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Native Youth Contributions to Indigenous Sovereignty and Climate Justice in the #noDAPL Movement

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Abstract

Using the #noDAPL movement and Indigenous protest actions associated with this movement as a case study, this thesis analyzes how the persistence of Indigenous communities in the United States depends on decolonization and resurgence actions that involve youth activism and leadership. This can be understood based on the premise that connection to land is inextricably linked to Indigenous peoples, and harm to or extraction of land through colonization is seen as a direct threat to the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. The central focus of this thesis lies in understanding how in the #noDAPL movement Indigenous youth are mobilizing through community organizations to reclaim control of land in a way that reverses established colonial relations and revives struggling communities. I argue that Indigenous youth lead the conversations and structure of decolonization and resurgence into a new framework that links climate justice and Indigenous sovereignty. This reveals the broader implications of climate change, as well as how Indigenous peoples are important members of the climate justice movement.

Keywords: #noDAPL movement; Indigenous youth; decolonization, Indigenous sovereignty; resurgence; grounded normativity

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Introduction

"Our ancestors are the ones that died fighting for this land, so that makes me think that we have a duty to fight for our land. And we are obligated to protect the soil and the water and everything that is sacred like that. Whatever happens with the pipeline and climate change -- that is going to be affecting us, this generation. And it will affect the next generation too."

Tokata Iron Eyes (as cited in Dhillon 2016)

On December 4, 2016, twelve year-old Tokata Iron Eyes, president of the Standing Rock Youth Council, and other Indigenous youth water protectors stood alongside community members and allies, holding their breath as they waited to hear the decision of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Whether or not they decided to approve Energy Transfer Partners' easement to continue the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) under Lake Oahe, the protectors knew something monumental was about to happen that would affect the future of Indigenous peoples in the United States. When the statement was released, cheers erupted across the Sacred Stone Camp, and a celebration began that lasted well into the night and the next few days. After months of determination and many demonstrations, the water protectors of the Sacred Stone Camp were victorious. But even in the moment of victory and joyous celebration, protectors were smart enough to know their land and water were not secure ("Voices for Standing Rock: Tokata Iron Eyes" 2016).

History had taught them not to trust the United States government to protect land and resources central to the identity and wellbeing of Indigenous people. The U.S. continues to extract fossil fuels, land, and other resources from Indigenous lands, furthering the colonization of Indigenous peoples in America. Yet Indigenous communities have resisted and fought back to protect their land. They have built strong defenses and programs in their communities to strategically work towards decolonization and sovereignty. They have created organizations to empower youth and ensure that future generations persist in the face of oppression. Resistance to

the DAPL demonstrates the success of these defense programs because in this movement youth have emerged as leaders, bringing conversations of decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty to the forefront of national and international concerns. Additionally, this movement reveals the capability of the younger generation to prove that conversations of climate justice need to include Indigenous voices, particularly the voices of youth, because the future of Indigenous sovereignty depends on climate justice.

As an Environmental Studies major from a small liberal arts school in Maine, I find this movement compelling because it has implications for the future of the environmental movement and the Indigenous rights movement. I have been an advocate for Indigenous rights throughout my time at Bates College and I have recognized an overlap in this interest and my focus of study in Environmental Studies. This movement is a powerful indication of the many ways these seemingly separate subjects are inextricably linked. In this thesis, I analyze the factors that contribute to this link and what this means going forward in discussions of climate change.

Timeline of DAPL Events[1]

A detailed background and introduction of the Dakota Access Pipeline is crucial to understanding the various actions of the #noDAPL movement. The DAPL is an internationally funded pipeline that runs approximately 1,172 miles across North Dakota, through portions of South Dakota and Iowa, and ends in Illinois (ETP 2016, p. 1). The pipeline delivers crude oil from the Bakken and Three Forks production areas in North Dakota to market centers in the Midwest where oil is shipped to refineries in East Coast and Midwest states. In Patoka, Illinois, the DAPL also connects to the Energy Transfer Crude Oil Pipeline (ETCOP), a converted

[1] The majority of this background was taken from my paper written for the class *Social Movements, NGOs, and the Environment* on December 14, 2016, titled, "Was the Dakota Access Pipeline Permit Denied Because of Strategic Essentialism?"

trunkline natural gas line which travels south to the Sunoco Logistics Terminal in Nederland, Texas, where the oil is sent to many different refineries throughout Texas (ETP 2014, p. 1). The DAPL and ETCOP combined transport the majority of the crude oil taken from the Bakken and Three Forks production areas. Together the DAPL and ETCOP have become the nearly 2,000 mile long Bakken Pipeline Project. The pipeline carries up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil per day, half of Bakken's current oil production (ETP 2016, p. 1).

On June 25, 2014, the project was announced and approved by Energy Transfer Partners L.P. (ETP), the company that managed the construction, planning, and overall execution of the project (ETP 2014, p. 1). The announcement projected that the pipeline would be complete and in service by the end of 2016. ETP's purpose statement for this project is to make the United States "truly independent of energy from unstable regions of the world," provide "statistically the safest and most reliable mode of transporting crude oil," and "create 8,000–12,000 construction jobs and up to 40 permanent operating jobs" while bringing "significant economic benefits to the region that it transverses" (ETP 2016, p. 1). ETP currently owns and operates approximately 35,000 miles of natural gas and liquid natural gas pipelines in the United States in addition to the DAPL (ETP 2014, p. 1).

Before construction began, ETP was required to obtain permits from federal and state agencies, and to negotiate with private landowners and tribal reservations. The first consultations with tribal members began in September of 2014. At the time, former chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, David Archambault, expressed the Sioux Nation's opposition to the project. Despite this, the ETP continued the process of negotiation with private landowners and began an Environmental Assessment (EA). This assessment was required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for all lands crossed by a pipeline containing projects funded or authorized

by the federal government or lands crossed by a pipeline that have federal government flowage easements under management by the USACE (Dakota Access, LLC 2016, EA-10). The first draft of the EA was sent to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be edited, and on January 8, 2016, an assessment report was sent back to the USACE with comments about which parts of the report were inadequate (Strobel 2016, p. 1). There were three major concerns; impacts to drinking water resources, insufficient information about measures taken to limit pipeline construction and operation impacts, and segments of the pipeline that were omitted or forgotten in the report.

After pushback from members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, on March 11, 2016, the EPA sent another letter with additional concerns about the proximity of the DAPL to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and recommended that the USACE assess environmental justice impacts, coordinate with tribal governments, and disclose emergency preparedness measures (Strobel 2016, p. 2). Although there were maps included in the EA draft, no tribal lands or reservations were identified on the maps. In addition to this, the draft "did not include any information on coordination with tribal government other than in connection to historical and cultural resource impacts" and "no tribes were included in [the]… listing [of] federal, tribal, state, and local agency consultation and coordination" (Strobel 2016, p. 4). There is evidence of the USACE consulting the Standing Rock Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) on February 12, but there was no documented response to the urgent correspondence email sent to the USACE with concerns regarding DAPL's route near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, et al., Plaintiffs 2016, p. 24). The residents of Standing Rock Reservation were offended by what they felt was insufficient consultation and decided to take action.

On April 1, members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe began a prayer camp on reservation lands just a few miles from the proposed pipeline crossing. They spread the word to the whole Sioux Nation and people quickly responded, primarily youth. While at the camp, youth from the Sioux Nation decided to take a bold action and run to Omaha, Nebraska, to hand deliver a petition to the USACE. They left camp in the end of April and arrived in the beginning of May. Upon arrival, they decided to take an even bolder action and run to Washington D.C. in hopes of delivering their petition to President Obama and the USACE at their office in Washington, D.C. They left for this segment of the run on July 15, 2016. Tokata Iron Eyes participated in the run and, describes how "in the beginning it was just a couple of videos and a couple of kids, and it grew into such a huge and powerful movement" ("Voices From Standing Rock: Tokata Iron Eyes" 2016). From the start of the run to the end, the number of people supporting the runners' cause rapidly grew, and hundreds of people traveled to the Standing Rock Reservation to support the Sioux Nation. This led to the formation of the Sacred Stone Camp and other connected encampments which became a community of water protectors who camped for months to demonstrate their commitment to fighting the DAPL. This was the birth of the #noDAPL movement.

Unfortunately while they were running, on July 25, the USACE officially signed a document allowing the DAPL to cross underneath Lake Oahe. On July 27, 2016, the tribe officially sued USACE for its "profoundly inadequate" consultation with the THPO for the Sioux Nation and for violation of permits to address environmental concerns (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, et al., Plaintiffs v. USACE 2016, p. 26). On September 4, 2016, the construction team demolished a burial site that had cultural significance to the Sioux people (Ravitz 2016, p. 1). This was a major event that caused outrage because earlier the tribe had stated that

"destruction or damage to any one cultural resource, site, or landscape, contributes to destruction of the Tribe's culture, history, and religion. Injury to the Tribe's cultural resources causes injury to the Tribe and its people" (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, et al., Plaintiffs v. USACE 2016, p. 12).

On December 4th, 2016, Jo-Ellen Darcy, the assistant secretary of the US Army, issued a memorandum on behalf of the commander of the USACE. She wrote that the decision to allow the DAPL to cross under Lake Oahe "merits additional analysis, more rigorous exploration, and evaluation of reasonable siting alternatives, and greater public and tribal participation and comments… Accordingly, the Army will not grant an easement to cross Lake Oahe at the proposed location based on the current record" (Department of the Army Civil Works p. 2016). Construction was temporarily halted on the DAPL, but on January 24, 2017, President Trump issued an official memorandum and executive order to expedite the process of construction. The memorandum told the USACE to "consider… whether to rescind or modify" the December 4 Memorandum, and to "consider… prior reviews and determinations, including the Environmental Assessment issued in July of 2016… as satisfying all applicable requirements" (Office of the Press Secretary 2017). As a result of these documents, on February 8, 2017, the USACE granted the easement to ETP allowing the DAPL to traverse under Lake Oahe (USACE 2017).

Shortly after President Trump's memorandum the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe pursued further legal avenues to end construction of the DAPL under Lake Oahe, but in a legal decision on June 14, 2017, the court ruled that the DAPL could continue transporting oil (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, et al., Plaintiffs v. USACE 2017). After an appeal, on October 11, the court officially ruled that the DAPL can continue operating. However, an updated environmental review needed to be conducted by the USACE. On December 4, 2017,

a new court order was issued that required the USACE to complete oil spill emergency response plans with the Sioux Nation for Lake Oahe. In addition, the court ordered that an independent auditor be selected by the Sioux Nation to assure the USACE was adhering to the order, and that ETP must file regular reports on any incidents or repairs on the pipeline ("The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Litigation on the Dakota Access Pipeline" 2018). This is the last legal action that has been noted at this time, but it is likely that further court cases will ensue.

This timeline reveals two important themes that will reoccur throughout this thesis. First, from the beginning, the Sioux Nation has resisted the DAPL. They have pursued a variety of avenues to fight its completion, all for the purpose of protecting the integrity of the land and water at Standing Rock Reservation that is important to the health, wellbeing, and culture of the Sioux Nation. This is directly stated by the lawyers of the Sioux Nation in the lawsuit between the USACE and the Standing Rock Sioux. Second, youth have participated greatly in resistance to the DAPL, and their actions have shaped the #noDAPL movement'

Literature Review

What is most remarkable about the #noDAPL movement is how rapidly it gained both national and international support. This is certainly not the first time Indigenous people have been oppressed by the United States government, and will not be the last. However, knowing that this is not the first time Indigenous people have resisted colonization raises the questions; what about the Sioux Nation's resistance in #noDAPL made this movement a global phenomenon, and what are the larger implications of this movement? To start to answer this question, I looked at a variety peer-reviewed sources that analyze the #noDAPL movement.

Various scholars have attempted to answer these questions by studying different factors that contributed to the growth of #noDAPL. However, the movement itself is so recent, and in

many regards an ongoing event, that few scholarly resources have been published. An article by Hayley Johnson was published in the Fall of 2017 which focuses on the role social media played in the movement, specifically the capacity of social media to "empower historically disadvantaged groups that have often been misrepresented within traditional media outlets" (Johnson, H. 2017, p. 155). Johnson argues that mainstream media "continues to frame events using dominant frames that can minimize the message American Indians are trying to communicate through their protests" but social media gives American Indians the opportunity to "rebuke, alter, or control the dominant media narrative" (Johnson, H. 2017, p. 163). In other words, both historically and today, mainstream media has inaccurately represented the actions, intentions, and identities of Indigenous people in a way that contributes to their marginalization in mainstream society. In the #noDAPL movement, first-hand accounts from protesters' individual forms of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter created a window into real-time engagements that allowed social media users to interact with water protectors during the movement (Johnson, H. 2017, p. 164).

Johnson also discusses what types of issues water protectors brought to the attention of social media users in the #noDAPL movement. Ultimately, she says, "The utilization of social media to reach a worldwide audience and bring attention to the issues of environment, energy, and tribal sovereignty inherent in the struggle occurring at Standing Rock has had a powerful impact" (Johnson, H. 2017, p. 172). In this statement, Johnson identifies social media as an important factor in bringing issues of tribal sovereignty, energy consumption and infrastructure, and environmentalism to the forefront of global concerns during the #noDAPL movement. Additionally, she highlights how social media connected each of these ideas to the Sacred Stone Camp at Standing Rock Reservation and the construction of the DAPL.

Kyle Powys-Whyte has published multiple articles about the relationship between tribal sovereignty and environmentalism in the #noDAPL movement. In his article "The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and Settler Colonialism," he claims that the DAPL is a continuation of settler colonialism, citing disregard for ninetieth-century treaties and arrests for practicing prayer and ceremony in the #noDAPL movement, as evidence (Whyte 2017a, p. 158). Furthermore, he describes how settler colonialism is an environmental injustice because it "undermin[es] the ecological conditions required for Indigenous peoples to exercise their cultures, economies, and political self-determination" (Whyte 2017a, p. 165).

One of the clearest examples of the environmental injustice Whyte describes is the fact that the DAPL was rerouted from a crossing in Bismarck, North Dakota, to the crossing under Lake Oahe as a result of protests from non-Indigenous people in Bismarck, who were concerned about the potential impacts it would have to their water and environment. Indigenous concerns were disregarded and the U.S. failed to consider the cultural implications DAPL construction could have on the Sioux Nation. However, Whyte analyzes the environmental injustice impacts more deeply and examines how the DAPL furthers U.S. fossil fuel consumption, which contributes to climate change. He argues that climate change disproportionately impacts Indigenous peoples around the world, who are among the first climate. He specifically describes how the Sioux Nation is "concerned about drought in the region, leading to water scarcity, as well as stresses on Tribal agriculture, ranching, and wildlife habitat" (Whyte 2017a, p. 166).

In a separate article about the #noDAPL movement Whyte argues, "Stopping the DAPL is a matter of climate justice and decolonization for Indigenous peoples." He once again explains how the DAPL is both an example of colonization and environmental injustice and argues many of the most prominent examples of U.S. colonialism have "served to pave the way for the

expansion of extractive industries which scientists now identify as contributors to human-caused climate change." In conclusion he states, "We need to realize that protection of sacred sites and worries over contaminated water supplies are simultaneously concerns about climate justice and its relation to U.S. colonialism" (Whyte 2016c).

In December of 2016, the journal *Cultural Anthropology* published a series of short articles about #noDAPL that analyzed the "social, historical, cultural, and political significance" of the movement (Dhillon & Estes 2016). Like Whyte, several scholars point out the relationship between environmental justice, settler colonialism, and #noDAPL (Montoya 2016; Pasternak 2016; Spice 2016). Nearly every article in the series points to the history of Indigenous resistance and how anti-colonial and anti-extractivism events shaped #noDAPL (Howe and Young 2016; Waters 2016; Pasternak 2016; Mays 2016; Dhillon 2016b; Spice 2016; Avalos et. al. 2016). A few scholars highlight how the #noDAPL movement was largely led by youth activism (Dhillon 2016b; Avalos et. al. 2006). In this same series authors Kim TallBear and Jaskiran Dhillon discuss how women were at the center of the #noDAPL movement. Tallbear argues that Indigenous women resisted colonialism by leading water protectors in "caregiving" actions (TallBear 2016). She emphasizes that caretaking is not the "sole domain of cisgendered, biologically-reproductive women" and that women are not the only individuals in the movement who "caretake" (TallBear 2016). Despite this affirmation, she notes that the leadership of women contributed to #noDAPL being structured in a way that emphasized the actions of individuals fighting the movement as peaceful water protectors, not protesters.

Jaskiran Dhillon discusses the role of gender and also the role of youth activism in the #noDAPL movement. She has published multiple short articles outside of the *Cultural Anthropology* series that highlight the importance of youth leadership in the #noDAPL

movement, particularly the leadership of young Indigenous women. Like Whyte, she links colonialism to climate change and environmental injustice, but she goes further to link violence against Indigenous lands that results from colonialism to violence against Indigenous bodies, primarily those of young women, two-spirited people, and girls. Some examples of gender violence related to environmental injustice that she describes include extractive industry workers bringing violence and sex trafficking to reservations, murders and disappearances of women, and reproductive illness and toxic exposure, just to name a few (Dhillon 2016a). Indigenous women and youth, including two-spirit youth, are important leaders "because of their insight into how environmental injury carries violence across multiple aspects of Indigenous life and living" (Dhillon 2017b). Overall, she states, "close attention must be paid to the wisdom and knowledge of Indigenous youth and their communities as they attempt to heal our planet from the harm that comes in the wake of a never-ending demand for more energy" (Dhillon 2016a).

Although each of these authors and sources target a different aspect of the #noDAPL movement that is important to study, I found few articles besides the work of Dhillon that specifically studied Indigenous youth activism or directly quoted youth who have been identified as leaders of the movement through social media. In the *Cultural Anthropology* series introduction, Dhillon and Estes ask the question "how does the pivotal leadership of Indigenous youth and the convergence of allied struggles inform transformative political possibilities for decolonization?" and I think that this question deserves more attention (Dhillon & Estes 2016). What interests me the most about youth leadership in this movement can be broken down to two questions of my own: what compelled youth to devote so much time and energy into fighting #noDAPL; and what are the larger impacts of this activism? This thesis will tackle these questions.

My Interest

I cannot pinpoint a particular time when I first learned about #noDAPL because like many other social media users, the movement somehow slipped into my Facebook news feed and captured my attention. In the beginning of September 2016, I felt deeply invested in the movement despite the fact that my only involvement was a close following of social media posts and events. I greatly admired the actions of Indigenous youth who ran hundreds of miles to protect their water and raise awareness about the negative impacts of the DAPL. Although I did not have the opportunity to travel to the Sacred Stone Camp, I participated in #noDAPL protests locally, signed the petition, and supported the movement through social media. In retrospect, my engagement in the movement was negligible. However, my actions were like those of thousands of others across the world who were also invested in the movement despite the distance between them and the construction of the DAPL at Standing Rock Reservation.

The dedication and courage of water protectors at the Sacred Stone Camp and surrounding camps was powerful enough to cause individuals like myself, who do not have an immediate vested interest, to feel strongly enough to support the movement in whatever way possible. I started to research the environmental and social impacts of the #noDAPL movement and quickly realized how fundamentally wrong it is for the United States to support a pipeline that exploits Indigenous peoples and increases the national reliance on fossil fuels, furthering the climate crisis that becomes more visible every day. Furthermore, the DAPL is just one of many pipelines and resource extraction projects that continues to colonize Indigenous communities. The persistence of Indigenous peoples is constantly threatened by our society's reliance on fossil fuels, yet the voting majority continues to support the projects that develop the fossil fuel industry. The #noDAPL movement is historical because it is one of the most widely supported

Indigenous rights movements that has revealed to the world that the United States' governing system and energy consumption continue to colonize Indigenous communities.

Chapter Overview

To answer these questions, I have divided my research into four chapters. The first chapter gives a theoretical framework with relevant lenses that I will use to break down evidence and the second chapter provides a historic overview of events leading up to the movement that are crucial to examine before investigating the formation and impacts of the #noDAPL movement. The third chapter gives an analysis of the present-day decolonization actions of Indigenous peoples in the Sioux Nation on various reservations that target empowering youth, and finally the Fourth Chapter breaks down the #noDAPL movement and discusses the implications of youth activism in the #noDAPL.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will be defining 'youth' as individuals under the age of thirty, but primarily between the ages of ten and twenty-five. The reason for this is because the International Indigenous Youth Council (IIYC), a youth group that is central to this thesis, states that it "serves youth and young adults below the age of 30" (IIYC 2018). The majority of my evidence concerning the #noDAPL movement is taken from online news reports, social media posts, and public profiles of organizations and individuals involved in the movement. While it is important to recognize that my evidence is limited by the fact that it does not include interviews or personal communications with water protectors or members of the Sioux Nation, a massive pool of information exists in the internet, and this is how the vast majority of #noDAPL supporters got involved in the #noDAPL movement. Additionally, as Johnson argues, social media provides a platform for Indigenous peoples to self-represent in a way that did not exist

before. Therefore, I believe there is enough relevant evidence to address my research question in this thesis.

One of the biggest challenges I have encountered in research is finding information about the #noDAPL movement from reputable sources. My historical analysis and theoretical framework come from peer-reviewed books and journals and the statistics or facts about present-day conditions on reservations come from government issued sources and records. Information about the DAPL comes directly from ETP's website, the environmental assessment put forth by ETP, and legal documents of lawsuits between the Standing Rock Sioux ad USACE. Information about different programs and organizations that exist on reservations come directly from the websites of these sources, or from the websites of grant organizations that funded these programs. However, there are few peer-reviewed articles discussing the #noDAPL movement as demonstrated above, and therefore majority of my data comes from online news reports. To find the most accurate reports, I targeted sources that I trusted to be reliable such as *ABC News* and *New York Times*, and sources put forth by Indigenous peoples themselves such as *Indian Country Media Network*. When looking at the websites for official programs and organizations on reservations, I often followed links posted directly through these sources to news reports that they deemed reliable. When these options were not available, I looked for repetition of information from multiple new outlets and often watched YouTube videos to see footage of events described for affirmation. As a result, I believe that the information I have gathered researching the #noDAPL movement is reliable and can be used in this thesis as evidence.

Before delving into this evidence, I have constructed a theoretical framework for my thesis that covers three categories: post-colonial theory, Indigenous theory, and youth activism related to Indigenous theory. The purpose of including post-colonial theory is to provide an

overview of how non-Indigenous scholars have attempted to understand the process of colonization in different parts of the world. It shows that conversations of colonialism have been happening for a number of years, and theories of colonialism are continually critiqued in a way that has increased our knowledge of the many layers of colonialism. Additionally, trends appear in examples of colonization from different parts of the world, proving the far-reaching impacts colonization can have globally. However, there are major flaws in post-colonial theory, particularly that it largely ignores colonization in North America and Indigenous voices, and is situated under a name that assumes colonialism is a structure of the past. Indigenous theory, therefore, is the most central framework in this thesis. I discuss decolonization or the "repatriation of Indigenous land and life", resurgence or "reconnecting with [Indigenous] homelands, cultures, and communities", and grounded normativity or "place based practice informing Indigenous normative relationships" (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 1; Corntassel 2012, p. 97; Coulthard 2014, p. 13). These theories underlie my analysis in every chapter. I also discuss how these theories have been tied to youth activism, empowerment, and education by various Indigenous theorists.

Chapter Two examines the process of colonization, and how it has affected the Sioux Nation throughout history. I examine the way the United States has extracted resources from the Sioux Nation, but my main focus is how the Sioux Nation has resisted this colonization and extraction of land and resources. These early anti-colonial efforts prove the resilience and determination of the Sioux Nation to remain strong in the face of oppression and to fight for their future. The later parts of this chapter examine youth activism and leadership, primarily in the twentieth century and how this has been a strong force of resistance to colonization. These events have contributed greatly to the collective identity of the Sioux Nation and explain why the DAPL

causes trauma to the members of the Sioux Nation today. Additionally, this chapter starts to explain how the Sioux Nation was capable of building a strong resistance to the DAPL, based on their past experiences of resistance.

Chapter Three discusses how colonization has shaped present-day conditions and lives for the various tribes of the Sioux Nation. It discusses how systematic oppression has had detrimental impacts that can be observed on reservations. However, the purpose of this chapter is not to dwell on these conditions because doing so erases the narrative of resistance that explains how Indigenous communities continue to persist and get stronger every day. I analyze evidence of decolonization, resurgence, and grounded on reservations. These practices ensure in the future, members of the Sioux Nation will have a strong community and connection to land and culture. I specifically look at how these programs work towards empowering youth, and providing them with the knowledge, support, and tools they need to defend themselves and their communities from the continuing challenges of colonization.

In Chapter Four, I use the evidence of the previous chapters to examine the #noDAPL movement chronologically, and look for evidence of youth leadership. I argue that this leadership stems from the community organizations and programs discussed in the previous chapter. I look for evidence of youth using the knowledge of their communities and ancestors to protect their land, wellbeing, and culture from the DAPL. Furthermore, in the second part of this chapter, I look more deeply at what impacts this youth leadership has had on the future of Indigenous activism and the climate justice movement. The heart of my argument and answers to my research questions lie in this chapter. I argue first that youth were compelled to devote themselves to this movement because they were empowered by their communities to participate in resurgence, grounded normativity, and decolonization. They used the knowledge of their

communities and ancestors to create the force behind the #noDAPL movement and to maintain the integrity of their land and water, resources essential to Sioux culture and wellbeing.

Youth have adamantly fought the DAPL and the continuation of fossil fuel consumption that negatively impacts the futures of Indigenous communities around the world. In doing so, they have revealed the inextricable link between Indigenous sovereignty and climate justice. This movement has lasting impacts on youth, who realize the importance of their contributions to the future of Indigenous communities in North America and who continue to carry their message even after the #noDAPL movement is no longer in the global spotlight.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

"This movement is not just about a pipeline. We are not fighting for a reroute, or a better process in the white man's courts. We are fighting for our rights as the indigenous peoples of this land; we are fighting for our liberation, and the liberation of Unci Maka, Mother Earth. We want every last oil and gas pipe removed from her body. We want healing. We want clean water. We want to determine our own future."

LaDonna Brave Bull Allard (Allard 2017)

LaDonna Brave Bull Allard's involvement in the #noDAPL movement demonstrates that she is a force to be reckoned with, particularly her efforts to start the Sacred Stone Camp that became an iconic aspect of #noDAPL. She is a strong mentor, activist, and role model for water protectors and youth leaders. As a tribal elder, she has lived through decades of Indigenous oppression and exploitation, and her words in this epigraph reflect the wisdom she has gained from this perspective. She, like all other Indigenous people in the U.S., know that the DAPL is not an isolated event that causes harm to the quality of water and integrity of sacred sites; it is a continuation of the same process of settler colonialism. Resource extraction and the U.S. government's deliberate disregard for Native land and lives are part of this colonialism, and this is why Allard asserts that she and other water protectors are fighting for a healing process, and liberation for themselves and the Earth.

This chapter provides a theoretical overview of the structures of oppression that have shaped the lives of colonized peoples, and the different techniques Indigenous people have employed to resist colonization. There is a long history of colonization around the world, and although a variety of factors including race, gender, and geographic location influence how colonization is experienced, there are similarities in experience that should not be ignored. Theories emerge from trends in colonization around the world, and the convergence of these theories creates a powerful pool of knowledge that can be used to identify and then dismantle

structures of oppression. This overview will display why the construction of the DAPL is a continuation of colonialism, and more importantly, the deeper implications this pipeline has on the lives on Indigenous peoples in both the Sioux Nation and the United States.

I will start by discussing postcolonial theory and the ideas and critiques from theorists within this field including Fanon, Said, Bhabha, and Spivak. The ideas I have chosen to include are important to shaping my larger argument of how colonization affects and shapes society structures. However, I also use the ideas of Hulme, McClintock, and Indigenous theorists to critique the idea of postcolonial theory by questioning what the word postcolonial means and discussing who gets to contribute to this field of theory. This leads to my next section specifically about Indigenous theory. The ideas coming from this section are extremely important in shaping my larger argument in later chapters about the importance of youth empowerment established through community actions that focus on land reclamation and cultural practice. I talk in this chapter about how climate change contributes to the colonization of Indigenous communities. As a result, something I will argue in later chapters is that Indigenous efforts toward decolonization, or "repatriation of Indigenous land and life", are a form of climate justice (Tuck & Yang 2012, p.1). Overall, these ideas will become the basis for my explanation of why #noDAPL is a movement for climate justice, decolonization, and Indigenous sovereignty and reveal why the climate justice movement must include the voices of Indigenous peoples.

Ania Loomba writes, "colonialism… is best understood by not trying to pin it down to a single semantic meaning but by relating its shifting meanings to historical process" (Loomba 2005, p. 10). Her book *Colonialism and Postcolonialism* analyzes the work of famous theorists within these fields of study, and compiles ideas into an anthology that reflects this statement. I

use her work throughout this chapter and agree that there is no straightforward definition for all cases of colonization. However, I will arrive at a particular definition of what decolonization means for the Sioux Nation based on the historical context of their colonization by the end of this chapter. I have done this by combining different aspects of postcolonial theory and Indigenous theory that apply to the situation and context. This is the definition I will use throughout the rest of this thesis to inform my argument.

Post-Colonial Theory

One of the first and most famous thinkers in postcolonial theory was Frantz Fanon, a scholar who studied colonization within Africa. He published the book *Black Skin White Masks* in 1952. In this book he talks about the physiological effects of colonization (Loomba 2005, p. 125). He describes how there are ways to enforce colonization outside of military power, in which colonizers "entice… [colonized] peoples to identify, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profoundly asymmetrical and nonreciprocal forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the settler state and society" (as cited in Coulthard 2014, p. 25). In other words, Fanon asserts that the process of colonization is not just the result of one group having a stronger influence due to the strength of their army: it is also a social process that causes one group to feel inferior to another and experience oppression and colonization as a result. Colonialism is therefore psychopathological and "a disease that distorts human relations and renders everyone within it 'sick'" (Loomba 2005, p. 122). Fanon strongly believed that "it is the racist who creates his inferior," or that the colonizer has a perception of colonized people, which is then internalized and becomes the identity of those people (Fanon 2008, p. 69). In addition to his analysis of colonization as a physiological condition, Fanon writes about decolonization and anti-colonialism. In his book, *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon discusses the process of resistance to

colonization, and how the physiological trauma of colonization can be overcome by unification and revolt.

Another important theorist that broadened the field of postcolonial theory was Edward Said who wrote the book *Orientalism* in 1979. Said was one of the first scholars to discuss the idea of "colonial discourse" (as cited in Loomba 2005, p. 42). He argues that "the authority of academics, institutions, and governments… can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe" (as cited in Loomba 2005, p. 42). In other words, knowledge can become a tool for colonization. Throughout this book Said discusses how knowledge is biased and reinforces power structures within society. He discusses how it is important to question the underlying assumptions that shape various forms of knowledge and theory when understanding or analyzing a particular fact. Understanding "colonial discourse" reveals how Western knowledge has created and reified various ideas that inform our understanding of identity and culture associated with certain people and land. He argues "colonial discourse" even has the capability to influence the way that Indigenous people remember their past and self-represent today.

Some major critiques of Fanon's work within the field of postcolonial theory include claims that he does not recognize that the characteristics and experiences of colonized individuals differ, and that he works within the current hegemony to overcome colonialism instead of creating a counter-hegemony that challenges colonial ideas (Lazarus 1993). Neil Lazarus, a scholar who has extensively studied postcolonial theory writes, "Some theorists… have moved to repudiate his legacy, charging that his ideas are as saturated with essentialist, totalizing, and latently authoritarian tendencies as those of his bourgeois nationalist antagonists" (Lazarus 1993, p. 72). For example, Lazarus points out that Fanon does not utilize the local

knowledge of colonized individuals and does not acknowledge pre-colonial histories in his writing. As a result, he relies heavily on colonial discourse to shape his writing. Additionally, he uses the phrase "wiped out" to describe how Africans had experienced a complete loss of non-hegemonic ideas and experiences through colonization. This word choice assumes that Africans had completely lost their culture as a result of colonialism, a problematic assumption that is inaccurate and gives no agency to Africans who have retained parts of their culture.

Similarly, one critique of Said's postcolonial studies that is particularly powerful comes from Homi Bhabha, who argues that Said's perspective of "colonial discourse" ignores the resistance of colonized people throughout time, which neglects to tell the full story of colonialism (Williams & Chrisman 1994). By doing this, Said empowers the colonizers by taking away the agency of colonized populations, despite the fact that he is attempting to describe the ways that colonization has shaped knowledge in a negative way. This critique could also be applied to Fanon's theory. Bhabha instead describes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized through the idea of hybridity, or "the idea that colonial regimes fail to produce stable or fixed identities and instead the 'hybridity' of identities or the 'ambivalence' of colonial discourse more adequately describes the dynamics of the colonial encounter" (Loomba 2005, p. 92). This theory assumes that colonized populations continue to maintain some authority throughout the process of colonization.

An extremely important postcolonial theorist, Gayatri Spivak, critiques aspects of the theories presented by Fanon, Said, and Bhabha in her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (Spivak 1994). She challenges the writings of other postcolonial theorists by questioning their position within society. She writes, "The postcolonial intellects learn that their privilege is their loss. In this they are a paradigm of the intellectuals" (Spivak 1994, p. 82). I understand this to mean that

although Spivak acknowledges that she is "far from adverse" to learning and appreciating the value of the work coming from western theorists and non-western male theorists, she still recognizes that their work is biased and overlooks the lack of agency that colonized people have in the construction of theory (Spivak 1994, p. 91). In fact, she goes so far as to state that the subaltern or suppressed colonial subject can never truly speak because their voices will never be heard and correctly articulated in western frameworks. She focuses specifically on the position of subaltern women who are both oppressed by colonization and also by the patriarchy. Her work demonstrates how postcolonial scholars can continue to erase the perspectives and voices of colonized individuals despite the fact that the field of postcolonial studies attempts to do the exact opposite.

Critiques of Postcolonial Theory

The work of Spivak and Bhabha demonstrates how theorists who research postcolonialism regularly critique scholars within their own field of study for not recognizing the many layers of colonialism and what biases contribute to the systematic oppression of certain groups. These processes of critique reveal how colonialism is so deeply embedded in knowledge and as a result it is difficult to understand the many impacts of colonialism. Disagreements between postcolonial scholars have helped scholars to refine their ideas and slowly get closer to a clearer understanding of colonialism.

The field of postcolonial theory has received a variety of critiques outside of the discipline, and one reason for this is the assumptions and implications of the term postcolonial. One scholar, Anne McClintock, argues that the term postcolonial implies that there has been a linear timeline from "the pre-colonial," to "the colonial," to "the post-colonial," and this timeline can be misinterpreted as forward-thinking development (McClintock 1992, p. 85). She argues

this is a "premature celebration of the pastness of colonialism," and as a result it "runs the risk of obscuring the continuities and discontinuities of colonial and imperial power" (McClintock 1992, p. 88). What is important to recognize is that McClintock does not have misgivings about the theoretical substance of postcolonial theory, something that she directly states in her essay (McClintock 1992, p. 88). She finds it troubling and problematic to categorize postcolonialism, a field of study that works to counteract systems of colonization, under a name that implies colonialism exists in the past. This devalues how marginalized groups still experience colonialism in their daily lives. Peter Hulme has a similar critique and believes that "postcolonial is (or should be) a descriptive not an evaluative term" (as cited in Loomba 2005, p. 21). He argues that postcolonialism is a "*process* of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome" something that he argues is inescapable for most colonized people (as cited in Loomba 2005, p. 21).

Perhaps the biggest flaw in postcolonial theory that Hulme points out is that the ideas coming from this field neglect the perspective of Indigenous people from United States. This argument comes from a variety of scholars who, like Spivak, find that the field of postcolonialism overlooks the perspective of colonized peoples, who are excluded from conversations of colonization (Hulme 1995; Sugars 2004; Shackleton 2001). In 1995, Hulme argued "the inclusion of America will, and should, affect the shape and definition of the field [of postcolonialism]" (Hulme 1995, p. 119). Hulme argues that differences between colonialism, a topic extensively covered in postcolonial theory, and settler colonialism, the type of colonization that continues to exist in America, complicate understandings of colonialism.

Indigenous scholar Neal McLeod explains the difference between settler colonialism and colonialism through concepts of spatial diaspora and ideological diaspora. He describes spatial

diaspora as "the removal of an Indigenous group... from their land" and ideological diaspora as "the alienation from one's stories" (McLeod 2001, p. 19). I would argue that spatial diaspora does not exist without ideological diaspora, which begins to explain why settler colonialism is more pervasive and devastating than colonialism. It is possible to be colonized or suffer from ideological diaspora, yet to not suffer from displacement. However, in settler colonialism, colonized people suffer from both displacement and "ideological diaspora", causing marginalized groups that suffer from settler colonialism to feel the effects of colonization more prominently in their lives. As a result, the perspectives of Indigenous people in America, who continue to experience settler colonialism, are extremely important and should obviously be included in discussions that analyze colonialism.

Indigenous Theory

Incorporating voices of colonized groups from America requires empowering Indigenous scholars. However, the predicament of including Indigenous voices in postcolonial theory is that Indigenous peoples are forced to work within the structure and knowledge systems of Western thought that are shaped by colonialism. In the essay "Indigeneity and the Work of Settler archives," several scholars discuss how Western forms and archives of knowledge "deny the legitimacy of Native histories, stories, and meanings of place" which inform the basis of Indigenous knowledge and theory (Adams-Campbell, Falzetti, & Rivard 2014, p. 110). Additionally, in his book, *Red Skin White Masks*, Glen Coulthard describes how "structural change negotiated in a colonial cultural context will only achieve the further entrenchment of the social and political foundations of injustice, leading to reforms that are mere modifications to the pre-existing structures of domination." (Coulthard 2014, p. 159). Both of these arguments reveal

the flaws that come along with trying to work towards Indigenous sovereignty and dismantle colonialism in a Western framework

Like Coulthard, Leanne Simpson, an Indigenous scholar and activist from Canada, argues is that there are two ways to work towards Indigenous liberation. The first is by using conventions of the Western academy to critique settler colonialism, and the second is to "choose to continue to produce knowledge and theory in opposition to the academy as resistance, resurgence, and sustenance through our own systems of knowledge" (Simpson 2017, p. 31). She argues that both of these methods are valid, and many Indigenous peoples use a combination of both. However, the most important thing she argues is that "without the knowledge, analysis, and critique produced by Indigenous people… the academy cannot have a full understanding of colonialism as a process" (Simpson 2017, p. 31). As a result, I used some discussion of ideas produced through Western academy to contextualize my research and provide a discussion the impacts of colonialism, but I center my research in the ideas coming from the field of Indigenous theory. The main concepts I explore in this section include extractivism, decolonization, resurgence, and grounded normativity. I then discuss how these concepts relate to environmental justice, climate justice, and youth empowerment.

Simpson defines settler colonialism as a process of controlled points of interaction such as consultations and negotiations with Indigenous peoples, policy, and laws that affect Indigenous communities (Simpson 2017, p. 45). These processes "work together as a cohort to maintain the structure" (Simpson 2017, p. 45). She argues that each of these examples seek to "consolidate power, to neutralize [Indigenous] resistance, to ultimately fuel extractivism" (Simpson 2017, p. 45) Simpson defines extractivism as "taking something, whether it's a process, an object, a gift, or a person, out of the relationships that give it meaning, and placing it

in a nonrelational context for the purposes of accumulation" (Simpson 2017, p. 201-202). This definition includes physical resources such as land, fossil fuels, and water as objects that can be extracted, but also includes Indigenous knowledge and culture in the category of things that can be extracted. People can be extracted through assimilation and taken from their homelands into a non-relational context. Through this definition, settler colonialism is centered on the dispossession of anything that rightfully belongs to the Indigenous peoples, including both resources and identity for the purposes of obtaining power over that Indigenous group. In the process of this dispossession, the meaning and context attached to identity and resources is lost. Similar to her discussions of producing Indigenous knowledge and theory in opposition to the academy of Western knowledge as resistance, Simpson argues that the best way to overcome the structure of colonialism is not by "Indiginizing the process," and attempting to assert Indigenous voices into policy and negotiation, it is by creating a new structure of communication founded in Indigenous theories of decolonization, resurgence, and grounded normativity (Simpson 2017, p. 47).

The majority of Indigenous scholars I will be using for my paper do not dwell on the reality of colonialism. Instead they look into ways to combat this oppression as Indigenous people in America have historically done, something I will discuss further in Chapter Two. Gerald Taiaiake Alfred writes, "we [must] choose to *turn away* from the legacies of colonialism… and take on the challenge of creating a new reality for ourselves and for our people" (as cited in Coulthard 2014, p. 154). This requires "an ethic of incommensurability" or deep questioning of the assumptions of ownership (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 35). In fact, an ethic of incommensurability leads to a questioning of the legitimacy of nations like the United States, that are built on stolen land. Clearly this kind of questioning is unlikely to occur from the higher

institutions that function in our society: rather, it is more likely to result from the field of Indigenous theory.

Indigenous theory should therefore focus on a discussion of what decolonization is and means because this is the primary method of counteracting the processes of colonization. In their article "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang give a foundation to understanding decolonization. One important thing that Tuck and Yang point out is that "decolonization is not accountable to settlers, or settler futurity. Decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity" (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 35). Therefore decolonization is not about negotiating or finding a way to work with the settler state; it is about focusing on Indigenous lives and people and their independence. They argue, "Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools" (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 1). This article acknowledges how knowledge systems and social structure are created and influenced by settler colonialism, but describes that decolonization is accomplished by dismantling the very foundation of settler colonialism; the forced dispossession of land. When decolonization becomes a metaphor, "it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future" (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 3). It is extremely important to acknowledge the sole purpose of decolonization as repatriation of Indigenous land and life in order to maintain the legitimacy and power of this word and action.

In his article "Re-envisioning Resurgence: Indigenous Pathways to Decolonization and Sustainable Self-determination*,"* Jeff Corntassel discusses three pathways to decolonization that have been monitored by the nation state and are not been successful in furthering decolonization. These pathways are: one, focusing on human rights specifically related to recognition for

Indigenous self-determination, two, reconciliation with the nation state, and three, gaining resources to work within the capitalist system (Corntassel 2012 p. 96). Corntassel argues that "overall, the rights discourse has serious limitations in terms of its potential as a remedial form of justice," and that "reconciliation is framed according to the logic of legitimating state authority" (Corntassel 2012, p. 96 & 97). Furthermore, gaining resources to work within a capital system forces Indigenous peoples to exploit their land and culture for the purposes of economic gain. Instead, Corntassel advocates for resurgence, an approach that turns inward and away from the distractions posed by colonizers and instead focuses on transforming a fight for human rights into a search for what responsibilities Indigenous peoples have toward the Earth. He believes that instead of looking to sell resources for economic gain, Indigenous peoples should focus on fostering relationships with other communities and forming a network of support. Corntassel believes that instead of searching for reconciliation, Indigenous people should focus on "reconnecting with homelands, cultures, and communities" (Corntassel 2012, p. 97). Because resurgence is an act of reconnection, it is built through Indigenous history and culture and rooted in land and sovereignty. Additionally, resurgence as a practice requires maintaining a positive relationship with the land, and actively protecting it from harm. As a result, resurgence is environmental activism.

Like Corntassel, Leanne Simpson also advocates for resurgence. She talks specifically about "resurgent organizing," something she describes as

> building a generation of Indigenous nationals from various Indigenous nations who think and act from within their own intelligence systems; who generate viable Indigenous political systems; who are so in love with their land, they are the land; who simply refuse to stop being themselves; who refuse to let go of this knowledge; and who use that refusal as a site to generate another generation who enact that with every breath, birth, and political engagement and in every moment of their daily existence (Simpson 2017, p. 188-189).

She describes how Indigenous people often spend their lives looking into the "colonizer's mirror," and in doing so are always faced with a reflection of how the state wants to see them. She asserts that Indigenous peoples must step away from this mirror and focus on self-development, and in the process create a strong generation that has the power to fight for Indigenous liberation. Her theory of "resurgent organizing" serves as a powerful antidote to the "colonizer's mirror" because it is a way for the next generations of Indigenous people to both love themselves and the land and focus on the development of their own knowledge and communities.

A similar theory that comes from the work of Glen Coulthard in his book *Red Skin White Masks* is grounded normativity. He describes this as "modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and non-human others over time" (Coulthard 2014, p. 13). In other words, he discusses how Indigenous people's relationship with the land and the knowledge that comes from this relationship can become a model and a basis for how Indigenous people interact with other people, communities, and the environment at large. He discusses how the land is a "system of reciprocal relations and obligations [that] can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in non-dominating and non-exploitative terms" (Coulthard 2014, p. 54). Coulthard draws from the work of Vine Deloria Jr. in his 1972 book *God Is Red*, in which Deloria argues that the most significant difference between Indigenous and Western philosophical theories of metaphysics is the centrality of land to Indigenous existence (as cited in Coulthard 2014, p. 40). Deloria argues that "American Indians hold their lands— places —as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind" (as cited in Coulthard 2014, p. 41).

Coulthard uses this quote to emphasize how grounded normativity is built into the history and culture of Indigenous peoples.

Simpson, Corntassel, and Coulthard all highlight the importance of using Indigenous knowledge and worldviews that are rooted in a relationship with the land to inform actions and communication. One of the first steps Indigenous people must undertake to develop practices in grounded normativity, resurgence, and decolonization is to determine the many ways colonialism exploits the landscape and has changed Indigenous people's personal relationship with land and environment. In his article, "Indigenous Experience, Environmental Justice and Settler Colonialism" Kyle Powys-Whyte discusses the ways that settler colonialism has interfered with or erased Indigenous people's connection with the land (Whyte 2016a). He argues that in the simplest terms, settler colonialism is an environmental injustice. He writes, "Settler colonial theory… offers a structure of oppression based on one society's interference with and erasure of another society" (Whyte 2016a, p. 179). He argues that this process is deeply ecological because of the way settler colonialism disrupts ecosystems by the imposition of large numbers of people who carry out a variety of activities that contribute to land and ecosystem degradation.

Whyte states that "certain forms of environmental change and variability, whether triggered by pollution, landscape degradation or climate change, alter how people experience their place in the world" (Whyte 2016a, p. 183). This is particularly relevant for Indigenous people who, in the words of Deloria, "hold their lands— places —as having the highest possible meaning" (as cited in Coulthard 2014, p. 41). Whyte argues that "when one society causes… environmental change too quickly for another society to adjust without 'sustaining preventable harms' than that society has committed an environmental injustice" (Whyte 2016a, p. 186). When the landscape is changed even in the slightest way, it triggers an emotional trauma for

Indigenous people because their livelihood and culture are intrinsically linked to the land. Because nearly every form of settler colonial activities drastically changes the landscape that once belonged to Indigenous people, this emotional trauma is compounded with displacement and direct impacts to the physical wellbeing of Indigenous people.

Understanding settler colonialism as an environmental injustice reveals how Indigenous decolonization efforts must advocate for environmental justice. Additionally, if decolonization through resurgence and grounded normativity involves strengthening land-based ethics and maintaining a positive relationship with the land, tackling the environmental injustices of settler colonialism is essential to the success of these efforts. Therefore, environmental justice and decolonization are inseparable. Taking this idea even further, Whyte argues that "climate injustice is a recent episode of a cyclical history of colonialism inflicting anthropogenic (human-caused) environmental change on Indigenous peoples" (Whyte 2016b, p. 88). In his paper, "Is it Colonial Déjà Vu? Indigenous Peoples and Climate Injustice," Whyte argues that the negative impacts of climate change disproportionately target Indigenous communities "because of how colonialism, in conjunction with capitalist economics, shapes the geographic spaces they live in and their socio-economic condition" (Whyte 2016b, p. 88). Displacement through settler colonialism has caused Indigenous peoples to live in some of the highest risk places as the impacts of climate change become more dangerous. Furthermore, the fact that Indigenous culture and identity are linked to land contributes to disproportionate impacts Indigenous communities face from climate change. The 2014 U.S. National Climate Assessment states that Indigenous people will face 'loss of traditional knowledge in the face of rapidly changing ecological conditions, increased food insecurity… changing water availability, Arctic sea ice loss, permafrost thaw, and relocation from historic homeland' as negative impacts of climate change"

(as cited in Whyte 2016b, p. 95). These examples highlight the extensive impacts climate change has specifically to Indigenous people who have been put in high risk situations as a result of settler-colonialism.

An aspect of Indigenous theory that is of great relevance to this thesis is the relationship between decolonization, resurgence, grounded normativity, and Indigenous youth empowerment. Simpson addresses this in her theory of "resurgent organizing" (Simpson 2017, p. 188-189). She speaks of the importance of building a generation of Indigenous youth who embrace the ideas that come from resurgence theory, and implement them in their lives as mechanisms to overcome colonization. Speaking of her own children Simpson writes, "I see a strength in them that I don't see in myself" (Simpson 2017, p. 1). She attributes this strength to the lives they have lived growing up in a community of artists, makers, and elders, something that many older community members did not have the opportunity to experience due in part to assimilation. In her children Simpson sees "the ability to point out and name colonialism, resist and even mobilize to change it" (Simpson 2017, p. 1). Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, a scholar who also studies resurgence theory, discusses how a process of Indigenous regeneration should include "the transmission of Indigenous culture, spiritual teachings and knowledge of the land between Elders and youth" (as cited in Corntassel 2012, p. 97). Passing knowledge down through generations by establishing a relationship between elders and youth is extremely important to the maintenance of oral tradition and traditional knowledge.

Both Simpson and Alfred highlight the role youth play in decolonization and Indigenous liberation. However, I have observed in my research that, overall, the importance of youth empowerment and activism in decolonization practices does not feature prominently in Indigenous theory. The work of Simpson and Alfred is fairly new and introduces ideas of youth

activism that could be expanded upon. Jaskiran Dhillon comments on the role of youth activism in the Idle No More Movement in the conclusion of her book, *Prairie Rising Indigenous Youth, Decolonization, and the Politics of Intervention* (Dhillon 2017, p. 247). She argues that this movement has revealed how Indigenous youth have been front-line activists in the fight for decolonization in Canada, and they have fought with both passion and power (Dhillon 2017, p. 247). As a result of this fact and an analysis of present-day social conditions for Indigenous youth, she states that "Finding ways to support Indigenous youth who are part of this front line resistance work should be foundational to the way we are thinking about decolonization and Indigenous resurgence" (Dhillon 2017, p. 247). She believes that youth empowerment and activism should be a central focus to Indigenous theories that work towards decolonization. Furthermore she says, "If we are going to take seriously the leadership role that can be assumed by Indigenous youth in the fight for Indigenous freedom, then we need to identify concrete ways to bring those opportunities into being, for their leadership to flourish" (Dhillon 2017, p. 247).

Like Dhillon, I believe that youth empowerment should be featured more prominently in Indigenous theories, and the leadership Indigenous youth are capable of should be taken seriously. The actions of youth in the #noDAPL movement are the most powerful demonstration of how youth activism is a crucial tool for Indigenous liberation. The absence of theories that analyze youth empowerment and activism may be due in part to the fact that the majority of theorists are not young themselves and look at the world from a different perspective. This thesis will demonstrate the importance of youth leadership in the #noDAPL movement and demonstrate, as Dhillon says, why youth leadership should be taken seriously and supported by Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have covered different concepts of post-colonial theory including psychological aspects of colonialism, dismantling of knowledge assumptions founded through colonization, hybridity, and subaltern studies (Fanon 2008; Said 2003; Loomba 2005; Spivak 1994). I have covered Indigenous theories of decolonization, grounded normativity, and resurgence. I have discussed the connection between these theories and environmental justice, climate justice, and youth empowerment. Despite separating Indigenous theory and postcolonial theory, I think it is important to consider ideas coming from both realms of thought when attempting to understand colonialism. However, as Simpson argues, "without the knowledge, analysis, and critique produced by Indigenous people… the academy cannot have a full understanding of colonialism as a process" and therefore it is important to center research and discussion of Indigenous peoples around a framework of Indigenous theory (Simpson 2017, p.31).

Incorporating ideas from both postcolonial theory and Indigenous theory, I have created a definition of decolonization to apply in the context of the #noDAPL movement. It is important to remember the words of Tuck and Yang, "decolonization is not a metaphor," before constructing this definition (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 1). The action of decolonization is a powerful and meaningful process, and therefore this word should only be used when considering "repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck & Yang 2012. P. 1). The first step to decolonization is recognizing how colonialism has shaped the institutions of our society. It is recognizing that settler colonial nations are built on land that is stolen and beginning the process of repatriation of Indigenous land and life. The process of decolonization should be directed through resurgence and grounded normativity actions coming from Indigenous community activism and organization that focuses on land-based ethics. Finally, decolonization should both focus on empowering

youth and follow youth leadership to inspire a new generation of activists who have a different perspective and different forms knowledge. This definition of decolonization is what I will apply throughout this thesis to understand the actions of the Sioux Nation throughout the #noDAPL movement.

Chapter Two: History of Sioux Resource Extraction and Colonization by the United States

"Wopila (thank you) to all those who have come before us and those who continue to stand up and defend the survivors."

Sonny Skyhawk (Skyhawk 2014).

Sonny Skyhawk, an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, is a longtime advocate for Indigenous rights in the United States. He is a famous actor and the founder of American Indians in Film and Television and First Nations Image Foundation, two organizations that advocate for Indigenous self-representation in film and media. He also writes for Indian Country Today Media Network, and on June 25, 2014, published an article on the anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn discussing why it is still important to commemorate the actions of his Sioux ancestors. He writes that this day "marks the anniversary of one of the few times where our brave warriors, defending their way of life and their families, were victorious against a bigoted and far superior force, the U.S. Cavalry" (Skyhawk 2014). The Battle of the Little Bighorn was is just one example of the perseverance of the Sioux Nation, but there are countless examples throughout history of the Sioux peoples responding with resistance to similar events of extractivism, or dispossession of anything that rightfully belongs to the Indigenous peoples, including both resources and culture for the purposes of obtaining power (Simpson 2017, p. 201-202). In the epigraph that opens this chapter, Skyhawk describes the constant fight in the United States for Indigenous rights, a task that requires defending land and sovereignty. The perseverance of Skyhawk's ancestors to resist colonialism has paved the way for Sioux people that continue to fight today. Therefore, is important to recognize each of these events and consider how they have contributed to present-day lives and living conditions of members of the Sioux Nation.

This chapter provides an overview of events that demonstrate how the United States has extracted resources and colonized the Sioux Nation for nearly two centuries, and this has caused members of the Sioux Nation to carry historical trauma and feel anger and resentment towards the institutions that continue to colonize Indigenous people in the United States. These feelings are particularly prominent in the identities of youth who inherit memories from their ancestors and foresee a future of exploitation and colonization in their lives. After understanding the extraction events that cause historical trauma and resentment in the lives members of the Sioux Nation, it is possible to see the underlying layers of oppression and years of exploitation that continue with the construction of the DAPL. Therefore, the DAPL is more than just a pipeline that has the potential to cause harm to the health of Standing Rock Sioux community if it contaminates their water supply; it also endangers the sovereignty and perseverance of Indigenous peoples in the United States.

The examples covered in this chapter do not represent all of the events of extractivism and colonization experienced by the Sioux Nation because the list is so long. Instead it describes the extraction of resources that are incredibly important to both the culture and the wellbeing of the Sioux peoples. Each of the events of extraction covered in this chapter is characterized by a direct threat to Indigenous sovereignty and to the environment and integrity of Indigenous homelands. Many historical records discussing the relationship between Indigenous people and the United States neglect the perspective of the Indigenous people because knowledge is shaped by colonization, something Said describes as ‘colonial discourse’ (Williams & Chrisman 1994). The colonization of knowledge continues to oppress Indigenous people by taking away their agency and voice. Throughout this chapter I will attempt to use Indigenous perspectives and describe the actions of the Sioux Nation in response to various examples of resource extraction

to paint a more accurate picture. This gives the Sioux Nation the credit they deserve for their willpower and determination to persist. I discuss how this resistance is characterized by a goal to defend land and community from environmental injustice. I particularly focus on the actions of youth towards the end of this chapter because in the last few decades they have increasingly emerged as front-line participants and leaders in resistance movements. Understanding this will make it possible for me to argue in later chapters how the #noDAPL movement is a continuation of youth-led Indigenous resistance to colonization and environmental injustice.

History of Resource Extraction

Before the nineteenth century, for the most part, colonization did not negatively impact the lives of Sioux peoples like it did Indigenous peoples living on the East coast of North America who were displaced by colonies and settlement. In the early nineteenth century, the first U.S. traders began to head West driven by a demand for furs in Europe. Although U.S. settlers were not the only fur traders, they established a highly successful fur trade industry in the West. Beaver pelts were the primary focus initially, but the trade expanded to include bison, elk, wolf, fox, rabbit, deer, and bear furs (Peterson & Afinson 1985). At the time the region was dominated by nomadic hunter-gatherer societies. The fur trade created a partnership between the Native people in the region and settlers.

Patricia McCormack describes the early stages of fur trade in the U.S. as "far more than a first-stage colonial extractive industry forecasting the European settlement and national development of the United States and Canada… Rather, the fur trade… was an 'Indian trade.'" (as cited in Peterson & Afinson 1985). She argues Indigenous communities initially established control in the fur trade industry and benefited from a partnership with U.S. fur traders. This was because the participation of Native peoples in the fur trade, especially the Sioux Nation, was

critical to the success of this industry. Settlers relied on Native knowledge of the land as well as Native labor to supply the growing demand of furs. Native people traded furs for goods such as kitchen items, weapons, and money. Scholar Daniel Francis describes the type of contact between Native and non-Native populations as a flow of cultural influences. He writes, "Clearly dependence, with its connotation of inferiority, is not a word which accurately describes the results of [initial] contact between Indian and European material cultures" (Francis 1983, p. 63). He explains how traders began to adopt aspects of Native culture such as traveling in birch bark canoes, using snowshoes, and creating skin or bark shelters in the winter (Francis 1983, p. 63). Additionally, the contact between Native peoples and white traders resulted in intermarriage, which often led to traders adopting some of the beliefs and practices of their wives (Peterson & Afinson 1985).

However, things quickly began to change as the fur trade industry grew and overharvesting of furs began to endanger the populations of a variety of species native to the West. Some Indigenous people became dependent on the fur trade for a source of income, which gave traders power over the Native populations. Additionally, species that are central to Native peoples' spiritual beliefs were overharvested, which contributed to power the U.S. held over the Native populations. One significant example is the role that bison, often referred to as the 'American buffalo', play in Sioux culture. Charlotte Black Elk, a Lakota woman, explains that bison are "our shelter, our food, our weapons, our toys—we played with the toe bones that we called bone horses—and we made the ribs into sleds… [they] provided us with everything. And [they are] also a spiritual connection…. It's impossible to totally explain how important the buffalo is to us. The buffalo is life" (ICT Staff 2011). The demand for bison fur grew in the U.S. and Europe during this time period because it had become a cheap alternative to cattle leather

products which were an important industry. Bison were hunted at an increasing rate which greatly affected the Sioux Nation. Although the Sioux people contributed to the fur trade and the overharvesting of bison, their contributions were minor compared to the damage inflicted by settlers. The relationship between the Sioux Nation and the U.S. quickly changed as members of the Sioux began to protest the extreme overharvesting of bison. This was happening in the latter half of the nineteenth century, at the same time that people were beginning to settle in the West. Tensions between Natives and settlers grew, and as a result the U.S. government began to formulate a strategy to control the movement of Native hunter-gatherer groups that were aggravating settlers. They started a campaign to eradicate Native peoples from their homelands by deliberately overharvesting bison. A famous quote from the 1860's that captures this campaign was "kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone" (Smits 1994, p. 328). This campaign was devastating for members of the Sioux Nation, who depended on bison for a food source and were now forced to reconstruct their subsistence patterns. This extreme example of the extraction of both resources and culture resulted in starvation and hardship for Sioux peoples.

During the time of the fur trade, the treaty of 1851 Ft. Laramie signified the change in relationship between Native people, settlers, and the United States government. The U.S. negotiated with a limited set of Sioux leaders to define territories where each particular tribal group ranged according to their own governance systems (Whyte 2017, p. 161). This forced Native people to define their lifestyles within the context of United States law, which resulted in the U.S. gaining land concessions, and eventually resulted in the U.S. government obtaining jurisdiction over Native people and their land. This treaty is an example of U.S. colonization because Indigenous peoples' sovereignty was directly challenged and land was extracted from

Indigenous communities. The treaty ultimately failed because settlers entered the land designated as Sioux territory, and the U.S. did little to protect the rights of the Sioux peoples (Whyte 2017, p. 161). The failure of the U.S. to uphold their end of the treaty resulted in tension between Native people and settlers. Under the leadership of Oglala Lakota chief Red Cloud, raids and ambushes were carried out against soldiers, civilians, supply trains and anyone else who attempted to trespass on Indigenous land ("Red Cloud's War"). These skirmishes lasted a full year and were called Red Cloud's War. The losses of settler lives and supplies were great, and eventually in an effort to protect settlers and end the war, the United States surrendered and agreed to amend the Treaty of Ft. Laramie ("Red Clouds").

The second installation of the Treaty of Ft. Laramie, also referred to as the Sioux Treaty of 1868, attempted to resolve conflicts with the Sioux Nation. The Black Hills and further land in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana was "set apart for the absolute and undisturbed use and occupation of the Indians" (U.S. Government Office of Indian Affairs 1858, p. 2). The treaty also states that the United States government "solemnly agrees that no persons, except those herein designated and authorized so to do, and except such officers, agents, and employees of the government as may be authorized to enter upon Indian reservations in discharge of duties enjoined by law, shall ever be permitted to pass over, settle upon, or reside in the territory" (U.S. Government Office of Indian Affairs 1858, p. 2). Although this treaty was created to appease the Sioux Nation, language within the treaty reveals an intention of the United States to assert power and continue to colonize the Sioux Nation. For example the treaty specifically states that "officers, agents, and employees of the government" were authorized to enter Indian reservations in "discharge of duties enjoined by law," a statement that regards U.S. law as the ultimate authority (U.S. Government Office of Indian Affairs 1858, p. 2).

In 1874, gold was discovered in the Black Hills on the Sioux Reservation. It immediately caught the attention of settlers and they rushed to the Black Hills in search of gold. In doing so, they ignored the Sioux Treaty of 1868 and trespassed on Native land. The United States government halfheartedly attempted to uphold their portion of the treaty by stationing government officials on the border of the Indian reservation to prevent settlers from trespassing. However, they failed to stop the rush of settlers and additionally in 1875, they dispatched a party of 400 men on a "scientific expedition" to the Black Hills to "determine the true value of the mineral resources to be found there" (Palais 1946, p. 65). When the United States government realized the extent of gold deposits, they attempted to make a treaty with the Sioux Nation to buy the land. However, the majority of the Sioux people were vehemently opposed. Despite the Sioux Nation's refusal to sell their lands, the United States made no effort to stop settlers and miners from extracting resources from the Black Hills. The Sioux Nation took this as a threat to their territory and began to fight settlers. The United States stepped in to defend the trespassing settlers, and the result of this conflict was the Battle of the Little Bighorn on June 25, 1876. I opened this chapter with a quote from Skyhawk, a man who deeply respects the actions of his ancestors on that day. In the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Sioux fighters stood up to protect their land and culture from the U.S. army, something that Skyhawk recognizes made it possible for the Sioux Nation to exist today (Skyhawk 2015). What will become clearer throughout this chapter is how over and over again the Sioux Nation has fought to defend their culture and homelands from extraction and colonization. The Battle of the Little Bighorn is a particularly important event in history because the United States underestimated the power of the Sioux Nation and as a result, were defeated.

The United States government responded to their defeat in the Battle of the Little Bighorn with outrage and brute force. They retaliated by sending many more troops and forcing the Sioux Nation to fight or surrender. The result of this fighting was a highly controversial treaty between the government and the Sioux Nation in 1877, known as the Sioux Agreement, that forced Native peoples to drastically shrink their land base. Most notably, it stripped the Sioux Nation of their lands in the Black Hills and in Powder River Country, one of the most abundant hunting grounds for the Sioux Nation (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 152). The extraction of gold from the Black Hills became a successful industry for more than a century, particularly the Homestake Mine, which opened 1876 before the Sioux Agreement was even established, and did not close until 2001. These extensive mining practices were harmful to the environment, causing disruption of the natural landscape, and in particular, exposing heavy metals which negatively impacted water quality and land in the area (Rahn, Davis, Webb, Nichols 1995, p. 38). In addition to causing harm to the environment, these mining practies demonstrate the United States' blatant disregard for the lives, culture, and land of members of the Sioux Nation.

The Dawes Act of 1887 was a continuation of the same processes of extraction, but in this case, instead of gold, the United States wanted land. The primary goal of the Dawes Act was to create allotments out of reservation lands, further shrinking Sioux homelands. Additionally, the U.S. government wanted to "extend the protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians," further extracting Indigenous sovereign rights (U.S. Government Senate and House of Representatives 1887). This act was not implemented on Sioux reservation lands until the passage of the Sioux Bill in 1889, which established the "confinement of western Sioux people on six reservations" (Hoover 1989, p. 68). This act successfully carved reservations into individual tracts assigned to one family or individual from a tribe. In doing this, the United

States government treated Native people as individuals rather than a tribe and undermined any Native system of government that existed prior to the passage of this act.

Over the course of three decades of negotiations, from the Treaty of Ft. Laramie in 1851 until the Dawes Act of 1887, the Sioux Nation was left with only 18.3 percent of their original land base (Hoover 1989, p. 59). These treaties were devastating for the Sioux Nation and they felt the effects of colonization as they lost agency over their homelands. The Sioux Nation was confined to a small space and unable to stop the U.S. government from exploiting certain places that were sacred to them, such as the Black Hills. Over time the Sioux Nation was forced to move away from sustenance hunting as their resources and space became scarce, a transition that began with the overharvesting of bison in the fur trade. As a result, members of the Sioux Nation started to become dependent on rations provided by the U.S. government through the treaty of 1877.

Despite the loss of land and the dependency that resulted from these examples of colonization and extraction, the Sioux continued to fight for their lives and homelands. The Ghost Dance movement was an example of the determination and strength of Indigenous people across the United States. The purpose of the Ghost Dance was to "restore the Indigenous world as it was before colonialism, making the invaders disappear and the buffalo return" (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 153). In 1890 the Sioux Nation began to participate in the movement and a Sioux man alive during this time says his people "danced without rest, on and on… they preferred that to food or sleep" (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 154). However, the U.S. government saw the actions of this peaceful protest as "disturbing" and "unstoppable" (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 154). They imprisoned and killed Sioux leader Sitting Bull, because they believed he had started the Ghost Dance Movement. When Lakota leader Big Foot heard of Sitting Bull's death, he and 350

Lakota Sioux that had not yet moved to reservation lands traveled to Pine Ridge to accept what Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz refers to as "reservation incarceration" (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 155). When they arrived they were strip-searched for weapons. One man had not turned in a rifle, and as it was confiscated by the military, it accidentally fired. Immediately, soldiers began to fire. In the aftermath, 300 Sioux men, women, and children lay dead while only 25 soldiers were killed mostly by crossfire. For many years the U.S. recognized the Wounded Knee Massacre as a battle and the soldiers involved were given Congressional medals of Honor for their actions (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 155).

The horrific incident of the Wounded Knee Massacre once again demonstrated the United States disregard of Native lives, land, and culture. These same themes emerged in the twentieth century with the oppression of Native people through the 1940's Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin Program, a project that displaced Sioux Natives from the Standing Rock community. One of the dams for this project is situated in the Oahe Reservoir, the same place that the Dakota Access Pipeline passes under today. Consequently, this case is extremely relevant to the present-day DAPL protests. When the USACE started planning the project, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe resisted the condemnation of their land. They filed the lawsuit *U.S. v. 2005.32 Acres of Land* in an act of protest. The district court for South Dakota ruled in favor of the Tribe, stating that "The Flood Control Act of 1944 *cannot* be the legislation necessary to authorize the taking of Indian tribal lands… which are bound by treaty" (United States of America Plaintiff v. Sioux Indians of Standing Rock Reservation et al. 1958). However, the USACE lobbied congress to pass *Public Law 85-915* which Congress passed to allow Oahe Dam to be constructed (Public Law 85-915 1958).

As a result, the USACE seized 56,000 acres of bottomlands on the Standing Rock Reservation and in 1948 began the construction of the Oahe Dam (Lee 2014, p. 2).This project flooded entire towns and sacred ground, including gravesites and other places of spiritual significance. Vine Deloria, Jr., a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who dedicated his life to advancing tribal sovereignty through education, leadership, and the publication of more than twenty books, witnessed the impact the Pick-Sloan project had on the Sioux Nation. He describes it as "the single most destructive act ever perpetrated on any tribe by the United States" (Capossela 2015, p. 158). Despite the devastating effects of this project on the Sioux Nation, the Pick-Sloan dam has been described as a "great engineering marvel, having harnessed the power of the Missouri River to convert it to usable energy... creat[ing] vast economic opportunities for many along the river, including greater irrigation for farmers, expanded barge navigation and hydroelectric power" (Lee 2014, p. 3). On their website description of the Oahe Dam project, the USACE writes, the "story of [the] Oahe [Dam] focuses on people - from the early Native American tribes, to the fur traders and pioneers, to those who manage, operate and use the facility today" ("Oahe Dam and Lake"). Quite ironically, the website also states, "guests are encouraged to have fun and are reminded that care should be taken to preserve the lands and waters for future visitors" ("Oahe Dam and Lake"). There is no mention on the website of the displacement of Native people, revealing that the USACE still touts the project as a famous and marvelous work of architecture.

At the same time the Standing Rock Sioux were experiencing displacement from the Pick-Sloan Dam, Sioux from the Pine Ridge Reservation were being forced from their homelands in order to create an aerial gunnery/bombing range. In 1943, 125 Lakota Sioux families were forced to sell their farms because the military needed a bombing range to train

pilots bound for World War II (Wilkinson 1996). Martha Whiting and her family, members of the Sioux Nation, describe how they "were told it was our patriotic duty to give up our land" (Wilkinson 1996). The bombing range was just under fifteen miles from the homes of Pine Ridge Natives, and Paul Joseph Herman recounts that one night in 1957, an Air Force plane dropped a bomb half a mile from his house. According to Hermon's memory, when he questioned the Air Force officer as to why the bomb was so close to his house he just said, "we thought it was over the bomb range, it was only 13 miles off" (O'Sullivan 2013). Although in recent years the government has started to clean the debris from bombing, the National Park Service warns visitors near this area that there may still be Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and to be cautious ("World War II Comes to the Badlands The Badlands Gunnery Range"). Today members of the Pine Ridge Reservation live in fear of UXOs that litter their land. This is an example of both environmental racism and resource extraction because Native people are forced to live in unsafe conditions where UXOs could detonate at any time. The only other option was to move elsewhere outside of their homelands.

Indigenous Resilience

The examples of extractivism highlighted in this chapter so far reveal the many ways the Sioux Nation has been colonized by the United States government throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, it is extremely important to remember that Natives almost always responded with warfare and defiance to defend their lives and homelands. They were resilient in the face of extreme oppression, despite the fact that they grew dependent on the US government for rations. Skyhawk's words at the beginning of this chapter serve as a reminder that since the establishment of the fur trade, Indigenous peoples have been in a constant battle to defend their

homelands and lives from settler colonialism and extractivism. The survivors he speaks of are the ones that carry on this powerful fight for existence.

Throughout the twentieth century, Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism in the U.S. continued and strengthened as marginalized populations began to speak out and challenge their oppressors. Colonized peoples around the world began to fight for decolonization and land repatriation. This international cry for decolonization was the onset of studies in the field of postcolonial theory. The U.S. was very much a part of this movement and Indigenous peoples pursued organized protest and legal routes to resist extraction and colonization. The saga of the Black Hills is a prominent example of Sioux resurgence and activism. In 1923 the Dakota Sioux filed a lawsuit claiming that the United States failed to uphold the 1877 treaty, and demanded the Black Hills be returned to the Sioux Nation. In 1942 the government rejected the claim, but the Sioux Nation refused to give up. When the Indian Claims Commission was created in 1946, they tried again. However, in 1954 it was denied again in court on the basis that this claim had already been addressed in 1946. Still, the Sioux Nation refused to give up. They appealed the claim in 1956, and the Commission accepted this appeal on the basis of “inadequate counsel” from the Sioux Nation’s previous lawyer ("United States v. Sioux Nation" 1980).

The commission went on to find that “Congress, in 1877, had made no effort to give the Sioux full value for the ceded reservation lands” ("United States v. Sioux Nation" 1980). The U.S. government appealed to the Supreme Court but in 1980 *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians* the Supreme Court ruled that the Sioux Nation was entitled to an award of at least $17.5 million for both the lands taken by the government and the gold taken by trespassing prospectors prior to passage of the 1877 Act ("United States v. Sioux Nation" 1980). Additionally, the court admitted the misdeeds of the government and stated that "a more ripe and rank case of

dishonorable dealings will never, in all probability, be found in our history" ("United States v. Sioux Nation" 1980). This case illustrates the Sioux Nation's resilience and determination to maintain their identity and culture tied to the Black Hills. Even after the Sioux Nation was offered a settlement for $17.5 million dollars, they refused to accept the money. They firmly believe that the Black Hills were never for sale and should be returned to the tribe, or at the very least co-managed by the tribe. Mario Gonzalez, an Oglala Sioux tribal member and an attorney for the Sioux Nation says, "Our grandfathers and great-grandparents spilled a lot of blood so future generations could have a homeland that included the Black Hills" (Streshinsky 2011). His words harken back to Skyhawk's words in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter that recognize the importance of past generations in the survival and persistence of the Sioux Nation today.

The seven tribes affected by the Pick-Sloan Dams project–Fort Berthold, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, Lower Brule, Crow Creek, Yankton and Santee tribes–are also currently in the process of pursuing justice for the land seized by the government (United States 2008). After these tribes petitioned the government for just compensation and land concessions, in 1992 Congress passed the *Three Affiliated Tribes and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Equitable Compensation Act* (Capossela 2015). The findings of this Act were that the United States government did not justly compensate any tribes for the land that was acquired to create the Pick-Sloan Dams. Trust funds were set up by the government for the seven tribes, but the government refused to return surplus lands to the tribes. Today, members of the Sioux Nation as well as some other tribes continue to petition Congress for land restoration (Capossela 2015).

Youth Activism

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Indigenous youth became increasingly active in actions to defend their land and communities. They channeled a new energy and spirit into resistance and activism in the U.S., and one of the most prominent examples of this was the involvement of the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) in Indigenous rights activism. This council was founded in 1961 by twenty-six Native youth activists, mostly from reservations and rural tribal communities (Shreve 2011, p. 95). The core values of this organization, which still exist today, are "tribal sovereignty, self-determination, treaty-rights, and cultural preservation" (Shreve 2011, p. 94). This group gained national attention after a successful fish-in protest in Washington, where Indigenous people gathered to protest the persecution of Indigenous sustenance fishers. The publicity from this event spread the word of Red Power which contributed to larger mobilization efforts.

Red Power became a global phenomenon that eventually created the American Indian Movement (AIM). One example of Red Power was the1969 Alcatraz Island Takeover. This event is well known for radicalizing the perspectives of thousands of Natives and non-natives, primarily college students (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 183). The seeds for this movement were sown in 1964 when five Sioux, mostly college students, occupied Alcatraz for four hours (Gagnon 2011). Just five years later, a statement was drafted by the Indians of All Tribes, a group of Native students and community members living in the bay area, and Native people from across the country began a nineteen-month occupation. The statement was addressed to the "Great White Father and his People" and said, "we, the Native Americans, reclaim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery" (Kim 2015, p. 281). It was a mockery of European discovery proclamations and the many processes of colonialism. Some statements included, "We will offer [present-day residents] our religion, our education, our

life-ways, in order to help them achieve our level of civilization and thus raise them and all their white brothers up from their savage and unhappy state" (Kim 2015, p. 281). The occupation swelled to more than 400 Native people from all over the world ("We Hold The Rock" 2014). Although the movement ended when the United States Government forced protesters off of the island, the activists succeeded in gaining support for the AIM and media attention towards the disproportionate conditions of poverty and suffering that existed in reservations. Benjamin Bratt, a Quechua Native from Peru says, "It's easy to pass off the Alcatraz event as largely symbolic, but the truth is the spirit and dream of Alcatraz never died, it simply found its way to other fights. Native sovereignty, repatriation, environmental justice, the struggle for basic human rights – these are the issues Native people were fighting for then, and are the same things we are fighting for today" (Lapin & Hanna 2009).

Another of Indigenous activism as resistance to colonization and extractivism occurred in 1971. During this saga of the Black Hills court battle, a Lakota student named Lehman Brightman led a group called the United Native Americans to the top of Mt. Rushmore to protest to the government's illegal seizure of the Black Hills (Debolt 2017). More than thirty protesters renamed Mt. Rushmore Crazy Horse Mountain, and protesters drummed, sang and unfurled a huge sign proclaiming "SIOUX INDIAN POWER" as tourists watched on from below ("20 Indians Seized In Treaty Protest At Mt. Rushmore" 1971). Although the protest lasted only a few days, it demonstrated the Sioux Nation's determination to regain their land and sovereignty, as well as the power of youth activism.

An event of resistance that specifically targeted the decades of unfair US negotiations was the "Trail of Broken Treaties". The NIYC, AIM, and a variety of other organizations traveled the U.S. in the fall of 1972 with the *20-Point Position Paper* that targeted the U.S.

government's responsibility to uphold treaties and recognize Indigenous sovereignty. The protesters gathered representatives from seventy-five different U.S. tribes, and organized a march to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington. They occupied the BIA for six days in November (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 185). This event resulted in media attention for Indigenous rights, and the *20-Point Position Paper* became the framework for the "UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" that was first published in 2007. In addition, Vine Deloria Jr. published the bestselling book *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties* just two years later, which revealed to readers how the U.S. had oppressed Indigenous peoples in treaty negotiations for decades (Deloria 1985).

Perhaps the most well-known example of Native resistance during the 1970's was the 1973 siege of Wounded Knee. Oglala Lakota traditional people at the Pine Ridge Reservation collaborated with leaders from the AIM to start a protest to put an end to tribal government conflict. The primary purpose of this event was to challenge the tribal government structure that had been created through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and imposed upon all reservations by the U.S. government (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014, p. 185). The resulting protest was largely symbolic and powerful because it took place in the same location as the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890, and a steadfast and determined group of primarily youth protesters occupied the land for two and a half months. These protesters declared that they existed in the Independent Oglala Nation and resisted anything they identified as colonialism (Reinhardt 2000, p. 252). The protesters claimed the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie was the legal document for "nation-to-nation" negotiations with the United States (Reinhardt 2000, p. 252). This movement opened the eyes of many Native and non-Native people alike to the need for decolonization. Perhaps more

importantly, the 1973 siege of Wounded Knee highlighted the resilience of Sioux Nation and other Indigenous peoples in a place that associated with massacre.

Conclusion

From first contact, the relationship between the Sioux Nation and non-native settlers was driven by extractivism. This initially was a relationship that depended on the coexistence and partnership between Native people and traders during the fur trade. Later, it became an attempt to compromise with Native people through peaceful land negotiations. As time went on, however, it became apparent that the United States government no longer valued a positive relationship with the Sioux Nation and instead used force and power to extract land and things from the Sioux Nation. Despite the force and power exerted by the United States to suppress the Sioux people and other Indigenous groups, Native people constantly adapted and found new ways to defy these extreme acts of colonization. This resistance forced the U.S. to use a variety of avenues to continue extractivism to accumulate power, which were met by different Indigenous protests for sovereignty, and the protection of lands and resources central to their culture and beliefs. This vicious cycle of exploitation and resistance continues in the United States today.

Today we see this cycle through the implementation of the DAPL. ETP and the USACE used their power to create the DAPL despite outrage and protest from the Standing Rock Sioux community and other tribes from the Sioux Nation and across the country. Native people view this as a continuation of a long history of grievances the Sioux Nation has against the United States government because of how this project ignores Indigenous sovereignty and threatens the land, culture, and environment that are important to the identity and wellbeing of the Sioux Nation. The #noDAPL movement has attempted to validate Native claims to stop resource

extraction and oppression of Native communities, and give a voice to the people of the Standing Rock community. The importance and impact of this movement is exemplified by its ties to the historical pattern of resource extraction between the United States and the Sioux Nation.

Chapter Three: Present-Day Sioux Resurgence and Resilience

We are all responsible for the prosperity of our community… we have to strengthen our 'hochoka.' In our language 'hochoka' is a circle. Our way of life. We have to strengthen that way of life. Regardless of how painful it can be."

Yvonne "Tiny" DeCory (Coppola 2013)

Since the late 1800's colonialism has been a constant factor in the lives of members of the Sioux Nation. Extraction has and continues to be a form of colonialism that endangers the cultural and physical wellbeing of the Sioux Nation. Sioux peoples continue to resist this colonization and extraction, as they have always done. Today this resistance looks somewhat different and is centered in community-engaged resurgent organizing and grounded normativity, actions that focus on Indigenous reconnection with Sioux land and culture. An important part of this recent community engagement is the involvement of youth in efforts to resist colonialism. This is manifested in the emergence of many programs on reservations that have been designed by community members to empower youth and teach them to value their culture, heritage, and history.

Tiny DeCory recognizes the importance of building community and supporting youth from the Pine Ridge Reservation. She has worked closely with youth of various ages and established many suicide prevention initiatives, the most successful being the program Be Excited About Reading (BEAR) (Coppola 2013). She knows that the history of colonialism has inflicted pain and causes trauma in the lives of Indigenous youth, but she also knows there is potential and hope hidden behind this pain. Her own words, "we are all responsible for the prosperity of our community" serve as a reminder that community development and youth empowerment can be powerful tool of decolonization, and working towards these goals is a way to work towards Indigenous sovereignty (Coppola 2013; Tuck & Yang 2011). Her efforts, along

with the efforts of many other Sioux community members to "strengthen the circle" by returning focus to Sioux intelligence and knowledge and promoting community engagement have been instrumental to the development of youth empowerment in the Sioux Nation. This empowerment has in turn created a generation of youth leaders who are passionate about their community and culture and have stood up to defend their way of life from the imposition of the DAPL.

This chapter will first describe the present-day challenges members of the Sioux Nation face, challenges that emerge from decades of settler colonialism and the many ways the United States government and white settlers have exploited and extracted resources from Sioux land and peoples. This is important context to understanding the role of community engaged resurgent organizing and grounded normativity have towards ensuring the future resilience of the Sioux Nation. This chapter will then describe specific examples of resurgent organizing and grounded normativity actions and programs in the Sioux Nation today that empower youth. These programs decrease the Sioux Nation's dependency on the United States government and have moved the Sioux Nation in the direction of self-sufficiency. Overall, these programs and actions have strengthened the Sioux Nation, particularly for younger generations who have been empowered and inspired to defend their homelands through the #noDAPL movement.

Conditions on Various Reservations in the Sioux Nation

A close look at the U.S census data for Indigenous people living both on and off reservations in the United States reveals that Indigenous communities disproportionately face a variety of hardships including low life expectancy, high unemployment, high rates of poverty, and a number of other factors. This is not a coincidence: throughout history and even today settler colonialism has negatively impacted Indigenous people and the trauma this has created in the lives of Indigenous people is evident in these present-day hardships. Perhaps the most

demoralizing result of settler colonialism that exists on reservations today is dependency on the United States government for resources. The Sioux Nation is no exception, and these conditions can be seen on all Sioux reservations. For example, on the Standing Rock Reservation, the life expectancy is only about 69 years, compared to the national average of about 79 years ("US Heath Map" 2018). The number of people below the poverty level was about 47% in 2010, and the unemployment rate was about 79% ("United States Census Bureau" 2010; "Environmental Profile" pg. 1). The need for housing is great, with an average of 4.6 persons per household at Standing Rock compared to 3.27 for both North and South Dakota ("Environmental Profile" p. 5).

David Archambault, the former chairman of Standing Rock Sioux tribe says, "with poverty comes all the symptoms: high suicide rates, abuses, alcoholism, drug use, lack of housing, lack of law enforcement" (Wall 2017). The youth at Standing Rock and on other tribal reservations across the United States are particularly vulnerable and often suffer the most. This stems from youth living amongst and learning from family members and elders who carry trauma from experiencing years of settler colonialism, combined with a recognition that colonialism and Indigenous oppression still exist in America today. Jaskiran Dhillon's book, *Prairie Rising: Indigenous Youth, Decolonization, and the Politics of Intervention* discusses some of the ways youth have been affected by the changing face of settler colonialism in Canada. She writes, "Indigenous youth absorb the shock of conquest, both past and present. They carry the painful load of living in a settler colonial reality that is intent on mutilating Indigenous bodies, dislocating them, holding them in captivity, and ultimately, making them disappear" (Dhillon 2017, p. 211). There is a sense of hopelessness that exists on reservations, and this greatly affects youth who often feel they cannot rise above the conditions of poverty and pain.

The pain felt by Indigenous youth living on reservations can be seen in high school dropout rates, and in the self-destructive behaviors exhibited by youth. In 2000 there was only a 59% graduation rate on the Standing Rock Reservation, compared to the national average of 68%, and the state average for both North and South Dakota of about 70% (Cornelius 2002 p. 22; EPE Research Center 2013). Diane Garreau, a child-welfare official and enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, writes, "Our kids hurt so much, they have to shut down the pain. Many have decided they won't live that long anyway, which in their minds excuses self-destructive behavior, like drinking—or suicide" (Woodard 2012). Standing Rock Reservation has suicide rates three times higher than the national average, and alcoholism is rampant (Woodward 2012).

Despite the conditions of poverty and pain that exist at Standing Rock and other reservations across the country, the continued existence of Indigenous peoples in the United States is a testament to the strength and determination of tribes and reservations. The recorded population of Indigenous people reached an all-time low in 1900 when the US census reported 237,000 people, but since this time the population of American Indians has only grown (Calloway 2016, p. 379). In 2011 the Native American population was reported to be 5.1 million, and the projected population in 2050 is 8.6 million. The population of Native American people in America between 2000 and 2010 increased by 26.7%, compared to the overall United States population increase of 9.7% (CB12-FF.22 2012).These numbers show that the United States population has a higher percentage of Native American people than it has had in the last century. This is very impressive after the years of extermination and assimilation that Indigenous people have faced through US policy, which highlights the resilience of Indigenous peoples.

Additionally, the Sioux Nation as a whole has made other efforts to strive for self-sufficiency for both the people and land, and escape settler-state dependency. To improve the economic conditions at Standing Rock Reservation, the tribe has opened and continues to operate businesses such as Prairie Knights Casino and Lodge, Prairie Knights Quik Mart, Grand River Casino, and Standing Rock Farms ("Environmental Profile" p. 3). The tribe plans to develop their own bank and expand Standing Rock College to include tribal archives and a genealogy center as well as create a cultural resource center and museum on the reservation ("Environmental Profile" p. 4). These efforts made by the Sioux Nation empower the community by creating jobs and organizations outside of government control and in doing so, increase the independence of members of the Sioux Nation.

Community and Youth Empowerment

In her book, *As We Have Always Done,* Leanne Simpson argues that "we cannot carry out the kind of decolonization our Ancestors set in motion if we do not create a generation of land-based, community-based intellectuals and cultural producers who are accountable to our nations" (Simpson 2017, p. 159). The decolonization she speaks of is more than a century of Indigenous resistance to land extraction and determination to exist in a country that has made every effort possible to decimate Indigenous peoples. Like DeCory says, it is now the responsibility of the current generation assure a future of prosperity and continue to resist colonization. Members of the Sioux Nation are working toward this goal by creating community-centered, youth empowerment organizations that emphasize resurgence; "reconnecting with homelands, cultures, and communities" and grounded normativity; "place-based practice informing Indigenous normative relationships" (Coulthard 2014, p. 13; Corntassel 2012, p. 97). These organizations

have already created positive change in the lives of youth and inspired them to be accountable to their Nations.

An example of an organization that works towards ensuring the future prosperity of the Sioux Nation by empowering youth was the Sweetgrass Program, created by Tiny Decory and Delores Pourier in 2012 on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The purpose of this program was to "develop and implement a comprehensive and sustainable program to prevent suicide among Tribal youth, ages 15-24" (Pourier 2012). The program was funded by a grant from the Suicide Prevention Center, and an important characteristic of this program is that it was designed and executed by tribal members. Part of the grant description reads, "the approach is community-based, incorporates culture and traditions of the [Pine Ridge Sioux Tribe]... emphasizes coordination among existing organizations that serve youth and families, builds capacity for sustaining the program through training and resource development, and strengthens linkages between Tribal, State, and local resources for youth suicide prevention" (Pourier 2012). The name itself speaks to the focus on the tradition and culture of the Sioux peoples because in Sioux culture sweetgrass is used in ceremony and is one of the most sacred native plants in the Great Plains. When burned, the smoke symbolizes a purification ("Sweetgrass"). Some actions taken by this group to prevent tribal suicide include implementing the "American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum" and an "SOS Signs of Suicide Program" in six middle and high schools on and near the reservation. Additionally, the program worked towards strengthening capacity and resources of referral and follow-up for at-risk youth ("Sweetgrass Project" 2012). Unfortunately, in 2015 the federal government cut funds for the Sweetgrass Program and it is no longer in operation.

Like many others, DeCory was frustrated with this loss of funding, but she did not give up. In 2004 she had created the BEAR Program on Pine Ridge Reservation that focused on bringing books and stories into schools (Ray & Gehrke 2015). This program is completely volunteer run and operates on funding from donations. After working with youth in the school systems for some time, Decory recognized the need for a youth support program that worked to address high rates of suicide on reservations. She worked closely with students who were suicide survivors themselves and trained them to be mentors, transforming the BEAR Program into a suicide prevention and youth empowerment program. This program has attempted to take over the responsibilities of the Sweetgrass program, and provides a 24-hour hotline for suicide prevention as well as youth mentors on call for suicide intervention. In addition, the BEAR program performs musicals and dance skits in schools and at a variety of reservation events to help youth struggling with depression and desire to inflict self-harm. These skits use storytelling to teach important cultural and spiritual messages and inspire youth to become leaders in their communities.

One youth praises the program saying, “Becoming a BEAR is the best thing I've ever done in my life. Before I joined I always felt like an outcast and I felt alone most times, but after I started working with the BEAR program I found myself and became a whole different person and I've found another place to call home. It may have only happened after my first suicide attempt that I found my family” (“Bear Program” 2015). A former BEAR mentor and the grandson of Tiny DeCory says he was inspired by this program and as a result pursued a business degree at Southern Utah University. Today he is using this degree to design and create the Lakota Dream Museum & Monument. He has acquired the space and necessary loans and will soon open “the first Native-owned museum that will enable the return of precious artifacts to

the Lakota people, bringing to life the histories, cultural knowledge and ancestral experiences to educate future generations" (Woster 2018). He also intends to create a scholarship and education program for youth through this museum. His actions demonstrate the success of the BEAR program because he has taken his future and the future of his community into his own hands and is working towards repatriation and tribal self-determination.

Other programs like the BEAR program have been created with the intention of being self-sustaining, or existing without the support of federal funds. One example of this is the Empowering Our Youth Program. The Empowering Our Youth Program at Pine Ridge Reservation was created "to empower youth ages 8-24 years of age to have input in making positive changes in their communities, be proud of their heritage and culture and inspire them to be positive members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe" (Ecoffey 2016). This program creates a link between tribal lawmakers and youth who want to be part of the political process. The Empowering Our Youth Program has established youth councils in each of the nine districts on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The Facebook page for this program states that youth can "inspire not only members of [their] district but members of other districts and the Oglala Lakota Nation to ensure a positive future for the next generation" ("ANA Empowering Our Youth" 2016). Through this program, youth have the opportunity to work closely with tribal leaders and use their voices and opinions to help make important decisions for the future of their communities. Although the grant for this program ended in 2017, youth councils have been established in each district and are self-sustaining. Some additional projects that this grant helped make possible include youth classes to learn about traditional cultural activities such as drum making, storytelling, beading, sewing, and timpsila digging (Hand 2017). Timpsila or prairie turnip digging is a land-based activity of hunter-gathering. Teaching youth about timpsila

digging shows how classes offered by this grant create an opportunity for youth to be reconnected to their homelands and culture through resurgence.

Youth programs that exist on other reservations include One Mind and the Standing Rock Youth Council. One Mind is based out of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. The founders, Jasilyn Charger, White Eyes, and Trenton Casillas-Bakeberg created the youth group in 2015 to help teens struggling with depression and considering suicide (Elbein 2017). Jasilyn herself is only twenty-one. She discovered the need for youth support when thirty Cheyenne River youth attempted suicide in one year, and eight of these attempts were successful. Two of these youth were her close friends from childhood. The mission statement of the One Mind youth group says, "it is a common belief among our people that the children literally are the future. They are the sacred seeds of our ancestors, inherently instilled with the values passed down through generations. We have to water them and they will blossom into the sacred flowers of life they are" (Elbein 2017). The early efforts of this group reflected this mission. One Mind raised money to take youth to the Red Nation Film Festival in California and gave them the opportunity to see Native voices empowered at a festival that is "dedicated to breaking the barrier of racism by successfully replacing American Indian stereotype with recognition, new vision, arts, culture and economic prosperity" ("About Red Nation Film Festival" 2018). The group also went to the tribal council to start a campaign to make safe houses available for youth and on August 4, 2015, succeeded in getting enough votes passed to establish a Safe House for the youth of Cheyenne River ("One Mind Youth Movement CRST" 2015). A post on the One Mind Facebook page from this day states, "The youth are our future, we do this for you. Your support gave us courage to move forward and get this building. We believe in you… The time has come where belief manifests into reality" ("One Mind Youth Movement CRST" 2015).

The Standing Rock Youth Council mission states that it is "dedicated to removing the invisible barriers that prevent our native youth from succeeding" ("Standing Rock Youth Council" 2016). Anna Lee Yellowhammer describes why she likes being in the Standing Rock Youth Council; "we are at our meetings and I feel like a family and I just feel like a connection with everyone and when everyone is together I just get a good energy" ("Standing Rock Youth Council" 2016). Maya Rennels, the Secretary of the council remarks that "[the] council means a lot to me… it means steps to a brighter future" ("Standing Rock Youth Council" 2016). Cadee Peltier states that the youth group "helps me reach out to kids from other communities and from other tribes and other towns and it helps me stay connected with other people" ("Standing Rock Youth Council" 2016). One of the important projects of this youth council has been hosting the annual Youth Wellness Conference. Although this started more than fourteen years ago, it has grown into an annual event that now features youth leaders from all seven bands of the Sioux Nation who "gather for a day of inspirational presenters, events and roundtable discussions to address community needs" (Thompson 2017).

An organization that specifically targets women is the Brave Heart Society, which was revived in 1994 by a community of grandmothers, including Faith Spotted Eagle, on the Yankton Reservation in South Dakota. This society calls for a "revival of a traditional cultural society for women and works tirelessly at calling home the spirit of the culture" ("Brave Heart Society"). For her dissertation, Faith Spotted Eagle's daughter Brook Spotted Eagle chose to research this society with the purpose to "document the cultural significance of the Brave Heart Society's revitalization and existence" (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 2). She self-identifies as "the sister, the daughter, and the granddaughter of a family system associated with the Brave Heart Society" (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 7). Her involvement in this group has had a lasting impact on her, and

this is evident in the decision to write her dissertation about this topic. In this dissertation, Brooke Spotted Eagle discusses how colonialism breeds patriarchy because it is rooted in patriarchy and that the Brave Heart Society works to decolonize the imposed gender constructs resulting from colonialism (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 40). An example of this decolonization is an annual four-day retreat held in the Black Hills of South Dakota, where women participate in multiple *Inipi* (sweat lodge ceremony) and conduct a *Nagi Kicopi* (Calling Back the Spirit) ceremony that promotes healing (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 78).

Brook Spotted Eagle argues that the Brave Heart Society "has developed a collective political voice and asserts an Indigenous right to cultivate a relationship with various land bases in order to nurture spiritual and cultural revival" (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 21). This society has, among other things, established a community garden tended by youth, established a language nest to educate youth in the Dakota language, and created a storytelling institute that educates youth through the stories of their ancestors. Brook describes how this program "acts to fill a gap in autochthonic knowledge existing between generations… [and creates] a safe space for younger generations to gain a sense of pride, countering the aforementioned colonized/missionized instillation of cultural shame within Indigenous collectives" (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 49). This program has been hugely successful and due to its longevity, it has evolved to include issues of environmental justice and food sovereignty, to name a few (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 135). One of the Indigenous youth involved in the Brave Heart society describes the impact this program has had on her. She was 18-years old and had recently participated in *Isnati,* or a four-day coming-of-age ceremony performed by tribal elders after a girl's first menses. She says, "I feel stronger because of *Isnati*. I know I have to come back to help when I'm home. It makes me feel empowered because I've been through the ceremony and I feel more

connected to life as a woman. You make your own reality" (Spotted Eagle 2009, p. 97). This quote reveals how the programs created through the Brave Heart Society that work towards educating and empowering youth have the potential to compel the younger generation of women to get involved in their community and share their experience with others.

Programs similar to those that exist as part of the Brave Heart Society can be seen on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. An example is the "Native Gardens Project: An Indigenous Permaculture Approach to the Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes" that was established in 2012 through funds from a variety of programs, specifically the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The purpose of this program is to prevent and treat diabetes at Standing Rock Reservation by increasing Indigenous traditional knowledge of farming and different types of crops. Some goals of this program include promoting healthy living through gardening and eating fresh foods, creating farmers markets to sell traditional foods, and distributing USDA food vouchers for use at the local farmer's markets ("Native Diabetes Wellness Program: Traditional Foods Program and Map" 2015). The project has also established a farm-to-school program that provides fresh local produce to tribal schools, and it has created a community garden at Cannon Ball Elementary School on Standing Rock Reservation (Finberg 2015).

A report was published in 2014 titled, "Good Food Is Power" and discusses the positive effects of this program on the Standing Rock Sioux community. In an interview tribal member Aubrey Skye, coordinator of the Native Gardens Project, says, "the project has gotten more people involved in gardening. It makes locally grown foods more available. The entire reservation… resides within a nationally recognized food desert. Because of the Native Gardens Project, within a hundred-mile radius, fresh and locally grown foods, including traditional foods, are now available through vendors at the farmer's market in Fort Yates" ("Good Food Is Power"

2014, p. 12). What Skye speaks of is how this particular project helps the Standing Rock Sioux achieve food sovereignty, or move away from dependence on food rations and towards independent food sourcing. Additionally, the report includes images of tribal youth who are actively engaged in the process of farming, and in turn are learning about the importance of land-based food sovereignty, and Indigenous sovereignty ("Good Food Is Power" 2014, p. 12).

Conclusion

Each of the programs described in this chapter has been designed by tribal members to ensure the persistence of the Sioux Nation and culture. Every program either directly focuses on youth, or acknowledges the importance of educating, supporting, and empowering youth in communities through cultural and land-based practices. The Sweetgrass Program and the BEAR program have different approaches, but each program targets suicide prevention by using knowledge and stories from Sioux culture to provide support and education. The Standing Rock Youth Council and One Mind focus on empowering youth by giving them the opportunity see Indigenous empowerment through media and to help implement youth support and outreach. Empowering Our Youth Program gives youth the opportunity to work closely with tribal leaders and elders and learn about the tribal government. The Brave Heart Society is dedicated to empowering tribal women and teaching them Sioux culture through storytelling, gardening, and language. The Native Gardens project teaches Sioux culture and traditional practices through gardening, and works towards Indigenous food sovereignty.

Through these programs, I believe that the Sioux Nation is working towards creating a "generation of land-based, community-based intellectuals and cultural producers who are accountable to [their] nations," something that Simpson believes is essential to carrying out decolonization in Indigenous communities (Simpson 2017, p. 159). Simpson also speaks to the

importance of regenerating Indigenous knowledge systems and not focusing on creating a space for Indigenous knowledge within Western academics. Although many of the programs in this section were started with the support of federal grants, with the exception of the Sweetgrass Program, they are designed to be self-sustaining and become permanent infrastructure within communities. The curriculum and layout of these programs is grounded in culture and traditions of the Sioux Nation. These programs therefore are focused on regenerating Indigenous knowledge systems and creating a generation that values their culture and ensures that the next generation feels a strong connection to their community and Nation.

The imposition of the DAPL directly challenges the sovereignty of the Sioux Nation and disregards the cultural and land-based learning that has successfully contributed to community growth, youth empowerment, and self-sufficiency of the Sioux Nation. It is a direct threat to the culture and knowledge of Sioux Nation that is centralized around a positive relationship with the land because the DAPL disrupts ecosystems, threatens to pollute the environment, and destroys sacred sites. The #noDAPL movement is a youth demonstration to defend the culture, community, land, and sovereignty of the Sioux Nation through actions that exemplify a commitment to Indigenous decolonization, grounded normativity, and resurgence. These inspiration for this movement stems from the programs described throughout this chapter, as well as other programs with the same ideals. Decory's says, "We are all responsible for the prosperity of our community… we have to strengthen our 'hochoka.' In our language 'hochoka' is a circle. Our way of life. We have to strengthen that way of life. Regardless of how painful it can be" (Coppola 2013). Her words and actions through the BEAR program serve as a reminder that the road to decolonization for the Sioux Nation will be accomplished by focusing on the strength of

community and Indigenous knowledge systems, and empowering youth to take control of their own futures and homelands.

Chapter Four: Youth Empowerment and Leadership

Upon suffering beyond suffering; the Red Nation shall rise again and it shall be a blessing for a sick world. A world filled with broken promises, selfishness and separations. A world longing for light again. I see a time of seven generations when all the colors of mankind will gather under the sacred Tree of Life and the whole Earth will become one circle again. In that day there will be those among the Lakota who will carry knowledge and understanding of unity among all living things, and the young white ones will come to those of my people and ask for this wisdom. I salute the light within your eyes where the whole universe dwells. For when you are at that center within you and I am that place within me, we shall be as one.

Crazy Horse (as cited in Earth Wisdom Foundation 2011)

Crazy Horse was a powerful Oglala Sioux leader in the late 1800's, who recognized how colonialism destroyed Indigenous land and culture and fought to defend his people. While he led the Sioux Nation in battles against gold mining in the sacred Black Hills, today his descendants fight against pipelines and the harm they pose for Indigenous land and wellbeing. These struggles share a similar theme: resistance against extractivism, or "taking something… out of the relationships that give it meaning, and placing it in a non-relational meaning for the purposes of accumulation" (Simpson 2017, p. 201-202). Many activists in the #noDAPL movement refer to Crazy Horse because of the prophecy in the epigraph that people believe was spoken by him, discussing the future of the Sioux Nation and Indigenous people in the United States.

This prophecy is significant for two reasons. First, it is believed to be spoken by a Sioux leader who defended both his people and land from colonial powers, just as Indigenous activists have done at Standing Rock Reservation. It reveals why history matters in the #noDAPL movement and how history has shaped the relationship between the Sioux Nation and the United States government. Second, it has identified a time in history when Indigenous people from the seventh generation will try to heal the Earth using their knowledge and will unite Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth (as cited in Earth Wisdom Foundation 2011). Indigenous youth activists in the #noDAPL movement identify themselves as the seventh generation. Terrell Iron Shell says,

"We're the answers to our ancestor's prayers" and many youth like her believe it is their responsibility to uphold the prophecy (Simon 2017). Additionally, older members of the tribe also hold this belief and this is articulated by a quote from tribal elder Dave Swallow from Pine Ridge Reservation, who says, "I believe all these young people here… are the seventh generation. My grandpa talked about this. I see many young spiritual leaders here. I'd rather be [at Standing Rock] than anywhere else" (Darling 2016).

#noDAPL activists often combine Crazy Horse's prophecy with a prophecy from Lakota traditional knowledge about "zuzeca sape", or the "black snake" (Johnson 2017, p. 21). Iyuskin "Happy" American Horse, a 26-year-old Lakota youth describes this prophecy: "Our elders have told us that if the zuzeca sape, the black snake, comes across our land, our world will end" (American Horse 2016). The prophecy states that Indigenous people must rise up under the leadership of the seventh generation to fight back against the black snake (Johnson 2017, p. 21). American Horse says, "Zuzeca has come – in the form of the Dakota Access Pipeline" (American Horse 2016). As with the prophecy from Crazy Horse, this prophecy identifies the seventh generation as responsible for insuring the persistence of the Sioux Nation in the future (Simon 2017). Both Crazy Horse's prophecy and the image of the black snake have become central to the #noDAPL movement and start to reveal why youth have emerged as leaders in various demonstrations throughout this movement.

The prophecy from Crazy Horse discusses how in the time of the seventh generation rising, "the Lakota… will carry knowledge and understanding of unity among all living things" (as cited in Earth Wisdom Foundation 2011). Today on the Sioux Nation, this knowledge and unity can be seen in actions of grounded normativity and resurgence that focus on "reconnecting with homelands, cultures, and communities" (Corntassel 2012, p. 97). The Sioux Nation has used

these ideas to create organizations and programs like those discussed in Chapter Three to dismantle the structures of colonialism. The #noDAPL movement reveals how these Indigenous frameworks have been adopted by youth, who have resisted the extractivism caused by the DAPL through resurgence and grounded normativity actions. Furthermore, participating in #noDAPL has transformed the lives of many Indigenous youth, who realize their knowledge and actions can be a very powerful tool that greatly furthers decolonization. As a result, Indigenous youth have taken transformative steps towards decolonization inside and outside of their communities, particularly in the realm of climate justice. This has huge implications for the future of the climate justice movement as well as the future of Indigenous sovereignty.

This chapter has been broken into two parts. In the first part I will describe how youth emerged as leaders and front-line activists in the #noDAPL movement by giving an overview of some of the major events of the protest. I will explain how these events are linked to the programs and organizations, or the structure of grounded normativity and resurgence in the programs and organizations discussed in Chapter Three. Part two will discuss the larger significance of youth activism in the #noDAPL movement, particularly for Indigenous and non-Indigenous understandings of climate justice.

Part One: The Development of #noDAPL

The start of the #noDAPL movement cannot be attributed to one specific event, rather, it was created by a combination of resistance actions coming from the Sioux Nation throughout 2016. The force behind this movement and the reason that #noDAPL initially gained global recognition is a result of youth efforts from various Sioux Nation communities. The actions and efforts from youth and community members to establish the Sacred Stone Camp were some of the first major actions that shaped the #noDAPL movement. LaDonna Brave Heart Allard started

the first encampment or "prayer camp" on her private lands on April 1, 2016 (Elbein, 2017; "Sacred Stone Camp"). One of Allard's primary motivations for starting the encampment was to protect the integrity of the land and near Standing Rock Reservation close to where she had buried her son a number of years before (Bengal 2016). The construction of the DAPL had already begun elsewhere, but the permit for the crossing beneath and around Lake Oahe had not been approved yet (Bengal 2016). She reached out to other Sioux reservations and asked communities to join her in a peaceful demonstration. Just two days later Jasilyn Charger and a small group of youth from the One Mind youth group at the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation traveled to Standing Rock Reservation to participate in Allard's encampment.

This initial encampment quickly captured the attention of other community members who traveled to the encampment to join the demonstration. Members of Standing Rock Youth Council traveled to the encampment, along with youth from other reservations. Two youth in particular emerged as strong leaders during this transformation: Bobbi Jean Three Legs and Joseph White Eyes. They had decided to reach out to youth from all parts of the Sioux Nation and create a group that would run from Sacred Stone Camp to Omaha, Nebraska, to deliver a petition to the Army Corps of Engineers, requesting that the USACE deny permission for the DAPL to cross the Missouri River just above the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation (Elbein 2017). The petition itself was written by thirteen-year-old Anna Lee Rain YellowHammer with the help of other youth from the Standing Rock Youth Council. In addition to being a demonstration of determination, the run also had cultural significance because long-distance messenger runners were the primary means of communication for the Sioux Nation before the introduction of horses (Goodman 2017). The run demonstrates a resurgence because it was an

action that reflects the cultural values of the Sioux Nation, and it is based on a physical activity that involves a connection to the land, running.

The group started running on April 24, 2016 (Martell 2016). It consisted primarily of youth from different Sioux tribes as well as a few older Sioux and non-Indigenous runners. Although there were only about ten core runners, the group changed as people departed and entered in different sections of the run. While they were running to Omaha, the group decided that they would take a bolder action to try to meet with both President Obama and the USACE in the Capital of the United States. Three Legs and the other runners returned to Standing Rock Reservation for more planning and officially started their 2,000-mile run on July 15 (ICT Staff 2016). While they were running to D.C., the permit to begin construction was approved. Undeterred, the group continued to run in hope of changing the minds of the USACE.

Three Legs states that her reason for joining #noDAPL and running to D.C. was because she was "...afraid for the future generations… this is going to affect them the most" ("Water is Life, Water is Sacred" 2017). She also says, "I have a two-year-old daughter at home, and I can't imagine what life is going to be like when she's in her mid-forties or fifties. I can't imagine what my great-grandchildren or anybody's future grandchildren or those not born yet will be going through when they come into this world" (Goodman 2017). The run was a significant part of the #noDAPL movement because it united youth from many different Sioux reservations and gave them both a purpose and voice in this political debate. In addition, it greatly expanded the awareness and support for the movement, and the number of people at Sacred Stone Camp grew from fewer than twenty before the run to between seven and eight thousand people by the time runners returned to the encampment (Martell 2016).

Youth Activism at Sacred Stone Encampment

After returning from D.C. in late August, youth continued to participate in demonstrations at the Sacred Stone Camp, and more often than not, they were on the frontlines. Throughout the 2,000-mile run and the beginning of the Sacred Stone Camp, a particularly important change in leadership occurred. Youth from different tribes and nations joined forces with Sioux Nation water protectors and One Mind, and the International Indigenous Youth Council (IIYC) was created ("About the IIYC" 2018). Additionally, during this time youth began identifying themselves as water protectors, revealing a commitment to both land and water and emphasizing the importance of portraying the #noDAPL movement as a demonstration of defense instead of a protest. The distinction of #noDAPL as a demonstration of defense as opposed to a protest illustrates how grounded normativity and decolonization informed Indigenous youth actions throughout the movement. Grounded normativity is based in land-connected practices that emphasize the importance of respecting the land and focusing on creating an ethical relationship with the environment. By asserting that they are "protectors" Indigenous youth are embodying the practice of grounded normativity. Additionally, protest is often associated with violence, and colonialism is violence on the land and on Indigenous peoples. Decolonization, then, seeks remove the violence of settler colonialism. Framing #noDAPL as a peaceful movement reflects these ideas of decolonization.

The Forgiveness Walk was formed with these same sentiments of peaceful protection in mind. It was described by protectors as an action to overcome the anger that resulted from traumatic experiences with police (Women at Standing Rock Water Protection Forgiveness Walk 2016). It was organized by Lyla June Johnston, a Navajo and Cheyenne native youth in her late twenties, and native and non-native people of all ages participated. In a video Johnston and another Indigenous woman state, "In order for us to grow and take that next step, we have to

forgive…. we're here to protect the water. We're here to protect the people" (Johnston 2016). More than 500 protectors walked down the streets to the closest sheriff's office in Mandan, North Dakota, calling for peace and forgiveness. Water protectors arrived at the sheriff's office, surrounded it and began to chant and sing. They stayed for about two hours and shook hands with the police officers currently on duty (Green 2016).

The Forgiveness Walk was followed by the March of Silence at the Sacred Stone Camp the next day. This event was organized and led by members of the International Indigenous Youth Council. IIYC member Daniel Grassrope, the founder of this walk, says, "We wanted to do a prayer march... just to remind people why we are here. It wasn't to silence us... it was to show discipline and humility" (Simon 2017). Throughout the walk Grassrope carried a prayer staff and walked beside other members of the youth council. A number of other water protectors followed the lead of the IIYC and also participated in the march. Just one month later, the IIYC decided to take another action to solidify the importance of peaceful demonstration, and remind movement followers that #noDAPL was an act of protection, not protest. Lauren Howland, a twenty-one-year-old Apache and Navajo member of the IIYC, along with other IIYC members personally delivered supplies to the Morton County Sheriff's Department after the sheriff's department put up a Facebook post asking for community donations. She says, "The youth council has always been and will always continue to be about prayer and peace" (Simon 2017).

Following in the trend of forgiveness, on December 5, 2016, a forgiveness ceremony was conducted between Sioux tribal elders and non-native U.S. veterans. Faith Spotted Eagle, one of the leaders of the Braveheart Society, gave a speech while Leonard Crow Dog, a leader during the 1973 takeover of Wounded Knee and other protests, forgave veterans as they kneeled before him. In a speech these veterans stated, "We came. We fought you. We took your land. We signed

treaties that we broke. We stole minerals from your sacred hills. We blasted the faces of our presidents onto your sacred mountain… We didn't respect you, we polluted your Earth, we've hurt you in so many ways but we've come to say that we are sorry" (Amatulli 2016). This action demonstrated two important things. First, the ideas of nonviolent protest focused on decolonization had resonated with members of the Sioux Nation, and as a result this ceremony was founded on forgiveness like the Forgiveness March and the Walk of Silence. Second, Army Veterans were formally apologizing for previous events of extractivism and colonization in response to #noDAPL, proving that water protectors had effectively conveyed that protecting the Sioux Nation from extractivism was the primary purpose of the #noDAPL movement.

Although other events were instrumental in spreading awareness and strengthening the #noDAPL movement, including the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe officially suing the Army Corps of Engineers on July 27, 2016, it can be argued that these events would not have gotten nearly as much attention without the leadership and determination of Indigenous youth. Youth created the #noDAPL movement through a variety of actions based in values of resurgence and grounded normativity. They centered the movement around the ideas of protecting Indigenous land, and working to maintain an ethical relationship with the environment. Forgiveness and peaceful demonstration were a crucial aspect of the #noDAPL movement, representing the commitment of Indigenous youth to eradicating the violence that comes with extraction and colonization.

Leanne Simpson speaks of the importance of creating a generation through resurgent organizing that "think and act from within their own intelligence systems; who generate viable Indigenous political systems; who are so in love with their land, they are the land; who simply refuse to stop being themselves; who refuse to let go of this knowledge" (Simpson 2017, p. 188-189). The #noDAPL movement demonstrates how a generation that values these ideas has been

created in the Sioux Nation. These values were born through the teachings of organizations created by community members dedicated to resurgent organizing and healing communities. This can directly be seen through the involvement in #noDAPL of the Standing Rock Youth Council and One Mind, groups that organized movement events and joined forces with other youth to create the IIYC. Now some of the community members who created these original organizations are following the leadership of youth. This can be seen through the involvement of tribal elders Tiny Decory, leader of BEAR suicide prevention and youth empowerment program, and Faith Spotted Eagle, leader of the women's Brave Heart Society. Both participated in the Sacred Stone Camp, and Faith Spotted Eagle led the Forgiveness Ceremony after the Sacred Stone Camp disbanded between Elders, community members, and non-Indigenous veterans (One Spirit 2016; Amatull 2016).

The Role of Social Media: Youth Leadership

From the beginning, youth employed a variety of tactics to gain support, but perhaps the most effective strategy in spreading awareness to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike was creating a strong social media presence. The name #noDAPL directly reflects the prominence of social media in this movement. In an interview, Ladonna Brave Bull Allard writes, "One of the things that the young people taught us is this technology: Facebook Live, Instagram, Twitter. They used this technology to touch the world.… Because of that this movement became worldwide" (Halpin 2017). The use of social media was very deliberate and as a result highly effective. For example, before running to Omaha, Three Legs and members of the Standing Rock Youth Council published their petition written by Anna Lee Rain YellowHammer on *Rezpectourwater.com,* a website created to publicize the mission of the runners and #noDAPL protest ("Stop the Dakota Access Pipeline" 2016). In addition to the

petition, twenty other youth between the ages of twelve and sixteen published individual letters with their reasons for fighting the DAPL and images of themselves holding handwritten posters ("The Letters" 2016). These images illustrated that youth were leading the movement and explained why they cared. For example, Emma Jayne Lester, a thirteen-year-old youth writes, "I like to go fishing. If the water is bad, so are the fish. So, what's the point of even having summer?" (Jane Lester 2016). YellowHammer writes, "I want to be the voice for my great grandparents and my community and ask you to stop the building of the Dakota Access pipeline" (Yellowhammer 2016). Over the course of the run, the online petition gained 560,000 supporters and additionally people from all over the world heard about #noDAPL and decided to travel to Sacred Stone Camp to support the movement ("Stop the Dakota Access Pipeline" 2016).

While en route to Washington, D.C. and Omaha, Indigenous youth documented their entire run through various social media outlets. These videos captured both national and international attention because people were astounded by the perseverance of youth and other community members. As a result, news reporters from all over came to see the runners. The social media posts from youth also captured the attention of several celebrities including Leonardo DiCaprio, Shailene Woodley, Ezra Miller, and Jason Momoa, who retweeted, instagrammed, and posted photos asking their fan base to support the runners (Funes 2016). Shailene Woodley actually ran a section of the relay with youth runners and Ezra Miller visited the runners at one of their campsites on the way to U.S. Capital. Their endorsements contributed to the widespread support and international media attention gained through the run (Bell 2016; Funes 2016). Later in the movement, youth used social media for other purposes including calling attention to police brutality, violence, and destruction in the #noDAPL movement. These videos were quickly picked up by reporters and news outlets who traveled to the encampment to

get their own footage. Additionally, youth used social media postings to ask for support in the form of supplies, which quickly poured into the Sacred Stone Camp, revealing the far-reaching impacts previous postings had on social media users.

In her book *As We Have Always Done,* Leanne Simpson discusses the role social media played in Idle No More, an Indigenous rights movement in Canada that sought to protest parliamentary bills that interfered with Indigenous sovereignty and caused harm to the environment (Simpson 2017, p. 220). In this movement, social media was used by Indigenous activists as a tool to gain support, organize demonstrations, and self-represent. Despite the usefulness of these tools, Simpson is wary of social media. She discusses whether or not using social media at all is "digital dispossession" because "Insertion of Indigeneity in cyberspace is not insertion of Indigeneity into the physical world" due to the fact that Indigenous knowledge is founded in land-based, community-oriented thought and practice (Simpson 2017, p. 221). As a result, she states that grounded normativity and resurgence do not exist in cyberspace, and therefore social media is contributing to the further dispossession of Indigenous people, who are losing connection to land, culture, and community. She largely blames social media for the collapse of the Idle No More movement. She explains how some tribal members involved in the Idle No More movement attended a meeting with Prime Minister Stephen Harper that others did not which caused division of protestors and effectively ended the movement's hunger strike (Simpson 2017, p. 279 footnote 17). Since there was no physical community to regroup and find a different avenue to protest due to the reliance on social media as a form of organization, the movement could not recover from the challenges posed by the division and Idle No More collapsed.

Despite Simpson's warnings, I believe that social media can be beneficial to the success of an Indigenous rights movement, and #noDAPL demonstrates this. The #noDAPL movement's use of social media was more effective than that of the Idle No More Movement because activists did not rely on social media as the primary means of organization and self-representation. The initial stages of the movement were organized by One Mind and the Standing Rock Youth Council, groups that already existed on Sioux reservations. Under the guidance of Allard and with the help of other community members, these groups developed the Sacred Stone Camp, which was both place-based and focused on community building. By running 2,000 miles to Washington D.C., youth relayed their message in person and demonstrated their commitment to the land and their culture. Social media was used to amplify these actions, but the movement was largely built through grounded normativity and resurgence coming from the Sioux Nation.

Part Two: Significance of the Movement

It is difficult to quantify the significance of #noDAPL given that it is so recent and remains in many regards an ongoing movement. However, in this section I will discuss the preliminary impacts of the #noDAPL movement related to youth activism and climate justice. Through leadership and involvement in the #noDAPL movement as water protectors, youth have realized the importance of their actions and the potential progress they can make towards decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty. As a result, the #noDAPL movement has not ended, and today it can been seen in the actions of the IIYC, a program founded through the movement that focuses on community-oriented education, resurgence, and grounded normativity. This group is much like the programs and organizations that existed in the Sioux Nation before #noDAPL, but instead it involves more youth from different tribal Nations and members participate more actively in decolonization through demonstrations advocating for climate

justice. The implications of this leadership can already be seen in the climate justice movement. As a result of youth activism for climate justice, more people are beginning to understand that Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization depend on climate justice, and as a result, Indigenous voices need to be more prominently included in the climate justice movement.

Youth Shaping the Future

From the birth of Sacred Stone Camp on April 1 of 2016, the #noDAPL movement has demonstrated how Indigenous youth have stepped up to take control of their own individual futures as well as accepted the responsibility of shaping the collective future of their community and tribal nations. Their motivation for doing so is to protect their land, culture, and community and ensure that future generations can persist with the same land and culture values. Iron Eyes, the thirteen-year-old president of the Standing Rock Youth Council, believes that the Sacred Stone Camp motivated youth to turn their lives in a different direction. She says, "Those camps and this whole movement gave our youth something to do that occupied time where they could have been drinking, doing drugs… Our communities have such a hard time. But we don't want to be victims anymore… Now, with this generation, with the youth, we're just trying to pick ourselves up and start over and live in a good way" (Green 2017).

The individual experience of Daniel Grassrope, an IIYC member, reveals a similar experience. He identifies participating in the relay run to Washington, D.C. and joining the IIYC as monumental events in his life and a time when he realized his future mattered both to him and to the Sioux Nation. Before joining the #noDAPL movement, Grassrope said that he dreamed of being taken away from his family and adopted by whites (Elbein 2017). He disliked living on the reservation and said, "As an Indigenous person sometimes growing up you feel like nobody sees you. You feel like people don't want you around, and you feel like if you disappeared everyone

would just be happy" (Simon 2017). However, the run gave Grassrope a sense of power and purpose and taught him to be proud of who he is. He says in an interview, "I had been praying for something like this…" (Simon 2017). Both of these quotes reveal how the community-engaged programs and organizations described in Chapter Three may work towards teaching youth that their wellbeing and culture are important, but the #noDAPL movement provided a place for youth to actually see how their wellbeing positively contributed to the community.

In addition to creating a space for youth to feel they were important assets to their community, the widespread attention this movement gained revealed to youth that their voices and leadership were crucial in the persistence of the Sioux Nation. This newfound realization deeply impacted many people, and the results of this can be seen in statements from many water protectors. Jasilyn Charger, the founder of One Mind, believes that #noDAPL has significantly impacted her future. She says, "This has changed my life completely. My life will never be the same. I will never be the same girl I was when I first came to camp. I used to be [scared] but then I found courage. And I'm gunna continue this way. I'm gunna continue fighting for the rest of my life" (Green 2017). Grassrope asserts, "I'm willing to put my life on the line if that's what it takes," an extreme statement that reveals his commitment to the future (Simon 2017).

White Eyes recognizes the importance of youth leadership to the persistence of the Sioux Nation and says, "If we are going to win this movement, the environmental movement, you let your youth lead. You follow the youth because they're the only ones that have these fresh ideas, they're the only ones that can think differently than how our colonized minds think right now" (Reson 2016). This quote hearkens back to Leanne Simpson's recognition that her own children she have a strength she does not have because of the way they have grown up surrounded by and supported by their community. Much like White Eyes she says they have "the ability to point out

and name colonialism, resist and even mobilize to change it" (Simpson 2017, p. 1). Similarly, Charger believes that the strength of youth comes from a passion and urgency to fight for Indigenous sovereignty. She says, "We, as youth, that fire still burns inside of us. That is a representation of our perseverance, of our strength, of our prayer. And that cannot be extinguished, even if you're older than us, even if you tell us to stop, that we aren't going to stop" ("From Keystone XL Pipeline to #DAPL" 2017).

Resurgence and Grounded Normativity

Like Charger, many youth have demonstrated a commitment to continuing to stand up and protect Indigenous land, culture, and community from extraction, even after the DAPL construction was approved in 2017. Indigenous youth have begun pursuing different avenues of resistance to take control of their own futures and ensure the future persistence of their communities. These avenues are rooted in community development, defense and connection to the land, and youth empowerment: actions and values that once again demonstrate Indigenous framework of resurgence and grounded normativity. This is clearly demonstrated in the actions of the IIYC in the past year. This group was created at the Sacred Stone Camp by youth from a variety of tribal nations. Although the actions and programs of this one group do not reflect those of all Indigenous youth that were involved in #noDAPL, the IIYC has a broad reach and includes many youth water protectors from different places in the country. Additionally, it is a good indicator of youth activism that carries on from the #noDAPL movement because this group was responsible for a large portion of the actions that took place at the Sacred Stone Camp. Even though the camp disbanded when the DAPL was approved, the IIYC continues to exist and carries the same values that water protectors embodied at the Sacred Stone Camp.

Because members of the IIYC come from various Indigenous groups across the country, one of the first actions after the Sacred Stone Camp disbanded was to establish IIYC chapters in different areas. Today the IIYC has chapters in Chicago, Denver, Texas, New Mexico, and South Dakota ("IIYC Chapters" 2018). The IIYC website describes how each of these chapters hosts monthly community meetings that focus on education, spiritual practice, and civic engagement. Additionally, IIYC has organized a "7th Generation School Tour" program that brings IIYC council members into schools near chapter locations to share their experiences in the #noDAPL movement "in hopes to inspire young people to stand for what they believe in" ("Programs" 2018). This tour is focused on educating youth about why the #noDAPL movement is important. Finally, the last program created by IIYC is "Mi Vida Su Vida," a training program to educate youth about health practices that focuses on culturally responsive prevention, intervention and treatment. The IIYC description states "as young people, if we are to lead in our communities, we must ensure we are developing our leadership skills from a strong foundation. This begins with education around mental, physical and spiritual health" ("Programs" 2018). The development of chapters is based on a structure of Indigenous resurgence or "reconnecting with homelands, cultures, and communities," as well as empowering youth (Corntassel 2012, p. 97). The chapters create a physical community and support system for youth outside of reservations, and the programs focus on "culturally responsive prevention, intervention, and treatment," and developing leadership around "mental, physical, and spiritual health" ("Programs" 2018).

Through these chapters, the IIYC has organized and participated in decolonization events that focus on defending both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities from extractivism in a very similar way to the actions of water protectors in #noDAPL. One example is on February 3, 2017, the IIYC launched a movement titled Decolonization of People Everywhere (#DOPE). The

purpose of this movement is to reach out to colonized people across the country and help them fight to defend their land, culture, and wellbeing. The name of the campaign, #DOPE, was chosen for two specific reasons. First, according to IIYC member Ta'Sina Sapa Win, this name will "appeal to the younger generation, our generation 'cause we know, being how young we are, when [people] think something is cool or rad they say 'oh, that's dope'" (Young 2017). Second, a deeper purpose of the acronym #DOPE is to bring attention to the use of drugs on reservations. Indigenous communities suffer from some of the highest drug addiction rates in the country. They have the highest per-capita rate of opioid overdoses and between 1999 and 2015, Native people have experienced a 500 percent increase in drug-overdose deaths related to opioid use compared to a 200 percent increase for all Americans (Brunswick 2018). Currently, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is in the process of suing major opioid manufacturers and distributers for creating a public health crisis and concealing the addiction risk of opioids (Brunswick 2018). As Ta'Sina says, "drugs have hit our homes pretty hard… a lot of the drugs and alcohol that have been inflicted on our people are because of oppression and... because of colonialism" (Young 2017). For Ta'Sina and other members of the youth council, the #DOPE movement is giving a new meaning and sense of empowerment to the word dope and taking away some of the negative drug use implications (Young 2017).

In addition to #DOPE rallies, members of the IIYC from all chapters have both supported and organized rallies and demonstrations that defend the environment from fossil fuel extraction in an effort to ensure the future of Indigenous peoples in the United States. In May of 2017, the IIYC sent a group of Indigenous youth to Washington, D.C. to participate in the People's Climate March. On March 1, 2018 in Chicago, Illinois, members of the IIYC organized a rally to encourage divestment and spread awareness about bank investments in the fossil fuel industry.

This rally's primary focus was to convince the Illinois Democratic gubernatorial candidates to sign a pledge to divest from fossil fuels, to resist pipelines like DAPL, and commit to doing everything possible to transition towards renewable energy in Chicago ("NoDAPL Protest and Divestment Rally at IL Governors Debate" 2018).

One of the most successful movements in which IIYC played a large part was the #FrackoffChaco movement. From June 24 - June 26 2017, members of the IIYC and Native youth in the Four Corners Area, under the leadership of Lauren Howland, traveled to New Mexico to run an eighty-mile relay and protest fracking in the Greater Chaco Region ("Youth Awareness Run & Rally" 2017). In December of 2016, the Bureau of Land Management approved more than 400 new fracking wells without adequate consultation with the Navajo peoples in the area or full environmental assessments of water and climate impacts ("FrackOffChaco IIYC Youth Awareness Run" 2017; "Youth Awareness Run & Rally" 2017). On March 1, 2018, the final signatures and sale of lands was delayed. Further consultations and environmental assessments are required before the fracking plan can go any further (Coleman 2018). The front-line demonstrations and commitment of members of the IIYC and other activists forced the U.S. government to reevaluate, much like the actions and demonstrations at #noDAPL inspired President Obama and the USACE to initially deny the DAPL crossing beneath Lake Oahe.

On Earth Day, April 22, 2018, in Denver, Colorado, the Denver chapter of the IIYC will work with the organizations Earth Guardians and Hold Our Ground to organize a rally aimed at educating people from Colorado about the dangers of fracking, and helping them work towards renewable energy (Johnson 2018). The main goal of this rally is to empower people to speak up

and acknowledge that fracking is increasing the United States' dependence on fossil fuels and polluting the environment ("Frack Free Colorado" 2018).

Indigenous youth participation in the People's Climate March, #FrackoffChaco, and the Denver Earth Day Rally are all actions based in Indigenous frameworks of grounded normativity. The desire to participate in these demonstrations comes from "land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge," particularly knowledge that climate change furthers extractivism in the lives of Indigenous peoples. The participation in these events demonstrates how Indigenous knowledge and land-connected practices have informed "ethical engagements with the world" (Coulthard 2014, p. 13). As in #noDAPL, Indigenous youth see how they need to protect their communities from the harm caused by extraction of fossil fuels and the loss of culture and identity that results from climate change impacts. They have used this realization to inform their actions, like participating in these rallies and marches.

Climate Justice and Indigenous Sovereignty

A deeper look into these avenues of resistance reveals that Indigenous youth from the IIYC have continued to protect Indigenous land, culture, and community from extractivism, but even more importantly, they have gone further to assert Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization depend on climate justice. This is not the first time that Indigenous people have argued this, but it is the first time the United States has faced such a forceful demonstration of the relationship between climate change and the colonization of Indigenous peoples. A quote from the IIYC website is the best indication of how youth have asserted this perspective. In their statement regarding the upcoming anti-fracking demonstration in Denver, they assert,

> The greatest threat to young people's well-being and to sustaining a balanced future for the next seven generations is climate change. If we continue to lay a blind eye to our personal impact on climate change (even more so, the systematic impacts on climate

> change) our children will experience a very different quality of life from us… We know the only way to achieve our goal is to provide a platform for youth to speak out against the effects climate change will have on their health and the environment (Johnson 2018).

Because fracking sites in Colorado are not directly impacting Native reservation lands, it is difficult to understand why the IIYC fervently argue that this particular event will be a threat to "young people's well-being" as well as a "balanced future for the next seven generations" (Johnson 2018). However, it is important to take into consideration how this event fits into the history of colonialism and consider the future impacts climate change will have on Indigenous communities in the United States. Doing this reveals how extraction of fossil fuels that contributes to climate change is colonization of all Indigenous peoples in the United States.

Whyte writes, "Climate injustice, for Indigenous peoples, is less about the spectre of a new future and more like the experience of déjà vu" (Whyte 2016b, p. 88). Whyte is pointing out how Indigenous peoples have experienced various forms of dispossession through extractivism and colonization, and climate change is a furtherance of these same practices. It is important to remember that extraction does not always imply physical removal of resources or objects from land. As Simpson describes, extractivism as "taking something, whether it's a process, an object, a gift, or a person, out of the relationships that give it meaning, and placing it in a nonrelational context for the purposes of accumulation" (Simpson 2017, p. 201-202). Therefore, if an Indigenous group loses the ability continue the process and practice of sustenance hunting because of climate change, a resource has been extracted from that group.

The IIYC states that the United States' dependence on fossil fuels causes harm to the well-being and future of Indigenous people. Studies show that Indigenous communities carry a disproportionate burden of the negative impacts of climate change (Norton-Smith, Lynn, Chief, Cozzetto, Donatuto, Redsteer, Kruger, Maldonado, Viles & Whyte 2016). An article published

by the USDA discusses some of these physical impacts. Indigenous communities in Alaska and Louisiana have already been displaced by rising sea levels flooding lands. Temperature fluctuation has caused certain species to migrate, which interferes with Native hunting and fishing practices, and invasive species and prolonged drought in the Southwest has interfered with subsistence practices (Norton-Smith et. al. 2016, p. 2). These are just a few examples, but the list gets longer as the effects of climate change become more obvious. The USDA states, "These impacts threaten traditional knowledges, food security, water availability, historical homelands, and territorial existence, and may undermine indigenous ways of life that have persisted and adapted for thousands of years" (Norton-Smith et. al. 2016, p. 2). Indigenous lives and culture are intrinsically related to the land, and this can be seen in Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous lifestyles that center around land-based practices. Therefore, any form of displacement or change in the land and environment will also impact the identity and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and decrease their ability to persist as self-sufficient, sovereign nations. Members of the IIYC recognize that now is the turning point, now is the time to speak out against climate change before it is too late. For Indigenous peoples, a "balanced future" depends on maintaining the integrity of the land as well as the balance in ecosystems, which in turn allows Indigenous culture and identity to persist.

Members of the IIYC argue that "the only way to achieve our goal is to provide a platform for youth to speak out against the effects climate change will have on their health and the environment" (Johnson 2018). Earlier portions of this chapter demonstrate that youth voices are crucial to decolonization because youth utilize different tools like social media, have grown up and been supported by community knowledge and educated through Indigenous knowledge systems, and have a 'fire' or passion that elders don't necessarily have (Simpson 2017, p. 1;

Reson 2016; From Keystone XL Pipeline to #DAPL 2017). So far Indigenous youth have demonstrated a commitment to Indigenous knowledge systems by their use of resurgence and grounded normativity practices and proved that they are dedicated to ensuring the future of their communities through the continuation of the #noDAPL movement in the fight for climate justice elsewhere. This is just the beginning, and these ideas are growing through the IIYC. Already, the results of this activism can be seen in the way the #noDAPL movement has been framed as a demonstration to protect Indigenous sovereignty as well as a fight for climate justice (Dhillon 2016a; Dhillon 2017b; Whyte 2016c; Whyte 2017a). The actions of Indigenous youth through the #noDAPL movement have made it clear that it is *imperative* that conversations of climate justice include the voices of Indigenous people, because the persistence and wellbeing of sovereign, Indigenous communities depends on climate justice.

Conclusion

"The youth wanted to get it out that their futures, their lives, and their homelands were at stake… In the beginning it was just a couple of videos and a couple of kids, and it grew into such a huge and powerful movement... This is just one pipeline, there are pipelines being built everywhere... we [need to] look at it as… a global issue."

Tokata Iron Eyes (Acronym TV 2016)

It is hard to believe Standing Rock Youth Council's president is a thirteen-year-old named Tokata Iron Eyes. Yet her motivation to fight the DAPL reveals both advanced leadership skills and a strong dedication to her community, something that can be seen in the actions of Indigenous youth water protectors who emerged as leaders through the #noDAPL movement. Like Iron Eyes states, in the beginning of #noDAPL there were just a few kids who were fighting to defend their lives, futures, and homelands from the intrusion of a pipeline that today carries crude oil across the United States and under Lake Oahe. The movement quickly grew into an international issue. However, when President Trump took the required measures to approve the DAPL under Lake Oahe, while many water protectors returned to their regular lives, Indigenous youth did not stop the fight to protect their way of life from extractivism. They found other ways resist. As Tokata says, the DAPL is just one pipeline, and there are pipelines being built everywhere. DAPL is a physical structure that causes harm to Indigenous people, but it also serves as a metaphor for other events of colonialism and extractivism that have harmed Indigenous people in the past and continue to do so in the future.

Whyte states, "The reality is that extractive industries have been part of the experience of every single tribe in the US" (as cited in Bagley 2016). Although in Chapter Two of this thesis I focused on the history extractivism experienced by the Sioux Nation, all Native people in the U.S. have been subject to the same or similar events of extraction. Simpson argues that settler colonialism is ultimately about the extraction of Indigenous knowledge, resources, and culture,

whether it be in the form of fossil fuels being removed from Indigenous homelands, climate change impacts that prevent Indigenous communities from practicing sustenance fishing and hunting, or the loss of Native language through assimilationist policies that attempted to eradicate any form of Indigeneity from the United States (Simpson 2017, p. 73). However, the persistence and recent growth of Indigenous communities reveals how years of colonization have been met with Indigenous resistance and these efforts continue today in communities that grow stronger through organizations and actions founded through resurgence and grounded normativity.

Organizations and programs that focus on Indigenous resurgence and grounded normativity exist on reservations and continue the fight to ensure the future persistence of Indigenous communities. Furthermore these programs ensure the growth of Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization and are essential to educating youth and teaching them to value their lives, culture, and community. They help youth recognize that they play a crucial role in the future persistence of Indigenous peoples in the United States. Through these programs, youth learn to value Indigenous intelligence and use the culture and teachings instilled in them through education from community members and elders to protect and defend their way of life from further extraction and colonization. Unlike their elders who were forced off reservations to live in residential boarding schools or forbidden from speaking their native languages, youth have a greater opportunity to live and learn within their communities and regain traditional knowledge that has been lost through the history of colonization and assimilation. This knowledge empowers youth and gives them the tools to fight for their future.

Youth recognize that they cannot freely exercise their knowledge and culture because colonization and extractivism continue to endanger Indigenous ways of life. As a result, they

have taken it upon themselves to stand up and use their bodies and knowledge to resist colonization and protect their way of life. They have an important approach that uses grounded normativity and resurgence, values instilled in them by their communities, as tools of resistance. Youth have also utilized their knowledge of social media to self-represent and spread awareness. The #noDAPL movement demonstrates the utilization of this knowledge, and others have followed in the leadership of youth. Through the #noDAPL movement, youth have realized the importance of their efforts to furthering decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty. Even after their resistance was thwarted by the United States government under the leadership of President Trump, they continued to resist and adapted their strategies. They have taken their bodies and knowledge elsewhere to continue to fight for the same things, through grounded normativity and resurgence. In doing so, youth have entered the climate justice movement and asserted that the persistence of their communities depends on climate justice and stopping the extractivism that accompanies climate change.

Throughout this thesis, I have deliberately used theories coming from Indigenous knowledge to frame my analysis and discussion. The purpose of doing this is because "without the knowledge, analysis, and critique produced by Indigenous people… the academy cannot have a full understanding of colonialism as a process" (Simpson 2017, p. 31). Furthermore, as Simpson argues, Indigenous theory is a resistance to the colonization of knowledge, thought, and overall structure of society. This thesis is a resistance to Western frameworks of knowledge and the colonization of knowledge because I have focused on Indigenous voices to the best of my ability and I have used the knowledge and theory produced by these voices as tools to guide my research and examination. Although I recognize that a shortcoming of this thesis is that my research did not include direct interviews and feedback from Indigenous communities directly

involved in the #noDAPL movement, I have used the resources available to me to tell the story Indigenous youth water protectors who deserve recognition for their contributions to Indigenous sovereignty, decolonization, and climate justice. The #noDAPL movement is the most important demonstration of Indigenous rights activism in my lifetime, and it has far-reaching impacts that have influenced the way both non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples think about colonialism and climate change in the United States.

It is my hope that these impacts will influence and greatly change climate change policy and prevention measures in the coming years. A quote from Whyte demonstrates the current predicament of climate justice policy. He states, "In the absence of a concern for addressing colonialism, climate justice advocates do not really propose solutions to climate change that are that much better for Indigenous well-being than the proposed inaction of even the most strident climate change deniers" (Whyte 2017b, p. 7). In other words, climate justice advocates who fail to address the colonial underpinnings of climate change may cause the same harm to Indigenous people as climate deniers. While this is a harsh statement, it reflects an undeniable reality. Failing to address the inseparable relationship between colonization and climate change continues the oppression and colonization of Indigenous peoples. Whyte gives a specific example of how some strategies that work to lower national carbon footprints continue to colonize Indigenous communities. He says that they "pose risks to Indigenous peoples and put their human rights in peril, whether through programs of the World Bank, the United Nations or particular nations" because, as he explains, "hydropower and forest conservation *still* involve displacement of Indigenous peoples" (Whyte 2017b, p. 3).

An obvious step in the right direction towards addressing the relationship between climate justice and Indigenous sovereignty is to increase Indigenous participation in

conversations of climate justice policy and action. The USDA report "Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples: Synthesis of Current Impacts and Experiences," provides possible options, including recognizing that "Indigenous perspectives and traditional knowledges must guide climate-change assessment and adaptation to develop culturally appropriate strategies" (Norton-Smith et. al. 2016 p. 94). This report represents a step in the right direction because it was co-authored by Indigenous scholars and scientists and uses Indigenous knowledge to investigate the impacts of climate change on Indigenous communities. However, this one report is clearly not enough. The impacts of climate change are inevitable even if the United States greatly reduces our carbon footprint. Not only does our society need to include Indigenous voices into conversations that work towards lowering the carbon footprint of the United States, we also need to listen to Indigenous peoples in conversations of how to adapt to the coming changes.

As Iron Eyes says, "this is just one pipeline, there are pipelines being built everywhere... we [need to] look at it as… a global issue" (Acronym TV 2016). Indigenous youth speak with an urgency and fervor that reminds us that it is imperative to act now, and we need to listen. Climate justice should further decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty, and although youth have demonstrated this through the #noDAPL movement and other demonstrations to protect their way of life from further colonization, it is the responsibility of us as individuals, policy makers, students, intellectuals, and human beings to implement this into our society and lives.

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