore the relationships and responsibilities denied by settler colonial structures, as Simpson (2017), Coulthard (2014), Alfred (2009) and others have suggested. Whether resurgence takes the form of renewed relationality with settler neighbours or takes the form of refusal, settler-led organizations would do well to support it, for as the case of FSC has shown, resurgence may guide reconciliation to ensure that reconciliation can reach its transformative potential. Though reconciliation may be a settler responsibility, as FSC is modeling, settler-led organizations must take the lead from Indigenous Peoples as to defining the terms of engagement. As the differences in approaches exemplified in the disruption to the FSC public plenary demonstrated, there is no consensus on the single best way forward, nor need there be.

## Chapter Five: Manuscript Two

### ‘We have a lot of (un)learning to do’:

#### Whiteness and Decolonial Prefiguration in a Food Movement Organization<sup>11</sup>

##### ***Abstract:***

Despite the disproportionate food injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour, food movements have been dominated by white settlers who have had limited success in addressing this injustice. Settler colonialism is increasingly recognized as a root cause of food insecurity for Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island; however, it is also a key contributor to the food insecurity experienced by Black people and people of colour. The racialized exploitation of land and labour central to both settler colonialism and racial capitalism continue to form the backbone of the Canadian food system today, elucidating the important role food movements hold in the struggle for decolonization and racial justice. In this paper we present a case study of the (im)possibilities of white/settlers working towards Indigenous Food Sovereignty and food justice. By analyzing protests linked to Food Secure Canada’s 2018 Assembly, we find that an implicit reliance on representation may have limited the organization’s capacity for change. We propose that unsettling (un)learning, organizational transformation, and participation in broader anticolonial/anticapitalist struggle – what we are calling decolonial prefiguration – offers a more constructive path to decolonized futures that support food sovereignty and justice for all.

##### ***Keywords***

Settler Colonialism; Settler Decolonization; Racial Capitalism; Whiteness; Food Movements; Organizational Change; Indigenous Food Sovereignty; Food Justice; Social Movement Organizations.

### **5.1 Introduction**

The ability to access sufficient healthy food in line with one’s own cultural traditions is a basic human right (United Nations, 2020). This right is enshrined in multiple international instruments, beginning with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and further defined by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations General Assembly, 1966), both of which Canada has signed and ratified. However, this right has not been upheld equally among the different peoples of and on these lands. Recent surveys on food insecurity in Canada reveal stark disparities between white households and those of Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour. The 2017-2018 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) found that Black and

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<sup>11</sup> This manuscript was prepared following the guidelines for the journal *Settler Colonial Studies*, to which it was submitted on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Indigenous households experienced the highest levels food insecurity in the country (28.9% and 28.2% respectively) with other racialized groups also experiencing high levels of food insecurity (Arab and West Asian - 20.4%; South Asian - 15.2%; so-called 'Multiple origins' - 16.7%) compared with white households (11.1%) (Statistics Canada, 2017). When data from households on reserves, excluded by CCHS, are included the overall statistic for Indigenous households experiencing food insecurity is 48% (First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study, 2019).

Settler colonialism is increasingly recognized within the food movement literature as a root cause of food insecurity for Indigenous Peoples whose territories are occupied by the Canadian state (see for example Daschuk 2013; Matties 2016; Kepkiewicz 2017; Leblanc and Burnett 2017; Turner and Spalding 2018; Tait Neufield 2020; Thompson and Pritty 2020). Agriculture, in particular, has historically served as a key strategy of settler expansion onto Indigenous lands (Bhandar, 2018; Etmanski, 2012). However, settler colonialism is also a key contributor to the food insecurity experienced by Black people and people of colour. Settler anthropologist Patrick Wolfe (2016) identifies 'the demand for cheap land and cheap labor to work it' (47) as the paired priorities of settler colonialism, oppressing Indigenous Peoples on the one hand, and Black people and people of colour on the other, albeit in very different ways. Interestingly, Black farmer and activist Leah Penniman (2019) uses this same language, calling the exploitation of land and the exploitation of labour as the 'twin DNA' of the food system in the United States. In her book, *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land* (2018), Penniman presents an annotated timeline of these paired forms of exploitation that have led to disproportionate levels of food insecurity experienced by Black people through the dispossession of Black farmers from their lands and labour. This timeline includes the Doctrine of Discovery; the transatlantic slave trade; slavery; racialized police brutality; urban renewal; mass incarceration, laws and policies enforcing racial segregation, just to name a few, all of which are also part of Canadian history (Maynard, 2017). This racialized exploitation of land and labour continues to form the backbone of the Canadian food system today, from the ongoing exploitation and contamination of Indigenous lands and waters by capitalist agriculture and fisheries (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; Morrison, 2011), to the exploitation of racialized labour through Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program which employs approximately 18,000 farm workers from Mexico and the Caribbean each year (United Food and Commercial Workers Union, 2014) under 'unfree' conditions (Satzewich, 1991; Sharma, 2012) which, by excluding farm workers from employment and labour legislation, is in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Koshan et al., 2016). The inextricability of these different forms of racialized exploitation brings to light social justice scholar George J. Sefa Dei's (2019) insistence that 'decolonial praxis must be about resistance to all forms of oppression given that colonialism and colonization are fundamentally about exploitation and oppressions of peoples' (para. 4).

It is this deep entanglement of settler colonialism with food systems, and the racialized exploitation central to both, that elucidate the important role food movements hold in the struggle for decolonization and racial justice. In this paper we use a framework of racial capitalism, and a particular settler colonial lens, to present a case study of the (im)possibilities of white/settlers working towards Indigenous Food Sovereignty and food justice. We begin by focusing on critiques of white/settler-led food movements in relation to their Eurocentrism, exploring the need for a theory of change to enable these movements to leverage their position in support of wider struggles towards decolonization and anticapitalism, and turning to decolonial and critical whiteness theories to understand the particular role of white/settlers engaged in this work. We then analyze recent work towards decolonization and food justice at Food Secure Canada (FSC), a prominent national food movement organization, which have

been fueled in part by protests at its 2018 Assembly by a group of Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour, including the disruption of a prominent public plenary and a walk-out of the final day. We conclude by proposing that a theory of food system change that is grounded in unsettling (un)learning, organizational change, and participation in broader anticolonial/anticapitalist struggle, what we refer to as decolonial prefiguration, could better guide policy work and movement-building, and support white/settler-led food movements in helping to build a world where food sovereignty for all could become real.

### *5.1.1 Food Movements as Spaces of Exclusion*

Despite the disproportionate burden of food injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour, and the ongoing structural racism in food systems, food movement organizations and the discourses they shape tend to lack the diversity of the communities they are supposed to work for, and are by and large dominated by white settlers (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Billings & Cabbil, 2011; Guthman, 2008; Moore & Swisher, 2015). Settler food movement scholars Alison Alkon and Julie Guthman (2017) have been writing for more than a decade on the ways that 'whiteness and neoliberalism constrain contemporary food politics and hamper the emergence of a multiracial, class-inflected movement that can transform both food systems and broader socio-environmental inequalities' (vii). Guthman (2008) analyses various discourses of alternative food movements, such as 'getting your hands dirty', or 'organic alternatives', to make evident how, in interpellating a white subject, 'whiteness works to shape the social relations and spaces of alternative food' (434). Despite the prevalence of these Eurocentric discourses, she finds that 'many in the movement seem oblivious to the racial character of these discourses – if anything they presume them to be universal – and so are ignorant of the way in which employment of these discourses might constitute another kind of exclusionary practice' (434).

In her case study of the Community Food Security Coalition in Central New York – described by FSC as its 'sister organization' (2012) – Rachel Slocum (2006) shows how the community food movement reproduces white privilege. She finds that 'of the 13 organizations in the North East [United States] with a staff of 10–35, leadership positions are 84% white to 16% people of color and their board members are 11% people of color and 89% white' (330). Dominated by whiteness, Slocum describes several mechanisms through which white privilege is reproduced. For example, maintaining people of colour as 'the objects of the work but not the leaders of it' (330); serving as service providers more concerned with accountability to their funders than shifting power to the communities they work with; and promulgating Eurocentric discourses of community and self-sufficiency ignorant of the intersections of race, class and gender relations in food systems past and present (330). Because of these underlying mechanisms, Slocum concludes that the community food movement 'fails to act on the complicity of white middle-class privilege with institutionalized racism extant in the food system' (343), thus limiting its ability to build a truly just food system. In response to mounting racial tensions that eventually made its work untenable, the Community Food Security Coalition ceased its operations in 2012 (Charles Levkoe, Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Food Systems, personal communication, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour have demonstrated their agency in addressing food injustice by investing in their own solutions (see, for example, Gibb and Wittman 2013; Martens 2015; Hoover 2017; White 2018; Kamal and Ithinto Mechisowin Program Committee 2020).

However, these efforts have largely been ignored by white/settler-led food movements (Alkon & Guthman, 2017; Gibb & Wittman, 2013). White settler food activist and scholar Lauren Kepkiewicz (2015) insists that even when acknowledged, food justice scholarship tends to

conflate colonisation with racialisation – either leaving out indigenous experiences of colonialism within the food system or lumping them together as a “racial project” (Alkon and Agyeman, 2011, 5) or as a series of “racial projects” (Norgaard, Reed, and Van Horn 2011, 25) rather than a distinct project of genocide’ (192).

Kepkiewicz aligns with feminist scholar Andrea Smith (2012) in insisting that for food movements, there is a ‘necessity of understanding colonialism as a distinct but overlapping structure of oppression with its own logics and goals separate but related to processes of racialisation and capitalism’ (192).

In response to the many criticisms of whitestream food movements, some food justice advocates call for wider participation of marginalized communities, especially communities of colour (Moore & Swisher, 2015), calls that echo a common white/settler approach to racial justice (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Steinman, 2016). Inclusion of those most affected by food insecurity would, in theory, allow food movements to open ‘resources, authority, and power to those who have been denied opportunities to control their own lives’ (Moore & Swisher, 2015, p. 117). The concept of inclusion, however, has generated strong criticism. Several authors warn that this emphasis on inclusion could end up reproducing the inequitable relationships it seeks to address and actually undermine efforts towards decolonization by buttressing an unnamed Eurocentric norm (Kepkiewicz et al., 2015; Steinman, 2016). Adam Gaudry and Danielle Lorenz (2018) explain the problem of relying on inclusion alone as a strategy to ‘Indigenize’ institutions as follows: ‘Indigenous inclusion policy is a vision that ultimately expects Indigenous people to bear the burden of change’ (220). Scholar of ethnic studies Marcelo Felipe Garzo Montalvo (2015) writes that ““lack of diversity” and “inclusive” are often neoliberal code words for a space being already white-dominated’ (127). He asks: ‘What would our work look like if we shifted from asking how to “attract diversity” to our organizations, and instead asked how to dismantle the cultures that oppress communities of color on a daily basis?’ (128). Along similar lines, Kepkiewicz and co-authors (2015) insist that food systems work needs to ‘move beyond inclusion to connect food system inequities to interlocking structures of oppression, such as capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and colonialism’ (99).

### ***5.1.2 Theories of Change***

A theory of change describes the types of interventions that are presumed to bring about the desired changes (Connolly et al., 2015). For some social movements and organizations, theories of change are used explicitly as a framework to make the strategic planning process inclusive and transparent (Taplin & Clark, 2012). More often than not, however, they are not identified explicitly and the ways that change is expected to come about are taken as a given (Gobby, 2020; Tuck & Yang, 2013). Kezar, Gehrke and Elrod (2015) explain that the ‘literature on implicit theories of change empirically documents how people often hold unconscious ideas about change (which are often faulty) that can prevent them from being effective change agents’ (2015, p. 484). In her doctoral research analyzing decolonial and decarbonizing movements, Jen Gobby (2020) finds that ‘being explicit about how we think change happens and learning from scholarly theories of change can help strengthen social

movements' ability to transform systems' (79). Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang are more directive: 'Without a theory of change, struggle is going to be an exercise in futility' (2013, p. 92).

It follows, then, according to Kezar, Gehrke, and Elrod (2015), that if an explicit theory of change is not leading to the change sought, examining unconscious beliefs may illuminate implicit theories of change which could be limiting action. Relying on constructivist theories of learning, they describe the process of changing implicit beliefs as most effective when individuals are engaged in active learning experiences compared with using other more abstract learning methods. They explain that 'individuals will need to engage in an experiment with change processes, and once they hit a barrier, they will be more open to examining alterations in their perspective' (483). Their work aligns with that of sociologists Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev (2018) on the effectiveness of so called "anti-bias" trainings, who assert that despite their widespread use across sectors, 'hundreds of studies dating back to the 1930s suggest that anti-bias training doesn't reduce bias, alter behavior, or change the workplace' (48). They insist that in order to be effective, such trainings must be part of a broader program of structural change. To understand how this discussion of theories of change could help respond to criticism of white/settler-led food movements, we turn to decolonial theory.

### ***5.1.3 Settler Decolonization in Food Movements***

The concept of decolonization is applied in many different contexts and in many different ways (Tuck & Yang, 2013). Settler scholars Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker (2015) provide a helpful definition for our purposes: 'Decolonization as an ethic and guiding principle for collective struggle is both the ending of colonialism and also the act of *becoming something other than colonial*' (111, *emphasis in original*). While decolonization as a concept originates in struggles to dismantle European empires after World War II and return governing authority to former colonies in Africa, Asia and elsewhere, we follow the work of Indigenous thinkers and activists who use the term to describe the present-day project of extracting colonialism from worldviews and social and political structures while at the same time revitalizing Indigenous nationhood and lands (see for example: Alfred 2005; Simpson 2017; Tuck and Yang 2012; Coulthard 2014; Manuel and Derrickson 2017). While Lowman and Barker (2015) describe Indigenous decolonization as rooted in Indigenous resurgence, they insist that decolonization for settlers takes a different focus: 'For Settler Canadians trying to decolonize, the fundamental, difficult, necessary, and likely life-long challenge is to figure out how to stop colonizing' (114). For them, this means learning 'from history to politics to discourses of power and privilege, and perhaps most importantly, to understand Indigenous identity and peoples.' They go on to insist that 'we [settlers] have a lot of (un)learning to do' (110). Paulette Regan (2010) explores how uncomfortable emotions are an important part of decolonizing and liberatory struggle for settlers, using her own experiences as the director of research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to show the power of unsettling personal learning. The experience of unsettling emotions, she argues, opens up a 'space of not knowing [which] has power that may hold a key to decolonization for settlers' (18). Bringing these understandings to food movements, Kepkiewicz (2015) insists that 'reflecting and acting on the ways that food movements reproduce larger structures of colonialism will allow food movement actors to change narratives and practices' (192). She argues that it will be necessary for settlers doing food systems work to embrace a 'pedagogy of discomfort' by examining our own 'emotional investment in settler futurity and land' and recognizing 'how these emotions define settlers' inability as well as ability to challenge deeply entrenched norms and ideologies that allow for and reproduce settler colonialism' (194).

This unsettling (un)learning needed of white people is a theme central to the field of critical whiteness studies (Aveling, 2004; Matias, 2016; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Todd et al., 2010). This is brought forward most explicitly by white academic and workplace diversity consultant Robin DiAngelo (DiAngelo, 2010, 2010, 2011; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). DiAngelo takes as a premise that, though often unconscious, white people necessarily hold racist views as a result of being raised in white supremacist society, insisting that learning to identify our own unconscious racial biases is essential work for white people seeking to fight racism. She points to the many ways that white people tend to inadvertently recenter their own whiteness even as they seek to do away with it through, for example, ‘white tears,’ white solidarity, over-theorizing, minimizing, the good/bad binary, exceptionalism and many more. She emphasizes that white people not depend on the emotional labour of people of colour for our racial education, but seek guidance from the many resources they have made available on the subject. Despite the widespread popularity of DiAngelo’s book *White Fragility* (2018), which has hit #1 on the New York Times Bestseller list, this approach to antiracist work has garnered criticism, including for re-centering whiteness rather than the voices, experiences and priorities of people of colour (Cooper & Santay, 2019; Denvir, n.d.), and, most relevant to our purposes here, for its emphasis on personal change, despite a recognition that racism and white supremacy are structural in nature, stemming from ongoing relations of power that are rooted racial capital accumulation (N. T. Buchanan & Alexander, 2019; Frey, 2020).

To move beyond this focus on individual change, settler geographers Heather Dorries, David Hugill and Anishinaabe sociologist Julie Tomiak (2019) argue that the framework of racial capitalism can be helpful in bringing to light global processes that lead to the exploitation of land and labour so central to settler colonialism. White settler geographer Nathan McClintock (2018) explains that as an analytic framework, ‘racial capitalism considers how distinct forms of colonization, settler colonialism, and White supremacy function relationally as part of a unified system of capitalist accumulation built on the exploitation of racialized human and spatial difference’ (1). This analytic framework aligns with Wolfe’s understanding of settler colonialism’s ‘twin priorities’ of land and labour and his view that racialization of subject peoples by colonizers has taken different forms in order to maximize their exploitation. This framework also situates Penniman’s description of these paired exploitations in the food system as part of a wider project of racialized capitalism and orients movements for food sovereignty and food justice towards decolonial and anticapitalist struggle. We offer the present case study to explore how unsettling (un)learning can contribute to concrete change, in both white/settler-led organizations and white antiracist and anticolonial organizing.

## 5.2 Methods and Methodology

We approach this research as part of the food movements we study; we are white settlers who have been involved in food work in different ways. Heather has been involved in community and collective medicinal herb and vegetable farming for the past 14 years. This research is one part of her longer path of understanding and taking responsibility for her participation in settler colonialism and exploring right relationship to the land and its Peoples. Monica has supported the creation of community-led protected areas in Eeyou Istchee as a strategy to enhance Eeyou (Cree) authority over decisions about development while also supporting Cree in the fulfillment of their responsibilities to care for their lands and waters. Alain has worked to support the revitalization of Indigenous medicines in Cree and Inuit communities, amongst others. It is from these personal histories and social locations that we follow Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate scholar Kim Tallbear (2014) in her call for academics to study the communities in which they are invested, for which they care in a process that she names ‘studying



across'. We ourselves have struggled to do our work in a good way and have been confronted time and again by our own Eurocentric blind-spots.

This research began with FSC's 2018 Assembly, arguably the largest food movement event in Canada and the heart of FSC's strategy for movement-building, which the primary author attended as a participant. For its 10<sup>th</sup> biannual Assembly, FSC hosted almost 800 people over four days at Concordia University in Tio'tia:ke (Montreal), unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory. With 127 activities on the schedule, two to three scheduled blocks per day were organized, where 8-10 sessions (predominantly panels, with a small number of workshops and field trips) were offered concurrently, grouped into twelve thematic streams. Soon after FSC's 2018 Assembly (hereafter referred to as 'the Assembly'), we established a research agreement with FSC to explore what the protests at the Assembly might reveal about how settler-led food movements might better support Indigenous Food Sovereignty and racial justice in food movements.

The data used for our analysis came from two sources: post-Assembly questionnaires, and interviews. Shortly after the Assembly (Dec-Jan 2018-2019), the primary author analyzed the 124 responses to the post-Assembly qualitative questionnaires designed by the FSC Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as the "Board") and sent to all registered Assembly participants (794 people) the week following the Assembly. Questionnaire responses were anonymized before we received them and they were coded using NVivo software according to a modified grounded theory (Perry & Jensen, 2001) in which we used both deductive and inductive code generation. Twelve of the fourteen codes used were identified in advance by FSC Board members, who had completely redesigned the questionnaire from their standard evaluation following the protests in order to focus on better understanding the particular dynamics that these events brought forward. In going through questionnaire responses, we added two additional codes and thirteen subcodes to allow for more specificity around the racialized experiences and other intersectional oppressions that are the focus of the present research. Eleven of the codes focused on specific themes (*subcodes in parenthesis*): Advocacy, Communication, Convening, Logistics (*Space & Location; Schedule*), Membership, Organizational Governance, Representation, Sessions (*Facilitation, Format, Content*), Sharing, Social, Safety (*Accessibility, Accountability, BIPOC, Decolonization, Gender, Microaggression, Racism, Tokenism*). The remaining three were qualifiers- Positive, Negative, and Change- in order to get a broad sense of the strengths and difficulties of the Assembly, as well as where respondents felt change was needed. This initial analysis was the basis of a report produced for FSC, co-authored by the primary author and Joyce Liao (2019), which was shared with all Assembly participants in November of 2019.

In order to gain a more in-depth understanding of key themes, we used the questionnaire analysis to guide ten semi-structured interviews with past and present FSC staff, members of FSC's Board and other academic and community partners (whom we refer to inclusively as 'participants' to respect confidentiality). Interviewees were selected initially based on their involvement with Assembly organizing and the events in question, and then through snowball sampling as we were referred to others. In total, we spoke to four Indigenous people, two people of colour and four white people between April, 2019 and January, 2020. The ten interviews were recorded and transcribed, then thematic codes were established inductively through an initial reading. A second reading was done in order to ensure that all codes were equally considered across the interview analyses. Altogether the questionnaires and interviews represent a significant sample of Assembly participants (approximately 15%), complementary in their respective breadth and depth.

### 5.3 A Moment of Reckoning at Food Secure Canada

FSC is a prominent national food movement organization in Canada, whose roots date back to the 2001 Civil Society Input for Food Security in Canada conference at Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto, where the need for a national Canadian Food Security Network was identified (Food Secure Canada, 2018a). FSC was founded as a partnership between scholars and practitioners to be ‘the convener of the food movement in Canada, not only within the movement itself but also in broader social and political arenas’ (Kneen, 2011, p. 95). Until recently, FSC’s staff, Board and membership have predominantly been made up of white settlers. Until 2018 there had never been more than one Indigenous Board member at a time, and although several Indigenous people have been hired for short-term contracts, they have not held long-term positions within the small organization, which started hiring staff in 2012 and now usually has between 3-4 full-time staff. Black people and people of colour have been better represented over the years, but have never been more than a low percentage of FSC’s staff and Board. However, FSC’s demographics have shifted since the 2018 Assembly, though the nominations process had already begun prior. According to one research participant, FSC as an organization is more racially diverse now than it has ever been, with over a third of its staff and Board Indigenous, Black or a person of colour. For the first time in its history FSC is led by people of colour at both the staff and Board levels. This is reflective of the selection process, which, according to one participant, first and foremost seeks relevant experience and knowledge in the food system, but also considers social (racial identity, gender, etc.) and geographic location as an important consideration. They told me that although a matrix for Board-member selection is currently used, it is considered to be one tool among many. However, one participant, who has been alienated from FSC since the 2018 Assembly, criticized what they saw as a tokenizing focus on inclusion of ‘racial diversity’, with the expectation that Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour bear the burden of change:

I think that there's a trap in this perspective of inclusion and stuff. I've sat and pushed against the creation of a matrix to identify Board member features. That approach is very authoritative. To think of somebody from a Black background, who's involved in this, who's Indigenous, this feels very top-down. And again, colonial and capitalistic in that it's kind of head-counting of assets... I just see this erosion of relationships over time and then an expectation that people are going to be called upon to do things (Participant\_03).

They went on to explain that this experience of tokenization was not just felt in the Board selection process. This participant also felt tokenized by the expectation they would speak on all “Indigenous issues”, but their expertise was ignored or rejected in other domains. Rather than an identity-based matrix, they proposed one that was based instead on the various areas of expertise that are important to FSC’s work.

From the start, FSC has had an explicit theory of change based on two interrelated approaches; the first, movement-building through convening, supports and informs the second, federal policy work (Kneen, 2011). These two approaches to change-making continue to guide FSC’s work, with one research participant describing how one supports the other in the following way:

we were using the idea of an infinity symbol and on one side was the convening and on the other side was the advocacy, policy stuff. And the idea was that we go continually

back and forth between them. And so, the center is where FSC wants to be (Participant\_08).

Policy has been a major focus of FSC's work for the past five years, since the PFPP identified it as a key priority. As one participant told us 'a great deal of our effort has been focused on food policy, which is a big picture vision for our food system' (Participant\_09). This focus on policy has contributed to a number of important recent wins for food movements in Canada; for example, the Food Policy for Canada announced by the federal government in 2019, and 2019 federal budget pledges for a national school lunch program. However, according to one participant, this focus on policy has been alienating for some food movement leaders who do not necessarily see the federal government as a legitimate site for change. They described this sense of alienation as being particularly true for Indigenous Food Sovereignty activists as 'the idea of sovereignty in itself means that a community, or I think in the case of Indigenous communities, it means a rejection of the nation-state, basically' (Participant\_04).

Coming from this history and these social positions, FSC's staff and Board made significant efforts to better represent non-white communities in food movements at the 2018 Assembly through two distinct strategies. Firstly, they worked to increase the participation of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour through targeted outreach and engagement efforts and by reserving a full third of the Assembly's budget for bursaries, of which at least 52% went to Indigenous participants. Secondly, FSC sought to center content focused on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and racial justice, including making the Indigenous stream of events (7 events) among the largest of the Assembly thematic streams and hiring an Indigenous person to curate its content, inviting Indigenous elders to open the Assembly through ceremony, offering a KAIROS blanket exercise (a participatory workshop on the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada) on the Assembly's first day and focusing the Assembly's most public event- an evening plenary- on Indigenous Food Sovereignty. There were additionally four sessions focused on food justice. Nevertheless, a number of Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour expressed serious concerns about the event to staff during the Assembly, to facilitators and presenters during Assembly sessions, and by disrupting a public plenary. These actions cumulated in over a dozen people walking out in protest on the final day of the Assembly. One participant told us that the walk-out occurred because of the lack of response when issues were raised throughout the weekend. After the Assembly, concerns were also raised at stakeholder meetings, through the post-Assembly questionnaires and in two group letters co-signed by four food movement organizations led by and focused on the concerns of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour who had organized delegation to the Assembly. Ironically, one participant speculated that it was because the efforts taken to address inclusion and diversity were so successful that longstanding tensions erupted to the surface at this particular Assembly. They told us that with better representation from diverse communities, it was no longer acceptable to convene a gathering as if it were for a mostly white audience (Participant\_02).

While many respondents to the post-Assembly questionnaires shared overall positive experiences of the Assembly (52/124), the questionnaires also provide insight into some of the concerns leading up to the protests. A significant number of respondents shared experiences of feeling unsafe, of racism and of marginalization (23/124). Many raised specific concerns about representation. Five respondents expressed concern that communities were being discussed without the opportunity to represent themselves. Four respondents commented that there was a siloing of Indigenous concerns and that most panels tended to ignore how their content intersected with ongoing colonialism. One participant criticized the refusal to accommodate Indigenous diets by offering entirely vegan meals (chosen by staff in recognition of the environmental impact of meat as well as for simplicity and to lower costs),

resulting in at least three Indigenous people leaving the Assembly to source more culturally appropriate foods (i.e. meat) elsewhere. Five respondents decried the exhausting and extractive expectation that Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour retell their painful experiences with food and colonization to a mostly white audience. Indeed, during the discussion space entitled ‘Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty’, held on the Assembly’s final day, the Indigenous staff hired to curate the Assembly’s Indigenous and Northern stream told attendees that they had explicitly chosen presenters in order to craft a narrative that non-Indigenous people needed to hear. As one participant put it, Indigenous and racialized people ‘were feeling objectified, and trotted out and made to tell their stories’ (Participant\_09). They went on to insist that this was not new to FSC, and that FSC had tried to address this by changing the format of the Assembly sessions away from panels: ‘we really tried to rethink it this time to not have that kind of crap, but people fall back into patterns that they know’ (Participant\_09).

One research participant understood the protests to be the consequence of a disconnect between the stated values of the organization and how those play out in practice:

With respect to this particular issue of decolonization and justice and equity and anti-oppression, no one from FSC would not say that those things are not core to our work. And yet, we haven't been doing it... And I think the Assembly perfectly embodies that. We did some of the stuff. We did surface-level stuff. We made sure that people got there. We made sure the content was there. There were the nods. We did the obvious things, and yet, deeper than that, we didn't really realize what else had to be done. Or not all of us did. Or even when we did, we weren't able to achieve it because it's hard to prioritize (Participant\_08).

In response to the challenges raised at the Assembly and the engagement that followed, seven participants independently identified personal learning for settlers – white people in particular – about unconsciously held racism as key to bringing these anti-oppressive values into practice at FSC. One participant told us that ‘because all of us operate in a colonial, white-supremacist system, more or less, we do in fact need to unlearn and train ourselves to think differently’ (Participant\_08).

For one Indigenous participant, this personal learning was critical because much of the racism experienced at the Assembly was what they call ‘ignorant racism’, which they see as being mutually reinforcing to structural racism:

racism that is done through ignorance or lack of knowledge or awareness, very often is the outcome that I see. That doesn't mean that they are vindictively racist, that feeds into the system though. The systemic racism that on the grand scale of society leads to ignorant racism by organizations, individuals and groups. Because they at no point in their creation are given skills necessarily to actually impact those things... The need to address systemic racism within the organization is something that many have advocated for since the beginning of the organization (Participant\_1).

According to another participant, the protests sparked an important opportunity for food movement transformation because ‘it takes people being shaken up outside of their comfort zone to change’ (Participant\_09). Indeed, many were shaken by the protests at the Assembly. One settler

participant described a post-Assembly debrief that shows the impact that these protests had on some of FSC's staff and Board members:

we all went in a room and sat in a circle and went around the room and each of us just shared. And there were 30 people, because it was all of the staff who had worked on the Assembly, the whole Board and a few volunteers that were really core. And we all just cried. And I think this was super important. (Participant\_08).

However, this same post-Assembly debrief was experienced very differently by one BIPOC participant, who told us: 'I hate those conversations... with people speaking from their heart but speaking from not having any knowledge of the topic. So, it's painful and I just have to shut my mouth' (Participant\_05).

The post-Assembly questionnaires reveal some of the ways that the Assembly impacted attendees as well. Fourteen respondents noted that through the Assembly they understood the need for real change in food movements and the impacts of systemic racism in the food system. Ten respondents expressed increased awareness and concern about Indigenous food issues and one respondent came to realize how they themselves could unwittingly contribute to structural oppression within the food movement.

Beyond the unsettling work of uprooting unconscious racism, one research participant insisted that personal change also requires learning the real history of colonialism and what it means for national organizing in the settler colonial context of Canada:

So, it's awareness of section 35, awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It's also, in the domestic context, awareness of the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. And part of that, the calls say it will all be led by UNDRIP (Participant\_06).

Recognizing the need for this learning, FSC is attempting to 'build capacity to center antiracism, decolonization, reconciliation and equity principles in all [its] projects/work' (Food Secure Canada, 2019b). Despite fears expressed by several Board members that it would appear from the outside that FSC was not responding quickly enough, since the 2018 Assembly FSC has focused on restoring relationships that have been estranged rather than fast-tracking to 'settler-oriented solutions' (Participant\_08). In the months following the Assembly, FSC convened two stakeholder meetings to open dialogue about the future of the organization. It has met and exchanged correspondence with specific individuals and groups who have raised issues. FSC is also reinvesting in the Indigenous Circle and two Indigenous Board members are organizing a gathering of the Circle in 2020. One participant explained that FSC is leaning on these relationships to help establish more culturally competent organizational processes and restructure the organization.

As for personal and organizational learning, two participants described the initiative taken by several Board members to share resources and pursue their own informal learning. FSC organized their first ever all-staff anti-oppression training (1 day) in November of 2019. Additionally, two Indigenous

Board members are working on developing a training based on the Seven Sacred Teachings<sup>12</sup> as a guide for relationships and are considering how the concept of ethical space (Ermine, 2007) may be applied at FSC.

While recognizing that personal work is important, faced with the issue of turnover and the varying levels of motivation for this work, we were told that lasting change will only happen by instituting change at the organizational level. One participant told us, 'If this is the priority of FSC, how can four of us [i.e. Board members who are personally committed] hold that work? ...this needs to be done organizationally' (Participant\_05). FSC is exploring both procedural and structural changes to the organization. On the procedural side of change, FSC has been trying to do meetings differently by beginning with territorial acknowledgements, incorporating storytelling and closing in a good way. It has begun 'keeping a sort of repertoire and list of like different protocols that we need to be aware of as a Board so that we can do our work properly in each territory' (Participant\_08). FSC has also begun mapping instances of racism at FSC. In addition to these procedural changes, FSC is exploring structural change by considering new forms of governance and new ways to convene. As one Board member told us: 'right in the aftermath of the boycott [a.k.a walkout] and all this stuff happening... we undertook a fairly substantial task of trying to compile anti-oppression and antiracist frameworks for us to use' (Participant\_07). Out of this research, FSC has proposed the creation of an Antiracist Advisory, and is consulting with the Indigenous Circle on what shape more formal accountability to Indigenous Peoples might take. We heard the recognition that FSC holds different responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples than to Black people or people of colour, or otherwise marginalized groups at several FSC events, as well as in interviews. One Indigenous participant explained the difference this way:

Just look at how this country came together and the obligations- they're not the same. You can't put them in the same framework. It doesn't mean social justice issues are not important- of course they are! And it doesn't mean that they shouldn't be addressed- of course they are! But you've got to be careful in the framework that you create, that it reflects the architecture of what we call Canada (Participant\_06).

This participant went on to insist that co-governance with a parallel body for Indigenous Peoples is the path forward:

I think that at some point in the near future, the Board need to say 'we understand the commitment', that the commitment will be made to create a co-governance model. The commitment will be made to operate in ethical space, adapted as we see fit... to making sure that we meet respectfully and at least figuratively in circle in which everyone is equal, and that there is an accommodation for the primary relationship that gave birth to the sharing of the land. And that, of course, is the Indigenous-Western relationship (Participant\_06).

Perhaps the most concrete change to date at FSC is its new approach to convening. Rather than a single national Assembly hosted every two years, FSC will be experimenting in the months and years to come with much smaller regional gatherings, centering relationships with local Indigenous Peoples and

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<sup>12</sup> The Seven Sacred Teachings, also known as the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, is a set of Ojibwe teachings on human conduct towards others. Many organizations, communities and institutions across Turtle Island- Indigenous and settler- have adopted these teachings, in one form or another, to guide culturally competent education and collaboration.

creating space to recognize local differences and needs. Rather than a packed agenda largely consisting of panels, FSC is conceiving of these gatherings as more of a container for discussion, with no fixed content. Instead of organizing the gathering around panel discussions, decried at the Assembly as overly hierarchical, FSC is exploring new forms of participation to foster meaningful engagement and accountable contributions to defining policy-directions. How these intentions actualize over the months and years to come, despite the financial impact of scaling back one of the organization's largest sources of revenue, will evidence the strong commitment needed for change, even as all forms of gathering must face new constraints brought forth by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the general consensus among participants on the need for personal (un)learning and organizational change, and FSC's moves in these directions, participants pointed us to a number of challenges that makes this difficult to achieve at FSC. One participant emphasized the difficulty of requiring unsettling personal work for those who are not personally motivated: 'How do we say as a Board... "Go and read this book on your own time." If you're not interested in that, you're not going to! But how do we write that into organizational policy through job descriptions?' (Participant\_05). A second challenge raised was the ongoing nature of this work. As one participant told us, 'this is not going to happen fast, and yet we need to be constantly be placing it at the top of our priority list- and that's why it goes so unaddressed for the most part. Because it [decolonizing organizational change] is never something that we can cross off of the list, and yet it always has to be on the list' (Participant\_08). A related challenge raised by another participant is passing on this learning over time, with Board members holding 3-year terms and the majority of staff hired on short-term contracts. Additionally, FSC's reliance on project-based funding leaves little room for the long-term and behind-the-scenes work of personal learning and organizational change and the urgency of food injustice makes this slow and sinuous work difficult to prioritize.

#### **5.4 Discussion**

While policy work and convening for food movement capacity-building are the explicit theories of change guiding FSC's approach to food systems change, there appears to have been an implicit belief that better representation of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour would of itself result in the organization being better positioned to address the issues affecting them. This belief underlay what one participant felt was a tokenizing use of an identity matrix for Board-member selection and the roles assigned to Board members, as well as FSC's approach to engagement with Indigenous Peoples, with the significant focus on Indigenous Food Sovereignty at the Assembly, for example, and by forefronting Indigenous perspectives in the PFPP and during the visit of the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. This approach has been successful in many ways, and, as one participant claimed and numerous questionnaire respondents commented upon, FSC's 2018 Assembly was likely more racially diverse than it has ever been. However, the protests at FSC's 2018 Assembly revealed the limits of representation as a strategy for change. Informed by Kezar, Gehrke and Elrod's (2015) argument that theories of change that are implicit, and therefore exempt from critical examination, often limit the effectiveness of change-making, we argue that part of the power of the Assembly's protests was in bringing this reliance on representation to light, exposing its limits, and urging FSC towards more consequential strategies. Remembering Gobby's (2020) assertion that moving from implicit assumptions about how change happens to explicit theories of change can 'strengthen social movements' ability to transform systems' (79), the challenges raised at the Assembly could become a pivotal moment in FSC's history.

Despite the appreciable involvement and representation of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour in the organization and at the Assembly, the concerns brought forward suggest that FSC nevertheless participated in reproducing the Eurocentric bias so prevalent in food movements on Turtle Island (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Guthman, 2008; Moore & Swisher, 2015; Slocum, 2006). This was experienced at the Assembly with the figurative catering to a white audience in narrative, content and format, the siloing of Indigenous concerns and racial justice as two issues among many, and in the literal catering to what was seen as white food preferences. It was also felt outside of the Assembly in the alienation caused by the focus on federal policy, by considering Indigenous concerns as one of many competing priorities, and even in the ways that meetings have been run. The exhausting and extractive experiences that some Indigenous and racialized presenters shared in interviews and in the post-Assembly questionnaires speak to Adam Gaudry and Danielle Lorenz's (2018) critique of Indigenous inclusion as placing the burden of change on Indigenous people themselves. As one participant put it, though decolonization and justice are core values, FSC hadn't been 'doing' them to their full extent.

Because of the public nature of several of the protests at the Assembly, the event has proven to be an important moment of learning for white/settlers present, many of whom were 'shaken up outside of their comfort zone', as evidenced in the questionnaires and the post-Assembly staff and Board debrief. We thus return to Kezar, Gehrke and Elrod's (2015) conclusion that 'hitting a barrier' is needed in order to expose the limits of implicit assumptions about how change will come about and become more open to approaching change in a different, perhaps more effective, way. The protests at FSC's 2018 Assembly vividly call into question the assumption that food systems change will necessarily come about through increased representation of those most affected by food injustice in what continue to be Eurocentric food movements. We agree with Moore and Swisher (2015) that better representation is important; however, this case study shows that representation can only take us so far, at which point the Eurocentric status quo is no longer acceptable.

Our research suggests that white/settler-led food movements could be more effectual in their efforts towards food justice by addressing the often-unconscious Eurocentric reproduced in our organizations and movements themselves as a starting place. But as Dobbin and Kalev's (2018) work shows, anti-bias trainings on their own rarely lead to change; for FSC to contend with the challenges raised, this learning must be part of a larger program of procedural and structural change. Increasing representation at the Assembly while continuing to cater to white/settler preferences and processes led to protests and the demand for change; if FSC's shifting demographics are not accompanied by concrete organizational change, this pattern risks repeating itself internally. We thereby posit that in addition to policy work and movement-building, decolonial prefiguration could be made explicit as a theory of food systems change at FSC, connecting its policy and movement-building work to the internal structures and processes that shape them.

This is already underway at FSC to some extent, as it considers of new forms of governance that could create ethical space for the mutually supportive co-existence of Indigenous Peoples and settlers, as well as through moves towards forming of an Antiracist Advisory and through the new relational approach to convening. In approaching racial justice and responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples separately, these moves respond to Kepkiewicz (2015) and Smith's (2012) warning against the conflation of Indigenous sovereignty with racial justice more broadly even as they align with Dei's (2019) insistence that 'decolonial praxis must be about resistance to all forms of oppression' (para. 4). In making space in meetings, at Assemblies and in the workplace for unsettling (un)learning as a



‘pedagogy of discomfort’ (Kepkiewicz, 2015), FSC’s efforts align with Regan’s (2010) insistence that unsettling emotions are the foundation for settler decolonization. Fraught though they may be, FSC’s efforts to begin to decolonize the organization itself and move in practice towards the world it seeks to create – what we are calling decolonial prefiguration – respond to common critiques of white/settler-led food movements as being structured around whiteness (Alkon & Guthman, 2017; Garzo Montalvo, 2015), as relying on discourses that interpellate a white subject (Guthman, 2008; Moore & Swisher, 2015) and as largely ignoring the exclusionary impacts of these biases (Alkon & Guthman, 2017).

How decolonial prefiguration as a theory of change could take shape will differ based on context and positionality. For white folk in food movements it may involve acknowledging whiteness as a specific racial identity, carrying with it a ‘white frame of reference and a white worldview’ (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 7) rather than a universal experience, and that this identity gives ‘a social and institutional status and identity imbued with legal, political, economic, and social rights and privileges that are denied to others’ (24). In this recognition, white people are challenged to unpack the ways that Eurocentrism shapes organizational practices and structures to their benefit, making them inexorably, if unconsciously, invested in white supremacy (DiAngelo, 2018). For settlers of all backgrounds, decolonial prefiguration may involve (un)learning the discourse of white nationalism that naturalizes the exploitation of racialized labour and Indigenous lands (Ellis, 2018; Penniman, 2019; Wolfe, 2016), self-education about colonialism past and present and its continued impacts on Indigenous food systems, and self-reflexivity about one’s own benefiting and resultant complicities in colonial structures and discourses (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Regan, 2010).

The divergence of experience at the staff/Board post-Assembly debrief suggests that while the Assembly was an important site of learning, much of this learning came at the expense of some of those most impacted by food injustice and marginalized by white/settler-led food movements. This situation points to the importance of not holding Indigenous and racialized people as responsible for our racial education or asking them to soothe our unsettled emotions, but instead taking on the work of learning with other white people ourselves while seeking their guidance through the many resources they have made available<sup>13</sup>, by compensating them appropriately for their emotional labour<sup>14</sup> (DiAngelo, 2018).

Alongside FSC’s commitment to change and their promising, if modest, first steps, the challenges of doing this work are reflective of the larger colonial/capitalist system which favours short-term deliverables over long-term engagement and relationship-building. In our view, moving beyond informal self-learning to instituting organization-wide spaces of learning will be needed in order to address the challenges of continuity in the face of inevitable staff and Board turnover. The practice of mandatory anti-oppression and cultural competency trainings is becoming more common across sectors. Indeed, according to Chang et al (2019) claim that ‘virtually all Fortune 500 companies offer diversity training to their employees,’ many of which are mandatory. And this, despite the evidence showing that they are mostly unsuccessful at creating change (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). From the framework of racial

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<sup>13</sup> For just a small glimpse of the vast resources available, consider: Layla F. Saad’s *Me and White Supremacy* (2020); World Trust’s film *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* (2007); and Resmaa Menakem’s book *My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* (2017).

<sup>14</sup> For an example of what appropriate compensation might involve, consider the Elder and Community Protocol prepared by Wahéshon Shiann Whitebean on behalf of the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group at Concordia University (2019).

capitalism, the failure of such trainings makes sense: they do little to address the capitalist logic underlying inequality, in fact they often play into this logic (Anand & Winters, 2008), as diverse workforces have been found to be significantly more profitable (Hunt et al., 2018). Therefore, structural change to organizational procedures and governance will also be needed to ensure that personal learning does not take the place of working towards real world changes. These shifts from personal learning to organizational change and action are key, for as Lowman and Barker (2015) warn, although ‘self-education and critical self-reflection are key to the challenge currently facing Settler Canadians... (they) can become a distraction from struggle in that it allows people to feel that they are doing something revolutionary... while running the risk of substituting awareness for engagement and action’ (110). With this warning in mind, we cautiously applaud FSC’s efforts to move beyond personal and organizational learning towards new procedures and a new governance model that would concretely shift power relations in and through the organization.

Figure 2 summarizes the strategies discussed here, based on both our observations of the work underway at FSC, and feedback from our research participants. We recognize that events discussed in this article are specific to FSC and its particular history, and therefore that the strategies identified for organizational decolonization at FSC may not be the same as what is needed in other white/settler-led organizations or initiatives. Nevertheless, we highlight these strategies in order to unpack what decolonization can mean in practice, and thereby hope to contribute, not a model, but one way that it is being undertaken.

**Figure 2**

***Summary List of Strategies Identified for Organizational Decolonization at FSC***

- Decolonization begins with the organization itself: if the organization is exemplifying decolonization, its work in the world will flow from there;
- Make organization-wide spaces of learning and (un)-learning for White people, but remember that anti-bias trainings are only effective if they are part of wider structural and procedural change;
- Making space for White discomfort and growth, but separately – this is not a burden for Indigenous People, Black people and people of colour to bear;
- Shift leadership positions to Indigenous people, Black people, and people of colour. Avoid tokenizing by shifting real decision-making power, in line with experience and skill set. Remember that shifting demographics must be accompanied by change to organizational structures and processes;
- Restructure organizational governance in line with different accountabilities to Indigenous Peoples, to Black people and to people of colour;
- Continue to engage through contention and contradiction – expect them as part of the process of change;
- Allow the terms of engagement to be established by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour themselves;
- Participate and uplift broader anti-racist and anti-colonial movements to get at the root causes of systemic oppression.

Though the impacts that these changes may have on FSC's work in the world are yet to be seen, we hope they will lead to engagement with the wider struggle against racialized capitalism and the settler colonial structures driving the exploitation of land and labour underlying food injustice in Canada. In linking the struggle for food justice and IFS to capitalist oppression, deeper forms of solidarity may be built, for capitalist food systems disrupt the food systems of not only Indigenous People, Black people and people of colour, but of all peoples. From this position, we work for justice not only to 'help' others but because food sovereignty cannot exist for any if it is not available to all.

Though the path forward for FSC is still unfolding, FSC is not alone in taking up the challenge of decolonizing its work. In Canada, we look to two food movement organizations who are also on the long journey of decolonizing their work. The National Farmers' Union (NFU) was formed in 1969 'to promote the betterment of farmers in the attainment of their economic and social goals' (Wiebe, 2019, p. 26). Described by one NFU member as being 'very non-Indigenous and white' (quoted in Kepkiewicz and Giacomini 2019, 241), members of the NFU formed an Indigenous Solidarity Working Group (ISWG) with the mandate to 'share resources, learn together, engage in processes to decolonize land and relationships and empower the NFU to develop the capacity to act in solidarity with Indigenous peoples' (Kepkiewicz & Giacomini, 2019, p. 240). Since 2015, the ISWG has held bi-monthly meetings for its members. Moving from self-reflection to relationship-building, in 2019 the ISWG hosted a series of three webinars with Indigenous Food Sovereignty activists, and some members have worked to build alliances with local Indigenous struggles. In a published interview, ISWG member Rachelle Ternier emphasizes the importance of non-Indigenous people supporting each other in doing their own learning in order to create a more culturally safe organization before reaching out to increase the involvement of Indigenous people:

Indigenous peoples have already had to face so much of that [discrimination] and creating situations where they face more of this behaviour is harmful to individuals and to relationships. Maybe we need to battle that out within our own organization first, in the absence of Indigenous guest speakers so we can eventually listen to and understand Indigenous peoples' perspectives in a respectful and healthy way at later times' (Kepkiewicz & Giacomini, 2019, p. 252).

This behind-the-scenes work has in turn informed the NFU's politics in, for example, urging the Canadian government to fully adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (National Farmers' Union, 2017b), as well as in endorsing Idle No More's Unsettling Canada 150 Call to Action (National Farmers' Union, 2017a) and in supporting the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs in their fight against natural pipelines crossing their territory (National Farmers' Union, 2020).

At the more local level, Levkoe, Ray and McLaughlin (2019) describe the Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy (TBAFS)'s efforts to decolonize its work. Formed in 2008, today the TBAFS 'is an active and vibrant initiative, made up of over 40 organizational representatives, 10 executive council members, and seven regional municipalities' (8). However, until recently, the TBAFS had no formal engagement with the large population of Indigenous Peoples living in and around Thunder Bay<sup>15</sup>. The TBAFS first sought to address this gap through inclusion by reserving at least one executive council seat for an Indigenous person. However, it quickly realized that 'one individual could not represent the wealth of history and culture, and the needs of the diverse Indigenous communities in the region' (8).

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<sup>15</sup> At 13%, Thunder Bay has the highest percentage of urban Indigenous residents in the country (C. Levkoe et al., 2019).

The TBAFS thereby moved beyond inclusion to build meaningful relationships of trust with Indigenous communities by exploring the kinds of activities that they were already undertaking in order to understand how the TBAFS ‘could better engage with these initiatives and build partnerships that were relevant to Indigenous peoples’ (9). In these early stages, the TBAFS focused on building relationships with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous-led organizations, an approach similar to that currently underway at FSC. At the TBAFS, this work has led to the creation of an Indigenous Food Circle with 22 member organizations as a parallel but independent body with ‘the mandate to establish a collaborative platform to support food-related initiatives developed by and for Indigenous organizations in the Thunder Bay area’ (9). While this process has been challenged by settlers’ discomfort and resistance, the effects of historical and ongoing trauma and urgent need, as well as a lack of resources and time, the model of parallel decision-making bodies gestures towards the co-governance that one research participant insisted was needed for FSC.

Despite the constraints of project-based funding, competing priorities, turnover and differing levels of commitment, food movements are vital places to engage in decolonial struggle. Because food movements in Canada are highly organized networks, in which FSC holds a central position, and because they intersect with the demands of many parallel social movements, they are well positioned to contribute impactfully in wider efforts towards decolonization and racial justice. Because of the ongoing exploitation of land and labour that is central to food systems in Canada, with resulting food injustice weighing heavily on Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour, food movements are compelled to address the root causes of this exploitation, namely, racial capitalism and the settler colonial structures it promulgates. Finally, because of the strong critiques that white/settler-led food movements have reproduced the very racism and colonialism behind food injustice on Turtle Island, this case study shows that to engage effectively in decolonial struggle, white/settler-led food movements need to begin at the source. While food movements are particularly salient sites for this work, this discussion applies also to the myriad of white/settler efforts towards decolonization, reconciliation and racial justice that have emerged since the release of the TRC’s final report (2015) and in response to the important upwelling of Indigenous resurgence and organizing by Black people and people of colour in recent years. Rather than investing in the settler state as the primary site of change, decolonial prefiguration empowers us to begin building the world we are fighting for in the here and now.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion

During the research and writing of this thesis, Turtle Island - indeed the whole world - has been rocked by a number of significant social upheavals, many of which have been directly linked to racism and colonialism associated with food and food systems. On August 9, 2016, Colton Boushie, a 22-year old Indigenous man of the Cree Red Pheasant First Nation, was shot and killed by a white man, Gerald Stanley, on Stanley's Saskatchewan farm when Boushie and friends entered the farm after getting a flat tire on the road. The event was seen by some as a manifestation of the ongoing tensions between white farmers and Indigenous Peoples in the prairie region (APTN News, cited in "Shooting of Colten Boushie," 2020) and major protests erupted in response to Stanley's eventual acquittal by an all white jury. Both the Canada's Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice denounced the verdict (CBC News, 2018), and the Mayor of Saskatchewan called the trial and its aftermath "a defining moment for this community and this country" (National Post Staff, 2018). This was the spark that moved one Indigenous participant at FSC's 2018 Assembly to disrupt its public plenary, arguing that in the midst of the fallout from this disturbing event, the Assembly itself, with its focus on farmers and farming, was retraumatizing for Indigenous Peoples.

In the winter of 2020, protesters nationwide took to the streets en masse, occupied buildings and blocked passenger and freight train lines (most impactfully, the main CN Rail line in Eastern Ontario by Kanien'kehá:ka in Tyendinaga) for over two weeks in support of the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs' assertion under Wet'suwet'en law of their authority over their traditional territories and their refusal of the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline, which seeks to cross these lands to transport liquefied natural gas from northeast BC to a terminal on the coast near the town of Kitimat (Austen, n.d.). The hereditary chiefs have raised concerns about the pipeline's potential effects on the land, water, and community, which make up the basis of their food system, as outlined by FSC in a solidarity statement (Food Secure Canada, 2020a).

The examples continue. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the precarity with which migrant farm workers live, with major outbreaks on mega-farms in Southwestern Ontario (*400 Migrant Farm Workers Have Tested Positive with COVID-19*, 2020) and meat packing plants in Alberta and Quebec (*COVID-19 at Cargill Meat Processing Plant*, 2020). The pandemic is also disproportionately affecting Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour (Food Secure Canada, 2020b), with two of the most important risk factors- heart disease and diabetes- directly linked to the food insecurity they experience.

As the pandemic continues its devastating spread, the killing of George Floyd by police as he left a grocery store in Minneapolis in May, 2020 has led to a globalized rebellion against anti-Black racism, considered in the U.S. to possibly be the largest movement in the country's history (L. Buchanan et al., 2020). This disturbing event highlights the danger that even accessing food can represent for Black people, when nuisance abatement laws have forced grocery stores to operate "almost as an arm of law enforcement" (Bayoumi, 2020).

Bringing in this wider context shows not only how timely the focus of this research has turned out to be, but also the urgency for change. The racialized impacts of an unjust food system are literally a question of life and death for many Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour. This research suggests that as a nation we have some serious reckoning to do. However, efforts towards the inclusion

of marginalized groups within the settler state to address unequal outcomes is still a common strategy across Canada. Take for example, the Quebec ban on religious symbols, passed in March, 2019 as Bill 21, “An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State”, which had the stated goal of ensuring the “equality of all citizens” (2019, Chapter 12). The Act prevents the wearing of religious symbols by public workers in positions of authority and requires having one's face uncovered to give or receive specific public services, but ensures that catholic symbols will continue to be ubiquitous in public spaces and institutions because the ban does not apply to “elements of Québec’s cultural heritage that testify to its history” (chapter 12). At the federal level, the so-called “Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework” was proposed by the Trudeau Liberal government to ensure that the “recognition and implementation of rights is the basis of all relations between the federal crown and Indigenous peoples” (Canada, 2018). This framework was heavily criticized as “domesticating Indigenous self-determination within Canadian Confederation” (King & Pasternak, 2018, para. 4) and was largely rejected by Indigenous nations “because it functioned to limit rather than enable the exercise of existing Indigenous rights” (Joyce, 2019). After several attempts at consultation, the Liberal government abandoned the framework late in 2018.

As we have seen, food movements on Turtle Island are struggling to contend with their own complicities in the systems that maintain the unjust status quo. While the protests at FSC’s 2018 Assembly are small compared with the uprisings that have rocked the world in the past few years, taking a detailed look at this microcosm allows for a more nuanced understanding of the wider events. It also allows practitioners to understand how these wider dynamics may be playing out concretely in their work.

Through this research, I have uncovered some of the specific mechanisms through which white/settler-led food movement organizations have tended to reify settler colonialism. I have found that the refusal of settler structures can be generative, supportive of cultural and political resurgence and can create the conditions necessary for reconciliation to be transformative of these structures and mechanisms, rather than merely an attempt at assimilation in new dressings. Seen in this light, the scale and scope of antiracist protest currently alive on Turtle Island give hope that meaningful change to dominant structures could be possible.

I hope that I have brought new understanding to some of the specific responsibilities of white settlers in identifying and countering these mechanisms as they play out in their work in order to better address the root causes of the disproportionate levels of food insecurity experienced by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour. While organizational decolonization will play out differently in different contexts, I believe that the strategies identified at FSC can serve as a guide to many other organizations, institutions, industries and initiatives grappling with the necessary work of decolonization and reconciliation.

While this in-depth look at one particular “moment of reckoning” has drawn out important themes, the limited timeframe of a Master’s research project has precluded a long-term analysis of how FSC’s intentions will play out in practice. Bringing in the lens of the fields of management and organizational change would be of particular benefit to the further work that is warranted on the potential and the challenges of co-governance between settlers and Indigenous Peoples, and its practical implementation at FSC as well as in myriad other settings, from non-profit, to industry, from municipalities to the federal government. Further work is also encouraged to bring a deeper

understanding to the different responsibilities white people have to Indigenous Peoples, Black people and people of colour, as well as to explore the question of how white/settler food sovereignty is also impacted by settler colonialism and racial capitalism, in order to examine how fighting white supremacy and settler colonialism may respond to both.

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**Appendix 1: Food Secure Canada's English-Language 2018 Post-Assembly Questionnaire****Questionnaire - Food Secure Canada 10th Assembly**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to give those who attended the assembly an opportunity to share their experiences and feedback with the staff and board of Food Secure Canada. We want to better understand what went well and what didn't, as well as gather thoughts and suggestions on the best ways forward. The information collected here will be part of a larger ongoing process of reflection, re-examination and re-orientation that the organization is undertaking.

Please read the letter from the Board addressed to assembly participants before answering the survey (included in the email).

**\* Required**

When you think about the Assembly, what stands out for you? \*

We want to understand how the Assembly impacted participants. How did the Assembly impact you? \*

Were there aspects of the assembly that didn't feel right, or that didn't work well for you? If so, please describe these instances.

What, if anything, will the Assembly change in your involvement and engagement with the food system? \*

FSC understands that the Assembly (and FSC's work more broadly) needs to evolve for many reasons. What additional advice/suggestions do you have for FSC to better support you in the doing your work you are doing (whether through future Assemblies or other activities)? \*

We acknowledge that some participants felt excluded, uncomfortable and/or unsafe in some spaces at the assembly. If you experienced any of these things and are comfortable sharing your experience, please feel free to do so in the space provided here.

Do you have any suggestions or feedback on how to create safer spaces at the assembly? \*

What other arrangements could be made (ceremony, circles, physical spaces) in order to create appropriate spaces for learning, building relationships, sharing stories, and working together on food issues? \*

We would like to better understand the indirect impacts of this event as participants return to their home communities and networks. Will you share your experience at the Assembly with others, and if so, how? \*

How would you describe your role at the Assembly? \*

Check all that apply.

Participant/attendee

Presenter/moderator

Volunteer

Organizer

Are you an FSC member? \*

Yes I am individual member.

My organization is a member.

No.

Was this your first Assembly? \*

Yes

No

What year were you born in?

What gender do you identify with?

How would you describe your ethnicity?

Which province or territory do you live in? \*

Choose

Please feel free to include any additional thoughts or comments in the text box below.

We also welcome you to leave your name and e-mail should you wish to be contacted for further discussion.

Name

E-mail

SUBMIT

**Appendix 2: Research Agreement with Food Secure Canada****COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AGREEMENT**

**THIS AGREEMENT** made on December 14, 2018

BETWEEN:

**Food Secure Canada**  
3875, rue St-Urbain, Suite 502,  
Montréal, QC  
H2W 1V1

- and -

Heather Elliott  
[heather.elliott@gmail.com](mailto:heather.elliott@gmail.com)  
8, rue Lafleur  
Montreal Quebec H4G 3C4

(hereafter called the "Volunteer Research Collaborator")

**PREAMBLE**

The present research agreement has been developed to meet the needs and interests of both Food Secure Canada (FSC) and the Volunteer Research Collaborator. It is seen as a partnership through which FSC will benefit from research support, analysis and insight into events taking place during and surrounding their 10th Biannual Assembly. The Volunteer Research Collaborator will benefit from access to information, internal documents, and FSC collaborators (staff, board, members, etc.) which will contribute to her Master's thesis and potential future publications. Both parties value the opportunity to collaborate in a constructive partnership for their shared learning, which will be undertaken with respect, transparency and solidarity.

**BASIS OF THIS AGREEMENT**

- A. Food Secure Canada has approved the volunteer research collaboration services of Heather Elliott
- To summarize responses to the Assembly evaluation working with other team members (Charles Levkoe, Susanna Klassen and others)
  - To strive to faithfully and succinctly write a report with those findings, according to the agreed upon framing with the research team.
  - To participate in briefings with FSC board and staff as required.
  - To organize and/or participate in interviews and focus groups with Assembly participants and organizers, when feasible.

- B. The Volunteer Research Collaborator will provide such services on behalf of Food Secure Canada on the terms and conditions contained in this Agreement. Food Secure Canada's Intellectual Property policy applies to this agreement. The Volunteer Research Collaborator cannot discuss publicly or publish any findings obtained directly from these above listed services without the prior consent of Food Secure Canada.
- It is understood that the Volunteer Research Collaborator will include information from the Assembly evaluations, as well as other information obtained from her participation with FSC (including but not limited to conversations with FSC staff, board and members; interviews; focus groups; etc.), in her Master's thesis (at Concordia University, under the supervision of Monica Mulrennan and Alain Cuerrier) as well as in at least one published article. FSC recognizes and affirms this objective and its willingness to support it. In conformity with Food Secure Canada's Intellectual Property Protocol for Academic Collaboration, no publication will proceed without FSC's consent.

**FOOD SECURE CANADA AND THE Volunteer Research Collaborator AGREE AS FOLLOWS:**

**1. CONSULTING SERVICES**

**1.1 Retainer.** Food Secure Canada retains the volunteer research collaborator to provide the Agency with the consulting services outlined in Section A, free of charge. In turn, Food Secure Canada will integrate the research collaborator in the evaluation activities for the 10th FSC Assembly. She will be allowed access to internal documents and organize and/or participate in interviews and focus groups, to be defined together with the executive director. Work to be supervised by Susanna Klassen and Charles Levkoe in consultation with Diana Bronson.

**1.2 Term of Agreement.** The term of this Agreement shall be from December 4, 2018 to March 30th, 2019. Subject to Section 5 below, this contract can be extended by mutual written agreement of the parties

**1.3 Consulting Fees.** There are no fees attached to this contract.

**1.4 Provision of Services.** The Services to be provided hereunder to Food Secure Canada by the Volunteer Research Collaborator shall be provided by Heather Elliott. It is agreed and acknowledged that the Volunteer Research Collaborator and the Associates will provide services to other persons, firms and corporations.

**2. OWNERSHIP AND USE OF MATERIALS**

**Exclusive Property.**

**2.1** Written materials and other deliverables directly resulting from this Agreement will become the exclusive property of Food Secure Canada in so far as they are part of a internal evaluation

process. The Volunteer Research Collaborator however is able to use the data to generate other academic papers, noting that those which are to be published will require FSC consent.

### 3. CONFIDENTIALITY

**3.1 Confidential Information.** In the course of performing the Services, the Volunteer Research Collaborator will have access to, will encounter, or will be entrusted with certain confidential information concerning business, financial and other private affairs of Food Secure Canada. Confidential information means, without limitation, non-public information about donor and volunteer lists, employment records and policies, operational methods, marketing plans and strategies, financial data, evaluation materials and research programs. Confidential information shall also include any information which is marked or otherwise identified by Food Secure Canada as being proprietary or confidential, and shall further include any information which the Volunteer Research Collaborator should reasonably perceive as being confidential by its nature or by the circumstances of its use, access or safekeeping. However, confidential information shall not include information that is in the public domain through no act or fault of the Volunteer Research Collaborator.

**3.2 Non-Disclosure.** The Volunteer Research Collaborator shall hold confidential information in strict confidence and trust on behalf of Food Secure Canada. Except with the prior written consent of Food Secure Canada, neither the Volunteer Research Collaborator nor its associates shall directly or indirectly disclose any such confidential information to any person, nor shall the Volunteer Research Collaborator use or copy the same for any purpose except as is specifically necessary for the Volunteer Research Collaborator to provide the consulting services. These restrictions on the disclosure and use of confidential information shall apply to the Volunteer Research Collaborator for the term of this Agreement and thereafter.

### 4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

**4.1 Definition.** A conflict of interest is defined as a situation whereby the Volunteer Research Collaborator has a direct or competing interest with Food Secure Canada or the Agency's activities. This competing interest may enable the Volunteer Research Collaborator's consultants, sub-contractors, or employees to be in a position to benefit personally from the situation, or as a result of their participation in that situation, Food Secure Canada may not be able to achieve its best results.

**4.2 Resolution.** The Volunteer Research Collaborator agrees to work with Food Secure Canada to resolve any conflict of interest that arises to the satisfaction of the Volunteer Research Collaborator and Food Secure Canada. In the event a satisfactory resolution is not possible, this Agreement shall be immediately terminated.

### 5. TERMINATION

**5.1 Termination of Agreement.** Either party may terminate this Agreement for any reason with legitimate cause by giving the other party two weeks' notice or payment in lieu thereof.

**6. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**6.1 Entire Agreement.** This Agreement constitutes the entire Agreement between the parties with respect to all of the matters herein and its execution has not been induced by, nor do any of the parties rely upon or regard as material, any representations or writings whatever not incorporated herein and made a part hereof and may not be amended or modified in any respect except by written instrument signed by the parties hereto.

**6.2 Assignment.** This Agreement may not be assigned by the Volunteer Research Collaborator.

**6.3 Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Province of Quebec and the parties agree irrevocably to conform to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of such Province.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the parties have duly executed this Agreement.



Diana Bronson, Executive Director  
Food Secure Canada

Date: 18 December 2018



Heather Elliott  
Concordia University

Date: 18 December 2018

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the parties have duly executed this Agreement.



**Appendix 3: Office of Research Ethics Certification****CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY  
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

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Name of Applicant: Heather Elliott  
Department: Faculty of Arts and Science\Geography, Planning & Environment  
Agency: N/A  
Title of Project: Unsettling the Table: Settler Colonization and the Food Movement

Certification Number: 30010746

Valid From: February 05, 2019 To: February 04, 2020

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Hebblethwaite".

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Dr. Shannon Hebblethwaite, Vice Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

## **Appendix 4: Executive Summary of Food Secure Canada's 2018 Post-Assembly Questionnaire Responses**

### **Executive Summary**

Prepared by Heather Elliott and Joyce Liao

#### **A positive experience for growth and inspiration**

Overall, many people had a positive experience of the Assembly. The great majority of respondents felt that it was motivating to be around so many inspiring people and projects connect their own work to the bigger picture. Many were impressed by the diversity of topics and presenters. Many mentioned sharing these experiences, as well as specific content and contacts, with their colleagues, community partners, and wider networks. In particular, many respondents said that the Assembly allowed them to understand the impacts of structural racism in the food system and the need for real change within and through the food movement.

#### **Creating safer spaces**

While some respondents expressed that the Assembly felt welcoming and safe, others shared experiences of unsafety and distress at the treatment of others. In particular, a significant number of respondents felt that the Indigenous woman's intervention on the topic of racial tensions between farmers and Indigenous people at the end of Saturday night's plenary should have been addressed on the spot, and that this lack of response led to the boycott by Indigenous people and people of colour the next day. Others reported that a young woman of colour was excluded from certain sessions as well as a disturbing incident of the policing a black person attempting to pick up their lunch. Numerous respondents also shared that they felt unsafe or triggered during sessions. Nevertheless, there was a general appreciation for the board's transparency, willingness to have hard conversations and openness to change. A number of respondents suggested the board continue on with this work by consulting directly with those who named feeling unsafe. A number of suggestions were made by respondents to help address these concerns.

#### Suggestions for future assemblies

##### **Intentional spaces**

- There was a clear desire by respondents for more participatory spaces where they could engage with presenters and other participants on specific topics of interest
  - Specifically, creating caucuses where communities can gather and dialogue on issues pertinent to themselves
- Many folks highlighted the importance of holding a safe space for Indigenous folks, where smudging was available, as well as the presence of an Elder throughout the entire Assembly.

- Other spaces where uncomfortable/triggered individuals could speak to active listeners would be beneficial

### **Accountability**

- Ground rules for the creation of safer spaces to be shared and agreed upon in advance (with registration), and then reminders given at the start of each session;
- Land acknowledgements at the beginning of each session;
- More and better moderation of sessions. Anti-oppression training is needed for FSC moderators;
- Better representation of communities of colour, Indigenous people, youth and those in situations of poverty throughout the Assembly (not just in their respective streams) as well as the entire planning process. Avoid having others speak on their behalf;
- Finding a way to give anonymous feedback during the Assembly itself so that concerns can be addressed on the spot (feedback boxes after each session, presence of an ombudsperson);
- Food provided to participants should reflect the values of the organization, and showcase the joy of eating with a diversity of cultures.

### **Increase accessibility**

- Many respondents felt that the cost was a barrier to participation in the Assembly and suggest bursaries to support low-income or marginalized groups to attend
- Many francophone respondents noted that many sessions were not translated to French, as well as a tendency to switch to English even in French presentations
- Respondents also noted that having the sessions spread over multiple buildings made them hard to access, and that many of the rooms were too small, forcing attendees to stand or sit on the floor.
- Particular attention is also needed to facilitate the participation of elders.

### **Quality above quantity**

- While many expressed gratitude for being able to meet with such a vast, diverse network, the sheer size and scale of the event made it challenging for some folks to foster meaningful connections.
- With full schedules, it was challenging for participants to take time to relax, socialize, self-reflect and unpack learnings from the day.
- Respondents suggested regional gatherings would perhaps be more nourishing and helpful. These could occur bi-annually alongside or instead of the large national gatherings.

### Suggestions for structural change within FSC

- The board and staff need to undergo a process of coming to terms with systemic racism within FSC and their role of perpetuating it within the food movement;
- Create leadership positions within FSC for people of colour and Indigenous people;
- Find ways to address systemic racism without relying on the emotional labour of those most affected. White folk must take responsibility while following the guidance of people of colour and Indigenous people;
- Direct efforts to create regional hubs through roundtables and localized gatherings;
- Provide space and time for bottom-up advocacy work to be community-driven;
- Prioritize issues concerning Indigenous communities and marginalized populations.

**Appendix 5: Template Recruitment Email for Interviews**

*Template for the email sent to selected Food Secure Canada Staff/Board/Participants as an invitation to participate in an interview. This email was personalized according to participant, their role at FSC and the researcher's relationship to them.*

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview that I am organizing with organizers and participants as follow-up to Food Secure Canada's 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly that took place in Tio'Tia:ke (Montreal) last November. My name is Heather Elliott, and after working in the food movement for many years, I have recently begun a Master's degree at Concordia University, focusing on how the food movement can come to terms with its role in perpetuating or challenging settler colonization and realign itself to support Indigenous struggles for self-determination and territorial sovereignty. I have decided to focus on FSC and the events surrounding their 2018 Assembly in order to understand the complexities and tensions that arise within the food movement in relation to addressing these fundamental concerns.

In follow-up to the post-Assembly questionnaire, I consider it important to hear in more depth from those involved in organizing the Assembly (*or for participants, who were particularly impacted by the Assembly or had specific feedback about it*). \_\_\_\_\_ suggested I get in touch with you, as (*you played an important role in organizing the Assembly OR you gave important feedback post-Assembly*). If you agree to participate, the interview will take 30-60 minutes and can be done anytime from mid-February to mid-March 2019, at your convenience.

For more information, or if you have any questions or concerns, please be in touch. If you are willing to participate, I will follow up with you with a consent form that will outline the possibility for confidentiality as well as how this information will be shared and stored.

With respect, gratitude and solidarity,

Heather Elliott

*M.Sc Candidate- Geography, Planning and Environment*

*Concordia University*

## Appendix 6: Interview Guide Template

*The interviews were semi-structured, with an initial question guide, but conducted openly to follow the direction of interviewees. This interview guide template was adapted to each participant.*

- Ask for consent to tape record discussion and take notes. Explain how these will be used.
  
- **Introduction: (10 min)**
  - Introduce myself
  - Present purpose and context of interview
  - Explain *déroulement*: length, plan for our time together.
  - Confirm that the interviewee has signed a consent form, ask if there are any questions about it
  
- **Warm-up: (10 min)**
  - Ask for the interviewee to introduce themselves and their involvement with FSC:
    - How long have they been involved?
    - What roles have they played at FSC?
    - What do they hope to get out of their involvement with FSC?
  
- **Main questions: (30-40 min)**
  - What was your specific involvement in FSC's 2018 Assembly?
  - How did that involvement go/feel for you?
  - How would you have liked that involvement to have been different?
  - What suggestions to you have with respect to that role at future Assemblies?
  - *For Indigenous people: How has your involvement with FSC felt beyond the Assembly? Does FSC represent your concerns, worldviews and priorities? How could it better do so?*
  - *For staff and board members: Read out the suggestions from questionnaires and focus groups related to their area of involvement. Ask what opportunities and challenges they see in implementing them.*
  
- **Wrap-up: (5 min)**

- Ask if interviewee has anything to say that hasn't yet been addressed.
  - Check-out: How has the interview felt for the interviewee?
  - Open question: next steps? Would they like to be involved in further research or action on the topics discussed today? Would they like to receive updates?
- 
- **Closing: (5 min)**
    - Thank you with small gift or payment to interviewee.
    - Explain how to follow up with me for questions or clarifications.
    - Confirm that I will send back a transcript of the interview within the month.

**Appendix 7: Timeline of Food Movement Events Attended**

*I considered the official participant observation to be done between September, 2018, and December, 2019, and so have only included events during this time period.*

Date	Location	Organiser	Title of event
September 13th, 2018	Montreal, QC (Concordia University)	Aboriginal Student Resource Centre	Fall Feast
October 13th, 2018	Montreal, QC	Club populaire des consommateurs de Pointe Saint-Charles	Fête des récoltes
October 26th, 2018	Montreal QC (Concordia University)	Center for Teaching and Learning	Decolonizing academia- Land pedagogy
October 26th, 2018	Kanesata :ke	Nations Garlic	Garlic planting day
November 2-4th, 2018	Montreal, QC (Concordia University)	FSC	10th Assembly: Resetting the Table
November 15th, 2018	Montreal, QC (Concordia University)	Me	Focus Group on Decolonizing community agriculture
November 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	Montreal, QC (Concordia University)	Cinema Politica	First Daughter and the Black Snake, a screening and discussion with Winona Laduke
November 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	Kahnawake	Me	Meeting with Tiio Hemlock and visit to First Nations' Regional Adult Education Center's garden
December 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	Montreal, QC (Concordia University)	Center for Teaching and Learning	Decolonizing academia- Community-based Education in Food Sovereignty
December 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	Montreal, QC (Native Montreal)	Native Montreal	Christmas Party and Feast
February 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Montreal, QC (Concordia University)	First Voices Week	Indigenous cuisine with Treena Delormier and others



February 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Remotely	NFU webinar	Indigenous Solidarity Webinar with Danielle Boissonneau & Adrienne Lickers Xavier
March 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Montréal, QC (Bibliothèque Georges-Vanier)	Midnight Kitchen	Farming While Black with Leah Penniman
March 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Montreal, QC (Grand Potager)	Grand Potager	Seed Sale
May through July, 2019	Montreal, QC	Club populaire des consommateurs	Collective gardening sessions
June 6-9 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Norton, MA	International Herbal Symposium	Multiple events
June 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Remotely	FSC	Improving the accessibility of sustainably-produced foods in Canada - Key Findings of a Food Secure Canada Research Project
June 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2019	Montreal, QC (Parc Arthur-Therrien)	Native Montreal	National Aboriginal Day (I volunteered)
September 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Ormsville, QC	Jardins de la Résistance	Harvest Party
September 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Grenville, QC	Camp Amy Molson	Harvest Party
October 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Montreal, QC	Missing Justice	Gathering to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2spirited people
October 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Remotely	National Farmer Union's Indigenous Solidarity Working Group	Webinar with Priscilla Settee
October 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Montreal, QC (Centaur Theater)	Festival Interculturel des Contes	Storytelling: On the buffalo hunt, Métis-style with Bruce Sinclair
December 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Montreal, QC (Santropol Roulant)	FSC	Annual General Meeting followed by <i>Visioning Dialogue: Walking the long path to food system transformation</i>