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Engaging Indigenous Political Theories: Colonial Histories, Decolonial Futures, and Indigenous Political Thought in British Columbia, Canada

by

Sophie Clara Major

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Energy and Resources

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Isha Ray, Co-chair Professor Kate O'Neill, Co-chair Professor Thomas Biolsi Professor Karena Shaw (University of Victoria)

Summer 2022

Engaging Indigenous Political Theories: Colonial Histories, Decolonial Futures, and Indigenous Political Thought in British Columbia, Canada

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Abstract

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by

Sophie Clara Major

Doctor of Philosophy in Energy and Resources

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Isha Ray, Co-chair

Professor Kate O'Neill, Co-chair

Despite wider efforts to departed and decolorize political theory, few contemporary political theorists have seriously engaged the diverse political theories of Indigenous peoples and the challenges Indigenous thinkers have posed to dominant political theory discourses. This dissertation considers what changes might be needed for Indigenous political thought and Indigenous ways of knowing to gain a meaningful presence in the subfield of political theory, and in particular, how engaging Indigenous political thought might support this presence. Building on the relevant work of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars across disciplines, the dissertation suggests that engagements with Indigenous political thought take up practices of reflexivity attentive to the relational and political embeddedness of theorizing, of respectful relationship building, and of prioritizing Indigenous political goals in the theorizing or research process. In a reflexive analysis of the discipline of political theory, the dissertation considers how political theorists might understand the role of the subfield in perpetuating or reinforcing the marginalization of Indigenous people and their political thought. Through historical analysis, it is demonstrated that vestiges of the developmental historicist tradition, and in particular, assumptions about the nation-state as a natural unit of political organization and about the supposed apolitical nature of Indigenous cultures, help to explain many misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples. Next, the dissertation turns to an engagement with previously unstudied Indigenous political thought from British Columbia, Canada, illustrating the other suggestions for engaging Indigenous political thought. Historically narrating and analyzing seven decades of the history of Indigenous political thought in British Columbia, it is demonstrated that Indigenous peoples from the region have longstanding traditions of theorizing territory and political authority that challenge the legitimacy of the authority of the settler-state. Next, using collaborative methods, an interpretive account and analysis of the contemporary political thought of a hereditary chief from the shíshálh Nation is offered. The dissertation makes clear that questions of territoriality and authority have never been settled in Canada, and in British Columbia in particular, and offers guidance for those considering what it might take to build a meaningful presence of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous people within political theory.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Engaging Indigenous Knowledge: Questions and Challenges

If political theory, in the broadest sense, seeks to assess and offer answers to the question, "how ought we live together?", the discipline has largely overlooked entire traditions' and regions' answers to this question. In particular, despite wider efforts to departicular and decolonize political theory, political theorists have largely failed to take seriously the diverse and intricate traditions of Indigenous political thought. Similarly, few contemporary political theorists have carefully considered or written on the methodological, moral, and political challenges of disciplinary engagements with Indigenous political thought. Indigenous political scholars, on the other hand, have over the last decades increasingly posed explicit challenges for contemporary political theorists and contemporary governance in settler-states.

Drawing on relevant existing work in disciplinary political theory, including comparative political theory and other recent discourses on disciplinary decolonization and epistemic marginalization, and Indigenous political thought both within and outside the academy, this dissertation interrogates the relationships between Indigenous political thought and disciplinary political theory. It analyzes the historical and political relationship between both, and considers what can be learned, particularly from Indigenous political thinkers, about the possibilities for and challenges of increased engagement by political theorists with Indigenous political epistemologies and ontologies.

At the outset, it is important to discuss the terminology of Indigeneity that is central to this thesis. Beginning in the mid and late 20th century, the term Indigenous began to be used in international coalition building, asserting the Indigenous peoples around the world can be understood as a collective, based on either shared experiences or characteristics. Questions of defining or conceptualizing Indigeneity, and who should decide who is Indigenous or not, remain contested across academic and non-academic discourses (Corntassel 2003; Timperley 2020).

Understandings of Indigeneity commonly invoked today often incorporate elements of

historical continuity, suggesting that Indigenous peoples are characterized by their shared experience of being descendants of the first or original occupants of a territory, or similarly, that they are characterized as descendant of ancestors who were unjustly dispossessed of the territories they once occupied. Contemporary definitions sometimes also characterize Indigenous peoples in terms of their experiences of social or power relations, or relationships to non-Indigenous peoples (Merlan 2009). For example, Indigenous scholar Stephen Anaya characterizes Indigenous peoples as, "the living descendants of preinvasion inhabitants of lands now dominated by others," drawing on both elements of historical continuity and contemporary political relationships (2004). Although such definitions are common, there are also well-documented concerns regarding the universal application of a fixed definition of Indigeneity, which may enact exclusions, reify Indigeneity as a stable category, or be used to control group membership (Barchman 2000).

Seeking to avoid possible risks of universalized definitions of Indigeneity, some discourses emphasize the importance of self-identification and self-definition. For example, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples emphasizes that "Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions" (2007). Such approaches often aim to side-step challenges and potential risks of a universalized definition of Indigeneity, deferring responsibilities of identification and categorization to Indigenous peoples themselves. However, relying on localized self-definitions of Indigeneity may also pose challenges for effective collective action amongst Indigenous peoples, or for the distribution of rights, reparations, or other entitlements to Indigenous peoples (Timperley 2020).

Alternative approaches to understanding Indigeneity have also been proposed, sometimes with the explicit goal of responding to limitations of both universalizing definitions and localized self-definitions of Indigeneity. For example, political scholar Claire Timperley argues for a non-identical conceptualization of Indigeneity, drawing on Adorno's critiques of identity thinking. Timperley suggest that we understand Indigeneity through "constellations of concepts that invoke indigeneity," which are attentive to the particular context and experiences of the people it attempts to represent (Timperley 2020, 47). They suggest that such an approach could highlight contingency, encouraging constant reassessment of our definitions under particular circumstances and contexts, and allow for consideration of competing views of Indigeneity within a particular Indigenous community or culture.

Acknowledging the complexities of conceptualizing Indigeneity, and the importance of ongoing debates on the topic for Indigenous peoples and politics, this thesis does not assume a fixed or universalizing definition of Indigeneity, nor does it contribute to debates about who is or is not Indigenous. I instead, in the present inquiry, aim to make clear how I am using the terms I choose. I rely on the self-identification of thinkers, scholars, and individuals as Indigenous. This approach is likely to have limitations and does not amount to an unequivocal endorsement of a self-identification approach to understanding Indigeneity. However, it allows me to prioritize my inquiry into Indigenous political thought without reinforcing a static view of Indigeneity. This thesis responds primarily to the Anglo subfield of political theory, and therefore engages primarily with the political thought and perspectives

of Indigenous peoples from Anglo settler-colonial states, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States.¹

1.2 Indigenous Topics in Academic Political Theory

Returning to the central theme of this thesis, marginalization and erasure of Indigenous perspectives within the academic subfield of political theory is longstanding. For most of the discipline's history, theorists have engaged near exclusively with a canon of dominant texts, typically associated with European traditions of politics and political thought². Consequently, the political perspectives and thought of many others have typically been omitted from or marginalized within disciplinary political theory scholarship. While the political perspectives of Indigenous thinkers and leaders have typically been marginalized in the discipline, many dominant political theory texts and discourses have included discussion of Indigenous people.

Some European modern political theorists, for example, did include discussion of the Indigenous peoples of North America, variously characterizing Indigenous peoples or "Indians" as savage, uncivilized, or pre-political (Berkhofer 2011). With the discovery of the new world, early modern and modern theorists of property, political jurisdiction, and the law of nations often include discussion of "Indians". In an early example, Spanish and Roman Catholic philosopher, Francisco de Vitoria, discussed whether the Spanish were justified in invading territories of Indigenous peoples in their 16th century lecture "On the American Indians." Vitoria offered potential contradictory theories on the topic, but in some instances claimed that Spanish invasion of the new world was justified based on the mental inferiority of Indigenous peoples. They also asserted that the Spanish had a responsibility to undertake missionary work, educating Natives about the Christian faith (Cavallar 2008).

Discussions of Indigenous peoples of the new world were also important to the philosophies of other modern thinkers, such as Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Contemporary analyses of these thinkers often consider if, how, and to what extent such works helped to justify colonial dispossession of Indigenous lands or other forms of colonial violence (Boisen 2013; Cavallar 2008; Stelder 2021; Ashcraft 1971; Braun 2014; Uzgalis 2017; Fitzmaurice 2007). For example, analyzing the work of John Locke, some theorists have argued that Locke's definitions of political society and property may have deliberately excluded the forms of political organization and property found in

¹I use the terminology "Indian" to refer to Indigenous peoples only when discussing texts or authors who relied on such terminology. In later chapters focused on British Columbia, Canada, I regularly refer to Indigenous peoples as First Nations and Indigenous individuals as First Nations individuals, as is common in contemporary Canadian political discourses.

²My use of the phrase "dominant texts" and "dominant theories" borrows from Red River Métis/Michif scholar Max Liboiron's concept of "dominant sciences" Liboiron 2021, 20-21. Like Liboiron, I choose the term dominant over Western because many Western texts and epistemologies are non-dominant, and some dominant texts and theories do not have clear Western origins. I further expand on my hesitation to rely on the phrase Western political theory in Chapter Two.

Indigenous societies of North America (Tully 1994; Boisen 2013). Based on these definitions, Locke concluded that Indigenous societies were apolitical and in a state of nature, and further, that Indigenous peoples fell short in their natural legal duty to cultivate the land. This perceived failure to fulfill natural duties provided the ex post facto moral reasoning to justify colonial usurpation of territories inhabited by Indigenous peoples Tully 1994. Across the modern era, theoretical engagements on topics of Indigenous peoples were important to debates about imperialism, colonialism, and related topics of territory, jurisdiction, and sovereignty.

In the contemporary era of scholarly political theorizing, most dominant texts and discourses have dispensed with overt orientalizing narratives of Indigenous peoples as savage or uncivilized. Instead, across much of the 20th century, most anglophone political theorists remained overwhelmingly silent on topics of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous politics. However, beginning in the 1990s and into the early 2000s, a small number of theorists began to draw attention to questions of Indigenous politics, Indigenous rights, Indigenous identity, and the proper treatment of such topics within the discipline (Shaw 2008; Tully 1994, 1995; Ivison et al. 2000; Ivison 2020; Kymlicka 1995b; Waldron 2003). For example, theorists Duncan Ivison, Paul Patton, and Will Sanders edited a collection in 2000 titled *Political* Theory and the Rights of Indiaenous Peoples, opening the book with an introduction acknowledging that Western political theory has long been complicit in colonial projects that have dispossessed and forcibly assimilated Indigenous peoples. They posit that one of the central contemporary issues facing political theorists is developing just relationships with Indigenous peoples, considering whether the academic tradition might "provide space for the contemporary aspirations of indigenous peoples" (Ivison et al. 2000, 2). In their view, Indigenous political aspirations typically include claims for a right to self-government and territorial sovereignty over traditional lands. They frame the following chapters of the book by two general questions, asking first, how political theory has contributed to the past and ongoing colonization and subjugation of Indigenous peoples, and second, what resources currently exist within the discipline to provide decolonial alternatives. Some of the additional chapters of the book are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

In the early 2000s, then, a number of critical questions regarding the historical and contemporary disciplinary treatment of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous politics began to gain some attention. However, the conversation opened by Ivison, Patton, Sanders and other contributors to their book garnered little engagement across the discipline, and over the next twenty years, many of the questions and challenges identified and posed by these theorists remained marginal in political theory discourses. Similarly, debates about Indigenous rights, state accommodations, and multiculturalism, which had drawn some disciplinary attention in the 1990s and early 2000s, largely waned over the last two decades (Kymlicka 1995b; Cairns 2000; Kukathas 1992). The few more-recent engagements on such topics have given some, although limited, attention to emerging Indigenous critiques of disciplinary political theory (Song 2020; Ivison 2020). Some exceptions to this general trend will be discussed in more detail below.

1.3 Indigenous Political Thought

Also over the last three decades, a growing number of Indigenous academics and scholars published theoretical works on political topics. Indigenous political theory has long existed within the academy and academic discourses, although such works have been written primarily by Indigenous scholars working outside of the subfield of political theory and have typically received limited recognition within political theory discourses. The emergence of academic Indigenous political theory scholarship can be traced back to at least 1970, when the discipline of Native American studies was founded in the United States by a group of Indigenous scholars and intellectuals. The express purpose of the founding of the discipline was to build Indigenous knowledge aimed at forwarding Indigenous political goals, and in particular, goals of protecting Indigenous land and rights (Cook-Lynn 1997). Some of the Indigenous scholars involved in this founding also wrote on these and similar topic of Indigenous rights, jurisdiction, policy, and land. For example, prominent Sioux political scholar, theologian, and activist Vine Deloria Jr.'s first book, originally published in 1969, introduced multiple broad-reaching theoretical, legal, and policy analyses of Indigenous politics in the American context. For instance, Deloria questioned the legitimacy of the government of the United States' claims to sovereignty, and put forward an argument for tribal self-government, noting that treaties between the United States and Native Americans already recognize tribal sovereignty (1988, 44).

Beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s, an increasing number of Indigenous scholars introduced new theories of Indigenous politics, often focused on either topics of Indigenous nationalism, sovereignty, land rights and title, resistance to colonial powers, or resurgence. Many of these Indigenous theorists responded directly to adjacent discourses within political theory. In the Canadian context, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) scholar Taiaiake Alfred was a central figure in this period opening up new challenges to non-Indigenous political thought (1995; 2005; 1999). For example, in one of their early books, Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto, Alfred argued that colonialism continues to insidiously oppress Indigenous peoples. One of the key ways this continues is through the adoption of non-Indigenous values and systems of governance by contemporary Indigenous leaders, which has the effect of distorting Indigenous cultures and aiding the assimilation and colonial control of Indigenous peoples. Alfred argues for a return to traditional Indigenous political values, practices, and ways of knowing, aimed at restoring Indigenous nationhood. They acknowledge that traditions and cultures are dynamic, but assert that we can nonetheless find a common and persistent set of core beliefs and values that characterize a given culture (Alfred 1995, 1999). In later works, Alfred continued to develop their theories of Indigenous resurgence, emphasizing the incompatibility of non-Indigenous liberal values and capitalist social systems with Indigenous traditions and political practices (2005).

Other Indigenous scholars during the period and into the 2010s also advocated for various forms of Indigenous refusal of settler-state politics and forms of recognition, in favor of practices of resurgence (Simpson 2014, 2011; Coulthard 2014). In the Canadian context, these works often both built off of the work of Alfred, and responded directly to disciplinary po-

litical theorizing on state-Indigenous relationships. Audra Simpson, for example, argued in their book *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* that political scholarship has largely under-theorized the continued existence of Indigenous nations, instead assuming that colonialism is something of the past (2014). Simpson, along with other Indigenous theorists, continued to draw attention to the shortcomings of disciplinary engagements with the challenges posed by Indigenous peoples to dominant non-Indigenous political ontologies. Simultaneously, cross-disciplinary theorizing by Indigenous authors on topics of Indigenous politics in settler-states continued to interrogate and develop theories on topics including Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (Alfred 2005a; Moreton-Robinson 2020), decolonization (Tuck and Yang 2012), and the failures of multicultural politics for Indigenous peoples (Byrd 2011).

One text of Indigenous political theory that is particularly relevant to the current project is Indigenous scholar Sarah Hunt's analysis of Indigenous ontologies in the academy (2014). Writing in the context of the discipline of geography, Hunt's central line of inquiry concerns what changes will be need to be undertaken for "Indigeneity and diverse Indigenous knowledge... to gain a meaningful presence in the discipline" (2014, 28). This question is particularly challenging given the epistemic violences enacted by the production of knowledge within disciplines, which create and sustain boundaries of what is seen as legitimate and real. Further, Indigenous ways of knowing have been suppressed, and ideas of Indigeneity transformed, in colonial processes of North America, aiding and justifying the displacement of Indigenous peoples. Given this context, Hunt identifies a number of challenges facing a meaningful disciplinary presence of and for Indigenous knowledge: how might Indigenous knowledge, rooted in its own Indigenous worldviews, "be situated in relation to the discipline of geography and its hegemonic ontologies?" (2014, 13) And how might geographers avoid merely assimilating Indigenous people and their knowledge? Hunt offers some proposals for these challenges, including efforts to destabilize hegemonic ontologies and increased acceptance of the emergent, contingent, and partial nature of knowledge. For non-Indigenous peoples engaging Indigenous ontologies, Hunt suggests that this might include becoming uncomfortable and shifting from a position of expert, to one of listener. They also suggest that such work must be attentive to the absence of Indigenous peoples in the study of Indigenous ontologies, and broader contextualizing politics of knowledge production.

Although Hunt writes to geographers, many of the challenges they identify and theorize remain relevant for disciplinary political theory, and for considerations of what a meaningful presence of Indigenous ontologies and theories might look like within political theory. For example, any attempts to expand engagement with Indigenous political thought in the discipline must reckon with the historical and contemporary role of disciplinary traditions and dominant disciplinary ontologies in the politics of knowledge production. Political theorists must also consider how to avoid remarginalizing or assimilating the Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought they seek to engage to engage.

The diverse body of political theorizing by Indigenous authors across disciplines, which extends beyond the works gestured at here, brings to light important challenges for considering the possibilities of increased engagement with Indigenous political thought within the

discipline. Notably, some of the earliest and most persistent challenges Indigenous theorists have leveled at political practice and scholarship concern the territorial integrity, jurisdiction, and legitimacy of contemporary settler-state political and legal institutions and practices. In the view of some Indigenous theorists, particularly those who advocate for Indigenous refusal and resurgence, the principles, ideals, and practices foundational to contemporary settler-state governance are fundamentally incompatible with Indigenous self-determination, Indigenous values, and Indigenous political traditions. While some disciplinary political theorists have taken up some of the challenges posed by Indigenous theorists, and Indigenous politics, such debates have, in general, attracted limited mainstream traction or attention in contemporary political theory discourses (Tully 2000; Ivison et al. 2000; Shaw 2008; Reinhardt 2016; Song 2020; Sherwin 2022; Ivison 2020).

1.4 Political Theories of Exclusions and Marginalization

Over the last two decades, political theorists have, however, began to reckon with the broad disciplinary practices and traditions that exclude, omit, other, or misrepresent non-dominant authors and non-dominant traditions of political thought. Works on these topics have typically had three general and often overlapping foci. First, some theorists study the practices of political theorizing, historical and contemporary, that have reinforced or legitimized the marginalization of some traditions of political thought, or that have legitimized or reproduced colonial or racist beliefs or practices (Tully 2000; Shaw 2008; Persram 2007; Levy and Young 2011). The second approach taken by some theorists involves offering theories of how common disciplinary practices, methods, and traditions of thought might be remade or replaced to avoid Eurocentrism, racism, sexism, or a legitimization of imperialism, and similarly, theoretical reflection on whether comparative political theory could ever rid itself of Eurocentrism (Shogimen 2016; Rollo 2018; Sherwin 2022). This includes the development of new methods of conducting and teaching political theory towards ends of departochialization, decolonization, cosmopolitanism, or epistemic justice (Godrej 2011; Jenco 2015; Tully 2016a; Cooper et al. 2017; Gordon 2014). Third, some theorists have begun to put into practice new approaches to political theory, engaging with previously understudied or little known texts of political thought. Many of these efforts emerge under the nascent subfield of comparative political theory, including new works of scholarship engaging theories from, for example, Islamic, Buddhist, Chinese, and Indian authors (Euben 1997; Tsai 2017; Iqtidar 2016; Moore 2016; Jenco 2010).

Across these emerging efforts, some attention is given to the particular ways in which dominant political theory texts have marginalized or misrepresented Indigenous peoples, or legitimized domination, colonization, or assimilation of Indigenous peoples in particular (Tully 2000; Shaw 2008). Yet, like other contemporary disciplinary work on Indigenous topics, such works have gained only minimal acknowledgment and debate within broader

disciplinary debates. In the last few years, a slow resurgence in attention to such issues has become more apparent in disciplinary dialogs, with non-Indigenous scholars Tony Rollo and Daniel Sherwin both reopening questions about the relationship of disciplinary political theory to cross-disciplinary Indigenous political theory specifically (2018; 2022). There have, otherwise, been few recent explicit considerations emerging from within the discipline of the unique challenges and considerations of possible disciplinary engagements with Indigenous political thought.

Within the subfield of academic political theory attention to Indigenous topics has largely waned, despite calls, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, for increased critical attention to the relationship between Indigenous peoples and their political aspirations and the discipline. As Ivison, Patton, and Sanders laid out in 2000, there remains work to be done to understand how political theory has perpetuated the colonization of Indigenous peoples and to interrogate if and how political theory might provide disciplinary alternatives that avoid re-marginalizing Indigenous peoples (2000). And while cross-disciplinary Indigenous political theory scholarship has flourished over the last twenty years, few of these works and the challenges they pose to contemporary disciplinary political theory have gained widespread acknowledgment or debate within political theory. Similarly, few political theorists have engaged with the political thought of Indigenous peoples who work and communicate their political thought outside of the academy (for one counter example see Tully 2016b and 2016a).

1.5 Political Thought and Political Theory

As I will explore more in the following chapter, Indigenous political thought is often communicated in varied mediums, and not only in the academic written forms taken by the Indigenous political thinkers I have discussed thus far. My view here, which I will belabor for the sake of clarity, is that political thought and disciplinary political theory are two largely separate phenomena. Political thought exists everywhere people reflect on governance, social organization, or the use of power within society, and not solely within academic discourses.

Second, the dissertation assumes that the academic discipline or field of political theory is largely separate from the broader phenomena of political thought. The sub-discipline of political theory is an institutionally defined and recognized category of knowledge that is researched and taught within universities. This category of knowledge is defined primarily by what is included or excluded in political theory content created by relevant academic institutions, including political theory and political science journals, university presses, academic associations, and departments. Scholars and academic institutions of political theory claim expertise in this category of knowledge, and sometimes offer generalized explanations of what is included in the category. These definitions or self-identities are unstable and contested, but relevant institutions often describe the category as including knowledge about the history of political thought and/or key normative or philosophical questions about political life, including questions of justice, democracy, and secularism (Dryzek et al. 2008; Heywood

2017). In other words, political theory claims expertise in the political thought of historical significance and the political thought relevant to normative political issues of central contemporary political concerns. Some texts or works clearly count as political theory, such as texts that are published within political theory journals and widely included in the political theory course curricula of political science departments. Other works that are occasionally included in the content of relevant academic disciplines sit at the margins of the category of political theory. What is or is not included in the category of knowledge is not easily contested by individuals operating outside of relevant academic institutions.

The texts and authors engaged with and included in political theory scholarship is narrow, excluding the study or acknowledgment of many political thinkers. The implication of this exclusion and the simultaneous claim to expertise is that the political thought of excluded authors and traditions were not historically important, or that they do not provide important or valuable insights for contemporary political issues. Further, the majority of traditions of thought and authors studied by political theorists are of European ancestry, which centers European and White culture and epistemologies as the key source of important political ideas. While it may be unrealistic to expect that political theorists comprehensively engage with political thought from all cultural and regional contexts, political theory's self-definitions typically imply that the discipline holds expert knowledge on the political thought that matters. Although most individuals' political thought goes unstudied within the discipline of political theory, some political theorists increasingly study a broad range of political thought or advocate for new approaches to public political theory (see, for examples, Bevir and Rhodes 2006; Tully 2016a; Livingston 2022).

Comparative political theorists have also engaged with political thought of other non-dominant traditions, and expressions of political thought not typically studied within the discipline. Yet, with few exceptions, comparative political theorists have not engaged with the political thought of Indigenous academics, nor with the political thought of other Indigenous thinkers and leaders whose work is found outside of the academy. As political theorist Kennan Ferguson argues on this topic, "Comparative political theory, too, looks beyond the boundaries our own settler colonial past. It ignores Native epistemologies and theories, even when these nations had well-developed traditions of governance and concepts of collectivity" (Ferguson 2016, 1029). Nonetheless, regardless of disciplinary and institutional acknowledgment or inclusion, Indigenous political thought remains alive and well across Indigenous communities in settler-states.

1.6 Questioning the Closures of Political Theory

The context of the present project, then, is one of growing Indigenous political theorizing and challenges to academic political theory discourses, and minimal disciplinary engagement with the political aspirations, thought, and challenges posed by Indigenous political thinkers. Throughout the early history of the discipline, theorists often discussed Indigenous peoples, characterizing them, for example, as outside of the boundaries of political

society, as mentally or politically inferior, or as failing in the duties necessary to secure various rights. In contemporary political theory discourses, some political theorists have offered theories about Indigenous peoples or Indigenous politics, discussing how the state ought to respond to contemporary Indigenous claims or what rights Indigenous peoples are entitled to in contemporary settler-state societies. Conversely, few theorists have engaged with Indigenous thinkers, acknowledging Indigenous peoples as authors of political thought work understanding or studying. Those that have engaged with Indigenous political thought have pointed to some important challenges for the disciplinary study of Indigenous political thought.

There are numerous reasons to be concerned both with the lack of attention to Indigenous political thought in the political theory discipline, and with possible projects that seek to include Indigenous political thought in the discipline. First, the marginal attention to Indigenous political thought is concerning as Indigenous peoples make up a significant portion of the political communities of settler-colonial states, and nearly all of the landmass of settler states is traditional Indigenous territories. Thus, past and present political relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are a key part of the political context in settler states. At a basic level, for contemporary political theories to adequately respond to and engage with contemporary political challenges and dilemmas, they must incorporate the political perspectives, thought, and aspirations of relevant cultures, communities, and peoples. Political theorists' limited engagement with, or acknowledgment of Indigenous political thought means that their contemporary political theories also fail to respond to the challenges and provocations posed by Indigenous political thinkers. This is likely to be of concern both to political theorists in settler-states who seek to produce applied political theories that respond to today's political challenges, including challenges of settler-colonialism and ethnocentrism, and to political scholars who seek to address major potential epistemic challenges to their theoretical work. In short, the failure to consider Indigenous political theories engenders disciplinary and political closures and limitations where they need not exist.

Second, the possibility of simply increasing inclusion of Indigenous political thought as a remedy to past misrepresentations and omissions of Indigenous peoples in the discipline is also concerning. As Hunt and other Indigenous political theorists have drawn attention to, the production of knowledge is political (2014). Knowledge production about Indigenous peoples has often reinforced, perpetuated, or justified many colonial and racist outcomes for Indigenous peoples in settler-states. Thus, closer engagement with or research on Indigenous political thought must also consider how Indigenous knowledge is engaged, what research questions are asked, and perhaps most importantly, who benefits from such work (Smith 2021). Few disciplinary political theorists have yet acknowledged or thoroughly interrogated these and many other pertinent questions regarding the prospects of a meaningful presence of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge within the discipline. Other relevant questions are context-specific and dynamic, and might include questions such as:

How have dominant political theory discourses been shaped by exclusions and mischaracterizations of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought?

How might scholars and students of political theory respond to the colonial origins and inheritance of their discipline?

Could scholars and students of political theory engage with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought without reproducing their marginality or otherness, and if so, how?

What would it mean for them to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and learning or Indigenous methodologies into this work?

How might they engage with Indigenous political thought without appropriating, decontexualizing, or generalizing Indigenous epistemologies?

Could there be a meaningful presence for Indigenous political theory within disciplinary political theory, without also having a meaningful presence of Indigenous theorists and scholars within the discipline?

How might a meaningful presence of Indigenous political theory change or create new openings for political theory?

This dissertation considers how political theorists might understand and respond to the existing disciplinary treatment of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought. It takes up a small subsection of the questions and challenges flagged thus far, building on the work of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous political theorists who have contemplated these issues and related questions of settler colonialism and disciplinary, epistemic, and political marginalization. Each chapter takes up separate questions related to Indigenous political thought.

The thesis begins with an investigation into what has been done within the discipline to engage topics of Indigenous politics, and to engage with, understand, or listen to Indigenous political thought. In this analysis of the existing literature, I consider what can be learned from existing work in this area, and whether and how political theorists might better engage with and respond to the theoretical and political challenges and provocations posed by Indigenous political thinkers. I then engage and analyze contemporary explanatory theories of the marginality or oppression of Indigenous peoples in settler-states and in disciplinary knowledge production, and theorize how understandings of such political outcomes might inform efforts to engage Indigenous political thought. The second half of the dissertation turns to political thought of Indigenous thinkers who are or were from First Nations within the territory now called British Columbia, Canada. Interpreting selected historical and contemporary Indigenous political thought from the region, I explore the challenges, possible risks, and opportunities of engaging Indigenous political thought as a non-Indigenous political theorist.

The present project focuses on questions about the presence of Indigenous political theory in the discipline of political theory, rather than in cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or non-academic political discourses for two main reasons. First, without interventions in the discipline, academic institutions are likely to continue teaching students that important political thought was and is authored primarily by non-Indigenous thinkers. Not only does the narrowness of the discipline imply racialized hierarchies, it is also likely to perpetuate political dialogs that fail to address some important contemporary political issues. For example, in their recent study of undergraduate political theory curricula in the United Kingdom, Simon Choat found that less than half of universities' current curricula include neither a single reading authored by a non-White political thinker, nor any reference to race or race-related themes (2020). Without re-imagining how the institutionalized category of political theory might make space for non-dominant theorists, and Indigenous theorists in particular, many students of political science and political theory will continue to be taught an ethnocentric view of political thought that neglects some of the most fraught and pressing political issues of today. Just as the self-definitions of political theory are not easily contested outside of the relevant academic institutions, work to challenge the closures and exclusions of political theory from within are likely to be most effective. The discipline attracts students who are drawn to thinking deeply and critically about normative challenges and commitments, and reckoning with the discipline's historical treatment of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge can offer opportunities for students and scholars to more effectively contribute to pressing issues in their worlds of politics.

Second, the present research focuses on the discipline of political theory because there is existing momentum and interest amongst contemporary political theory scholars to reckon with the discipline's colonial entanglements and exclusions. The growing interest in such work offers an opportunity to contribute to this conversation and encourage dialogue on the complexities of contemporary colonial experiences for Indigenous peoples within settler-states. The motivations of the present project share resonances with the normative goals of some works of comparative or cosmopolitan political theory, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Of course, investigating approaches to political theory that challenge the dominant Eurocentrism of the discipline is not the only option for advancing knowledge on Indigenous political thought and other non-dominant traditions and authors of political thought. Indeed, scholars across the fields of post-colonial studies, Native American and Indigenous studies, political ecology, anthropology, and beyond are already engaging with Indigenous epistemologies, and often Indigenous thought or philosophies that have political purchase. Much important work on and with Indigenous political thought also takes place outside of university institutions, in spaces of independent scholarship, Indigenous educational systems and practices, and in Indigenous political practices. The present research navigates the diverse locations of multidisciplinary and undisciplined Indigenous political thought by incorporating insights offered by Indigenous experts and political thinkers across these locations into analysis of the political theory discipline. Similarly, the research borrows insights from the work already completed by scholars engaged with Indigenous epistemologies across

academic disciplines, and considers what may and may not be relevant to the considerations of political theory scholars. I do not claim to incorporate or analyze all relevant works these topics, yet I draw on a broad range of texts and teachings across the following chapters.

It is likely that, in some contexts and conditions, the study of Indigenous political thought as political theory is not appropriate or would cause more harm than benefit to Indigenous peoples, even when all efforts are made to avoid damaging approaches that remarginalize, misrepresent, or appropriate Indigenous epistemologies. The assumption taken here, however, is that the discipline of political theory is dynamic and malleable, and that Indigenous political thought is also dynamic and deeply diverse. Because neither is homogeneous and fixed, the present research does not make a unitary judgment about the appropriateness of studying Indigenous political thought as political theory. Instead, it explores how Indigenous political thought, and particularly the challenges posed by Indigenous thinkers, might be taken up by political theorists and what might be gained from doing so.

1.7 A Chapter Road Map

Chapter 2 asks what can be learned from existing works of political theory scholarship about possible paths forward for an increased presence of and engagement with Indigenous political thought by political theorists. The chapter also begins to consider what has been missed by these existing approaches and what might be gained from different approaches to engaging Indigenous political thought. The chapter reveals the disciplining of Indigenous thought into conventional political theory concepts and questions, and shows how non-Indigenous theorists typically theorize about Indigenous people, rather than engaging with Indigenous people's political thought. The excepts to this general trend are also discussed. The chapter also reviews the efforts undertaken by contemporary political theorists to respond to general issues of marginalization in the discipline, and considers what from these theories might inform questions of disciplinary engagement with Indigenous political thought. Importantly, I also review the political thought of selected contemporary Indigenous thinkers and note the challenges they pose to contemporary politics and theory. Many of these Indigenous scholars argue that settler-colonial politics eschew Indigenous peoples' challenges to settler-state authority and reproduce the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Incorporating guidance offered by Indigenous methodologies scholars, I then offer a number of suggestions for approaches to respectfully engaging Indigenous political thought, without at the same time neutralizing or undermining them.

Chapter 3 asks how we might understand and explain experiences of Indigenous oppression and marginalization in settler states, and how we might generally explain the historical and current treatment of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge in academic political studies in particular. By better understanding how such outcomes or processes are caused or perpetuated, theorists can be better equipped to address, resist, or replace practices of marginalization, oppression, domination, exclusion, or subjugation. I consider selected existing accounts of explanatory theories of Indigenous marginalization, and stage a conversation

between these accounts to draw out their contributions. I then analyze how insights offered by Indigenous methodologies scholarship can help us advance our current theories of Indigenous marginalization. Building off of this existing literature, I advocate for an explanatory approach that is interpretive and historicist, and that explicitly centers Indigenous peoples' acts of relationally-situated agency.

Turning to an analysis of the political theory discipline, I offer a brief historicist and interpretive analysis of the contemporary landscape of relevant political theory scholarship. In a brief historical narrative, I argue that contemporary political theorists typically adopt unexamined traditions of belief and practice that assume that Indigenous cultures are generally apolitical, and that nation-states, including settler-colonial nation states, are the given unit of political society and political analysis. These assumptions were embedded in earlier academic traditions that have been widely challenged, yet they remain enmeshed in discursive disciplinary traditions. Combined, these beliefs situate Indigenous peoples and their thought as outside of the disciplinary scope of political theory. This historical account shares resonances with existing analyses of political theory's treatment of Indigenous peoples, but provides novel explanatory insights into the central role of developmental historicist beliefs (Shaw 2008; Tully 2000; Hunt 2022). With this new understanding, political theorists may be better equipped in their efforts at critical reflexivity.

With this disciplinary context established, the remaining chapters investigate what can be learned from closer engagement with political thought from British Columbia (BC), Canada. Rather than abstractly theorizing the risks and possibilities of political-theoretical engagement with Indigenous theories, chapters four and five explore such issues through an applied engagement with Indigenous political thought communicated through various mediums. The chapters explore new approaches to this area of study and grapples with some of the theoretical, political, and normative challenges it poses.

There are a number of reasons for the focus on Indigenous political thought from British Columbia, Canada. First, there are few, if any, BC First Nations political thinkers who are formally studied as political theorists, nor is there substantial scholarship on Indigenous political thought of the region. The Canadian Indigenous theorists that are somewhat familiar to political scholars, such as Glen Coulthard or Leanne Simpson, are not from British Columbia and are contextualized by distinct political histories and Indigenous cultures. Second, the research looks at British Columbia specifically because it is a rich area of Indigenous intellectual culture and because the political context of colonialism and settlement in British Columbia is unique. There are 198 provincially recognized First Nations bands in British Columbia, and most have distinct cultures and languages. In British Columbia there are also very few treaties between the colonial government and Indigenous Nations. This means that many First Nations in British Columbia continue to assert their sovereignty, land rights, and/or territorial jurisdiction to most of the province's land mass. While treaties were brokered between colonial representatives and Indigenous peoples across much of North America, the disputed status of territorial claims in British Columbia poses unique political and legal challenges to settler-state sovereignty. Thus, BC offers a culturally rich and politically complex and contested area of study.

Third, studying Indigenous political thought in this region can contribute to our general understanding of climate and environmental politics. British Columbia has historically been, and continues to be, a key location of Indigenous resistance to fossil fuel development and unsustainable resources extraction. This is particularly important because Canada produces some of the most environmentally destructive energy and carbon intensive oil in the world. Understanding Indigenous political thought, actions, and aspirations across the province can provide important political insight into the future of energy, resources, and climate change, and the Indigenous actors who are shaping relevant policy in British Columbia and beyond. Similarly, any contemporary political theorizing that speaks to the Canadian context ought to consider the insights, perspectives, and aims of diverse Indigenous peoples from the region. Finally, the focus on British Columbia is for personal and relational reasons; having grown up in Coast Salish territories in the province, I had the pre-existing relationships and trust important to building new collaborative and respectful relationships. I am also personally motivated to reckon with my own colonial inheritance on this land, and to offer my energy and time to Indigenous peoples' aspirations on this land.

Chapter four constructs and analyzes a history of First Nation political organizing and identity building in BC from the time of European contact and settlement in the 1800s, until 1927, a key turning point in Indigenous politics in the region. The purpose of the chapter is to build historical understanding of Indigenous peoples' political thought and actions in this region, acknowledging their ongoing political projects and contributions. While the recent political history of the region is more well-known, there are few resources currently available to understand the Indigenous political thought and action from this early history (Fisher 2011; Tennant 2011). The historical account offered in the chapter builds important epistemic, political, and relational context for interpreting contemporary Indigenous political thought from the region. The analysis incorporates historical evidence from over a dozen archives, revealing a rich history of Indigenous political thought in the region, and the relevant political context to aide interpretation of such thought. The linear historical narrative pauses in particular moments to look more closely at specific utterances of political thought, unpacking their contexts and their theoretical contributions or innovations. By comprehensively analyzing the trajectory of early Indigenous political action and thought, the chapter reveals that Indigenous political thinkers of the region have consistently articulated political theories that center Indigenous territorial rights and challenge the legitimacy of colonial and settler-state authorities. While distinct theorists and communities offered varied grounding of such rights, and emphasized different specific rights entitlements, there remains a clear tradition of political thought focused on Indigenous land and jurisdiction stretching from early settlement until 1927, which remains relevant today.

In Chapter Five, I introduce and engage with the political theorizing of one Indigenous elder and hereditary chief, híwus, from the shíshálh Nation, in British Columbia, Canada. The chapter is based on historical archival research and original oral history interviews undertaken in collaboration with híwus, and was written using collaborative methods. After providing necessary historical and political contexts, I offer a collaborative interpretation of the key themes and concepts of híwus' political thought. I then consider what these insights

might contribute to or challenge about current political theory discourses on territory, territorial rights, and jurisdiction, and find that ideas of territorial duties in híwus' political thought disrupt and enrich current theorizing on territory. The chapter also puts shíshálh political thought into dialog with environmental political theory, particularly on topics of environmental responsibility and stewardship. Overall, the chapter demonstrates one possible approach to the collaborative study of the political thought of one contemporary Indigenous thinker.

Finally, the concluding chapter reflects broadly on the prospects, possibilities, and limitations of political theory scholarship on Indigenous political thought. It summarizes the challenges posed by Indigenous thinkers to practices and ontologies of political theory scholarship identified in each of the previous chapters, arguing that the discipline of political theory must be substantially re-imagined to create meaningful opportunities for scholarship that theorizes alongside and with Indigenous political thinkers. Many of the central lines of inquiry within academic political theory take for granted assumptions that are centrally contested by many Indigenous political thinkers. Consequently, a presence of Indigenous political thought within the discipline requires not only a subfield or marginal interest in Indigenous political theory, but at minimum, an attention to Indigenous critiques and challenges within most topic of political theorizing. Further, without making space for and centering Indigenous political scholars within disciplinary discourses, efforts to engage Indigenous political thought are likely to risk reproducing practices of appropriative or decontextualized tokenization of Indigenous political thought.

1.8 A Brief Personal Narrative

Acknowledging that knowledge is always situated and political, I want to clarify at least some of my own relationships, beliefs, and experiences that inform the present project. First, as a White scholar, I do not claim privileged knowledge about Indigenous peoples or Indigenous political thought. Rather, this research emerges from my reflections on, and analysis of, non-Indigenous scholars' responsibilities to confront disciplinary racism, ethnocentrism, and epistemic injustices. Most of my early life was spent growing up in a rural area of British Columbia on unceded Coast Salish territories, primarily of the shíshálh Nation, close to both forests and the ocean. The human and non-human relationships I developed over this time continue to anchor my ethical beliefs and orientations. I also approach this project with a sense of responsibility to the multiple places I have occupied and benefited from during the research process, which includes Coast Salish territories of the shíshálh, Lummi, and Nooksack Nations, and territories of the Chochenyo Ohlone people, and to the people of these lands.

My interests in and approaches to this research are also informed my academic experiences and training in interdisciplinary studies and undisciplined spaces of academia. Throughout my time in institutions of higher education, I have found myself in largely undisciplined spaces that allow me to study environmental and social justice issues as deeply interconnected phenomena. I mention this to provide some background on my own relationship to academia, not to claim that my experience of higher education was devoid of Eurocentrism or other epistemic limitations. At first, my general disregard for academic disciplines was a result of being a first-generation college graduate who had little intergenerational knowledge of academia's unspoken and spoken conventions; I had no idea what disciplines were and was therefore happy to go without. This was reinforced in my undergraduate studies at Quest University, Canada, where I experienced a relatively international and non-hierarchical version of the university, and where I was encouraged to pursue multidisciplinary research questions. There, my self-guided inquiries into critiques of sustainable development and environmental politics led me to my first research project on Indigenous politics and activism, focused on the role of Indigenous leaders and protest in shaping the direction of forestry management in British Columbia.

My academic experience as a graduate student also resided primarily in the spaces between disciplines, studying and researching in an interdisciplinary department of students and faculty united by a commitment to build transformative knowledge for a sustainable and just planet. My early focus was on climate politics, researching competing normative political goals and barriers to effective climate action. The central and very broad problem motivating my research and studies was, why, if we have many technical solutions to mitigating climate change, is there an overarching societal failure to implement these solutions at scale? Investigating the root causes of this failure, my key occupation became studying competing views of the world of political ideas, primarily within the political theory discipline. This kept my attention because I believed, and still believe, that by better understanding political actors' beliefs and contextualizing regimes of power, we might better understand relevant political decisions, actions, and outcomes, and thereby develop effective interventions for climate change mitigation and other political-ecological crises.

Throughout my engagements with political thought, I developed some fundamental beliefs that will help to explain my approach to the present research. The central assumption is that our concepts, which we could also call webs of belief, local reasoning, or epistemologies, construct our social worlds through contingent processes. Individuals are born into inherited traditions of practice and thought, and these traditions are amended by some through acts of situated and creative agency, often in response to dilemmas (Bevir and Rhodes 1999). This opposes a naturalist view of the social world, as well as any claims to pure experience or social inevitability. To understand the social world and social change, then, one ought to focus on interpretively understanding individuals' concepts, or local reasoning, as well as their inherited traditions. This approach decenters grand narratives, as well as the focus on institutions often found in political studies. It also lends itself to interpretive and historicist methodologies. A key question for me, then, asks what are the concepts or local reasoning of those who make major decisions of environmental consequence? Who, and whose concepts, are included in such processes? Further, if academic discourses and concepts sometimes inform the beliefs adopted by important political actors, how can these be improved to counter xenophobia and promote more epistemically and socially equitable environmental outcomes?³

In an effort to eschew the universalizing tendencies of Eurocentric norms of academic writing, this dissertation acknowledges my subjectivity as an author. In practice, this means that the dissertation is framed in largely dialogical terms, presenting my reflections and findings as one voice in a conversation, rather than as the authoritative voice of expertise. This recognizes the legitimacy of multiple ways of knowing, including knowledge that is experiential, traditional, and practical. This approach also has resonances with the concept of cultural humility, first introduced by medical researchers Tervalon and Murray-Garcia as an alternative to the concept of cultural competency, which suggested that one should seek demonstrable mastery of others' cultural beliefs (1998). Cultural humility, instead, involves a commitment to lifelong and active engagement with oneself and others with the aim of redressing intersectional power imbalances. Such engagement also incorporates self-reflection and self-critique, mutual respect, and a commitment to mutually beneficial partnerships.

³Simultaneously, I do not wish to imply that all questions or issues of Indigenous politics are commensurate with issues of social or socio-environmental justice. My interest in the present research is to seriously take up Indigenous perspectives that unsettle existing social and environmental projects, rather than exclusively looking for instrumental insights from Indigenous peoples that reinforce and support existing projects.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Across existing works of academic political theory scholarship, there have been some efforts to acknowledge and engage the political thought of Indigenous peoples, and to consider why Indigenous perspectives have been typically omitted from political theory discourses. This chapter lays the groundwork for the following chapters by analyzing the ways existing political theory discourses generally bound and frame topics of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous politics and the contributions such works make to considerations of an expanded attention to Indigenous political thought in the discipline. The chapter also takes up Indigenous political thought and scholarship, identifying some of the critiques and challenges they offer disciplinary political theory discourses and practices. Throughout the chapter, I stage encounters between contemporary political theorists, comparative political theorists, and various Indigenous political thinkers, identifying possible paths forward for increased engagement with Indigenous political thought amongst political theorists, and the risks and opportunities of these possible routes.

The chapter begins with a critical review of some of the existing contemporary political theory texts that discuss either Indigenous peoples, or the political ideas or goals of Indigenous peoples. I start here not to respond to each text, but because it is the literature that first evoked my interest in the specific questions at the center of this research. My intention is to illustrate the contributions of this area of scholarship, along with my initial and ongoing concerns with it that, in later sections of the chapter, opens up to a broader conversation of possible paths forward for political theorists. In this initial section, I find that most existing political theory scholarship that includes discussion of Indigenous people and politics typically frame their lines of inquiry around questions of if and how the state ought to respond to Indigenous peoples' claims and resistance, and that such works consequently center state-based solutions. I also find that this existing scholarship typically offers theories about Indigenous peoples, rather than an engagement with the political theories of Indigenous peoples.

The next sections introduce some of the growing works of political thought on Indigenous politics written by Indigenous scholars. First, I review works that recount the experiences and political aspirations of Indigenous peoples in settler-states and that theorize how state-Indigenous relations ought to be challenged, subverted, or transformed in light of ongoing colonial domination and dispossession of Indigenous peoples. I find that many Indigenous theorists on these topics argue that contemporary political theorizing and practices fail to take up challenges that Indigenous peoples pose to the legitimacy of settler-state institutions. Many also argue that political practices and theories that offer recognition of Indigenous peoples aim to neutralize Indigenous critiques and political resistance. After suggesting how this might inform future scholarship that takes seriously Indigenous political thought, I turn to a second area of Indigenous scholarship that elaborates comprehensive Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies of political significance. The purpose of this section is to discuss and demonstrate the breadth of existing works of Indigenous political thought, and some of the challenges and contributions they offer disciplinary political theorists.

Next, I turn to works of political theorists that investigate and respond to broad issues of epistemic marginalization in the discipline. The center of gravity of such efforts is the nascent and diverse subfield of comparative political theory, where the goals and approaches to works of comparative political theory continue to be scrutinized and debated. Nonetheless, many comparative political theorists claim that engagement with non-dominant political theories provides opportunities for reciprocal self-reflexivity and critique. I explore some of the debates amongst comparative political theorists, and consider what questions and insights these debates might elucidate for possible projects of increased engagement with Indigenous political thought. I also clarify my central assumptions about the importance of traditions to the study of political thought.

In the final sections, I pose and begin to contend with some of the outstanding questions that surface at the confluence of these areas of thought and scholarship. At the most general level, these questions concern when and according to what processes and conditions the responses of political theorists might appropriately include engagements with Indigenous political thought. Calling up guidance from Indigenous methodologies scholarships, I offer a number of suggestions. First, I suggest that political theorists have a responsibility to reflexively evaluate and respond to the already political nature of the discipline. Second, I suggest that in light of this political embeddedness, engagements with Indigenous political thought ought to center the political epistemologies and political goals of relevant Indigenous peoples and communities. Third, I suggest that just as goals of such engagements are contextually and relationally variable, the appropriate processes of engagement are too. However, I also suggest that some central principles and practices of Indigenous methodologies, and the reflections of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars on related questions can offer general guidance to political theorists.

2.2 Political Theory: Omissions and Misrepresentations

My entry point into considerations of the treatment of Indigenous topics in political theory was, first, graduate level coursework in political theory and political theory examination readings lists. In these spaces, I noticed a lack of attention to Indigenous political thinkers, as well as some marginal notes about considerations of Indigenous rights across some texts of multicultural theory. As my interest in this area of research solidified, I also searched for other political theory literature that engaged Indigenous topics and solicited suggestions from political theory scholars and faculty. What this search turned up was, at first, disappointingly narrow and sparse. From this point, I began seeking out literature on the interactions of Indigenous peoples and academic institutions of knowledge production outside of political theory scholarship, from decolonial theory, Native American and Indigenous studies, anthropology, Indigenous methodologies, and spaces outside of academic institutions. This section begins the narrative of my journey across disciplines and forms of knowledge creation by laying out the landscape of political theory scholarship I encountered early on.

As was discussed in the introduction, it is not unusual to find some discussion of Indigenous peoples of the New World in the so-called modern texts of political theory. Although pre-contemporary political thought is not the focus of this chapter, the history of European political thought provides important context for contemporary academic political theory. The role of Indigenous peoples for dominant modern theorists was typically to define "the political" or civilized society in contrast to the alterity of Indigenous society, portrayed as uncivilized or as in a state of nature. This trope replicated a tradition in European political thought which started around the 5th century BCE in ancient Greek art and philosophy, where the identity of political society was painted in opposition to those on the outside, the barbarians. In the expansionist and colonial era of European politics approximately two millennia later, such a narrative was reproduced to both justify colonial domination of Indigenous peoples and their land, and to construct empire's self-image. Early-modern and modern theorists who wrote, sometimes extensively, on the Indigenous peoples of the new world included Francisco de Vitoria, Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Karl Marx.

Perhaps most widely noted and acknowledge is English philosopher Thomas Hobbes' narrative of Indigenous peoples of North America as savage, living examples of the state of nature. In Leviathan, Hobbes describes the state of nature as one of constant threat of war and violent death, where it is impossible to develop industry, rational knowledge, arts, or society (2005, 89). Indigenous peoples of America, then, were not only devoid of political life in Hobbes' account, but also unable to develop legitimate knowledge. John Locke, another English philosopher who was deeply involved with the trans-Atlantic slave trade, wrote at more length about the Indigenous peoples of the New World, also referring to them as evidence of a state of nature. While there is ongoing interpretive debate over whether Locke sought to justify colonial dispossession of Indigenous lands, there is little

debate that Locke narrated Indigenous peoples as pre-political (Klausen 2007; Locke 1977; Uzgalis 2017; Arneil 1996). Across the modern era, theoretical engagements on topics of Indigenous peoples were important to debates about imperialism, colonialism, and related topics of territory, jurisdiction, and sovereignty.

In contemporary political theory, most engagements on topics of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous politics are typically found in debates of multiculturalism and the challenges of difference or diversity in cosmopolitan society. While many theories of multiculturalism, recognition, and identity could have bearing on Indigenous topics, only a subsection of such theories engages explicitly and substantively on topics of Indigenous peoples or Indigenous politics.

A widely known theory of multiculturalism that speaks specifically to topics of Indigenous peoples is Euro-Canadian theorist Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of multiculturalism. In their seminal book, Multicultural Citizenship, Kymlicka's argument is grounded in an affirmation of the value of societal cultures for individuals, where culture supports secure self-identity and a sense of belonging, and further, supports a wide freedom of choice (1995a). With the value of culture affirmed, Kymlicka's liberal egalitarian theory argues that the state necessarily sponsors culture, and most often the majority culture. This leaves those born into minority cultures with disadvantaged access to their own culture and language (Kymlicka 1995a, 109, 111). Kymlicka argues for the rectification of these unchosen and morally arbitrary inequalities, and their associated disadvantages, through various group-differentiated minority rights. National minorities, which includes Indigenous groups, should have the opportunity to maintain their distinct culture and society, and in some cases, state institutions should grant Indigenous self-government rights to support these ends (Kymlicka 1995a, 102). He suggests that while self-government rights threaten social unity, denying such rights poses even greater risks to unity by bolstering secessionist movements (Kymlicka 1995a, 184). For Kymlicka, liberal states ought to offer specialized group rights to Indigenous groups to rectify the arbitrary inequalities of cultural accessibility.

Liberal theories supporting state accommodation or self-government rights for Indigenous groups offer some of the most widely accepted and comprehensive considerations of Indigenous and state relations across political theory discourses. Others, such as Seyla Benhabib and Alan Cairns, have accepted Kymlicka's position or offered similar arguments for specialized Aboriginal rights (Benhabib 2002; Cairns 2000). Some other liberal theorists, however, offer a competing view of state accommodations for Indigenous peoples, based on claims of liberal neutrality and benign neglect.

Chandran Kukathas, a Australian political theorist who was born in Malaysia, argues that cultural communities, including Indigenous communities, are dynamic and historically contingent associations (1992). To establish group rights based on these dynamic associations entrenches the community's structure, along with the structure of hierarchy within the internally contested minority group. Such entrenching would limit opportunities for minorities within the group to reshape the community. Further, the interests of group members vary, so group rights that aim to reflect a group's interest necessarily give preference to some voices who claim to speak for the group. Instead, Kukathas argues, the liberal approach

to cultural communities should be to uphold the individual right of association. Minority cultural groups, even illiberal ones, should not be interfered with as long as all individuals have a substantial freedom to leave such associations. Kukathas, then, frames Indigenous topics as a question of appropriate state responses to Indigenous peoples' rights claims, arguing that accommodations for Indigenous claims are unnecessary and put individual rights at risk.

Some communitarian theories of multiculturalism have also spoken to topics of Indigenous peoples and their political claims. For example, writing on topics of recognition, Euro-Canadian political theorist Charles Taylor, gestures at models of liberal society and recognition he would endorse through a critique of Kymlicka's liberal approach to Indigenous accommodation. One of Taylor's central critiques of liberal accommodations of difference is that such models are unable to accommodate Indigenous societies' true collective goals of multi-generational survival of their cultures into the indefinite future (1992). Taylor suggests that there is potential for a model of liberal society hospitable to collective goals of survival, which would require a willingness to sometimes favor cultural survival over uniform application of the rules that define rights, while invariantly defending certain fundamental rights (1992, 60, 61). Taylor further suggests that multicultural, porous societies demand, beyond cultural survival, a respect or recognition of the worth of different cultures through 'a regime of reciprocal recognition amongst equals' grounded in a sense of one's own limits (1992, 50, 73). For Taylor, like many theorists of multiculturalism, the goals of Indigenous people can be actualized in a liberal state model, but for Taylor the dominant society, courts, and policy makers must be willing to occasionally prioritize collective goals of survival and recognition over procedural uniformity (1992, 59).

Exploring these contemporary theories of multiculturalism, a number of issues struck me. First, these theorists approach the topic of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous politics from a common framing, which posits Indigenous politics as a challenge to the unity of the broadly liberal settler-colonial state. Their central question of inquiry, then, is often if and how the state ought to recognize, reconcile, or make accommodations for Indigenous peoples, or equally, what the state ought to do about Indigenous resistance. Theorists addressing these questions most often interpret ongoing Indigenous resistance to the settler-state and resistance to tactics of assimilation as claims to the state, whether they are construed as claims for specialized Aboriginal rights, land title, self-government, self-determination, or other forms of recognition. Consequently, existing examples of this approach theorize state responses to Indigenous peoples in terms of accommodations, rights, or acts of recognition or reconciliation. Such a framing of Indigenous political goals assimilates and contains Indigenous politics within the settler-state, in what settler-colonial scholar Patrick Wolfe calls the "logic of elimination", where settler states eliminate the owners of territory through a variety of techniques to maintain its territorial integrity (2006).

Wolfe's account of the mechanisms of settler-colonialism are particularly apt here given the centrality of state-based solutions across these contemporary political theories. In many cases, the promotion of state unity and persistence of settler-state institutions is the explicit goal, assuming the legitimacy of existing settler-states and the legitimate authority of the state to grant rights. For example, in his work on liberal-egalitarian theory, Kymlicka discusses preservation of unity, and argues that granting self-government might avoid secession movements (1995a). One may argue that Kymlicka's work does not necessarily imply settler-state legitimacy, since he also acknowledges peaceful liberal secession ought to be considered as a viable option for achieving individual well-being and freedom. However, Kymlicka asserts that peaceful and viable Indigenous secession is near impossible and they thus support a rights-based approach that placates secessionist movements (1995a, 187). Even when these theorists do not explicitly assert a goal of maintaining existing institutions, they imply, at minimum, the inevitability of settler-states and their overarching dominion over territory.

I also found that this area of contemporary theorizing, despite its engagement with topics of Indigenous politics, fails to engage in a serious way with the political thought or political aims of actual Indigenous peoples. In each of these contemporary works, there is no reference to specific and real-world articulations of Indigenous political claims by Indigenous peoples, nor citation of any utterances offered by Indigenous political thinkers. Instead, each of these existing engagements approach Indigenous political aspirations as general and homogeneous interests or claims, that are supposedly so well-known and generalizable that they require no reference or evidence. This is particularly striking in the recognition literature, omitting Indigenous peoples' voices while at the same moment calling for greater recognition.

Consider, for example, Kymlicka's discussion of Indigenous rights. Kymlicka's theory hinges on a characterization of Indigenous political aspirations, which in his view consist primarily of obtaining the right to self-government, and often, the more immediate goal of securing "the existing land base from further erosion by settlers and resource developers" (1995a, 30). Yet, in his central synthesis of Indigenous aspirations offered in Chapter Two, Kymlicka neglects to cite or reference expressions of political aspirations by any Indigenous individuals. Kymlicka does informally reference that a "recent international declaration regarding the rights of indigenous peoples" highlighted the centrality and importance of Indigenous self-government, but does not cite a particular document with attributable authorship, nor do they clarify if their reference was to an early draft of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples or some other lesser-known declaration (1995a, 30). Although Kymlicka's account may be well-informed, there is no indication that their text substantively includes the voices of Indigenous individuals in their characterization of Indigenous political aspirations. Although Kymlicka's take on Indigenous political aspirations may be privately informed by understanding of Indigenous peoples' political thought, Multicultural Citizenship does not acknowledge Indigenous peoples as agents of political thought.¹

Yet, this phenomenon makes sense across the literature discussed so far, given its narrow focus on supposed claims to the state. Such statist theories need only to identify a generalizable set of Indigenous claims or demands, simplifying Indigenous thought into a common

¹It is worth noting that, in contrast with their primary explication of Indigenous political aspirations, Kymlicka offers some references to Indigenous authors in other areas of the text. However, they do not incorporate or explicate these Indigenous authors' political thought or insights substantively.

framework. This obviates engagement with those Indigenous perspectives that are not easily understandable in terms of rights, claims, or accommodation, or that are not immediately relevant to considerations of state-Indigenous relations. While these Indigenous accommodations, rights, and recognition theories certainly offer reflections about Indigenous peoples, and how the state might react to or accommodate them, these theories overwhelmingly omit Indigenous peoples' political ideas in favor of essentializing stereotype. Perhaps this recent literature reproduces what Euro-American political theorist Hanna Fenichel Pitkin called the inherent tyranny of traditional political theory (2020). Pitken summarizes that:

there seems to be something in the enterprise of theorizing itself that makes the resulting system seem totalitarian and in that sense nonpolitical. The theorist stands outside the political system about which he speculates and writes; of necessity he deploys and manipulates its citizens without consulting their wishes or opinions. (Pitkin 2020, 326)

Although I do not mean to suggest that Kymlicka, Taylor, and others operate tyrannically intentionally, they have adopted disciplinary traditions that deserve closer self-critique. I analyze disciplinary traditions of political theory in more detail in Chapter Three.

Also often focusing on the politics of recognition and multiculturalism, Euro-Canadian theorist James Tully offers an alternative take that engages substantively on topics of Indigenous political aspirations. Tully's theories on these topics have evolved over time, but much of their core theoretical contributions were articulated in their 1995 book, *Strange Multiplicity*. In this book, Tully considers what they suggest is a central question for our age—whether modern constitutions can recognize and accommodate cultural diversity. Before jumping into this question, Tully spends some time unpacking the similarities of various struggles for cultural recognition and accommodation.

Tully suggests that across the board, struggles for political recognition by Indigenous peoples and others typically share three resemblances. First, they aspire to culturally appropriate forms of self-government, where they can rule according to their own customs and ways. In the case of Indigenous peoples this is often an aspiration for their own political institutions. Second, struggles for political recognition assert that culture is an irreducible part of politics; that politics and culture are inseparable. Tully argues that our view of one unified culture mapping onto a single state is outdated; cultures are overlapping, dynamic, and internally contested. Third, these struggles claim that "the basic laws and institutions of modern societies, and their authoritative traditions of interpretation, are unjust," because they thwart culturally-appropriate self-government (Tully 1995, 5). For a constitution to be just, it must recognize and take into account various "cultural ways" of citizens (Tully 1995, 6). Tully further claims that establishing a just form of constitutional discussion is a necessary first step in other discussions and negotiations of justice. These struggles for various forms of self-rule are, in Tully's view, struggles for liberty.

Amongst the various forms of struggle for cultural recognition are the demands of Indigenous peoples globally for "recognition and accommodation of their twelve thousand

diverse cultures, governments and environmental practices" (Tully 1995, 3). In Tully's characterization, these demands for recognition are often made by Indigenous peoples both to international legal systems and to the constitutions of contemporary political associations or nation-states. Across most struggles for cultural recognition, the aspiration is not to build independent nation-states, but to a degree if self rule "on the culturally common ground within and across existing nation states" (Tully 1995, 16). Discussions of Indigenous political struggles for recognition center squarely into the book.

Interpreting a Haida Gwaii carving created by Bill Reid, The Spirit of Haida Gwaii, Tully explores whether constitutionalism can be amended to recognize and accommodate cultural diversity. Modern constitutionalism assumes the superiority of European ways, and imposes a foreign constitution on other cultures. In contrast, Tully suggests that a contemporary constitutionalism based on recognition, would involve acknowledging others in their own terms and cultures, rather than understanding others according to our own traditions and forms of thought, as something familiar. Tully describes this as "a genuinely intercultural popular sovereignty, where each listens to the voices of the others on their own terms" (1995, 24). Each person in an association should be understood as being shaped by their overlapping interactions and interdependence with others, and as changing. These shared interactions can be seen from a number of different vantage points, and recognition is dynamic rather than definitive. A constitution can be seen then as an "endless series of contracts and agreements, reached by periodical intercultural dialogue," where the constitution is both the foundation of democracy and open to democratic discussion and amendment (Tully 1995, 26). This will involve not only listening to others say, but also the way it is said, without presupposing a common language, nor that universal goals will be achieved. These discussions will require "a multiplicity of speech genres," where we will come to understand others not through imagining being in their shoes, but through practical dialogue (Tully 1995, 132).

Tully turns to treaties amongst the British Crown and Indigenous peoples of North America during the period of early European settlement as examples of recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity in practice. These treaty relationships were a kind of treaty constitutionalism, where the British Crown and Indigenous peoples related to each other as equal and self-governing nations. Tully suggests that treaty constitutionalism worked out how diverse parties can reach agreement, through the developed a number of conventions that were widely mutually-agreeable. Tully suggests that these conventions can guide future diverse cultural associations in contemporary constitutionalism. The first convention is to come to an agreement on "a form of mutual recognition," which in the case of treaty constitutionalism was a mutual recognition of each party as "independent and self-governing nations" (Tully 1995, 119). In addition to mutual recognition, contemporary constitutionalism should be negotiated according to the principles of consent and continuity, where consensually agreed upon constitutional associations will not be amended unless there is explicit consent to do so.

In comparison with other theorists of Indigenous rights and recognition, Tully's engagement with Indigenous political thought and Indigenous political aspirations is substantial. Tully's work offers a number of important contributions that are relevant to the present

considerations of the presence of Indigenous political thought in political theory. Tully centers Indigenous political claims in North America which assert that contemporary political settler-state institutions are unjust because they limit Indigenous peoples' freedom to live according to their own cultures. They highlight how much of political theory fails to acknowledge this claim and points out that common assumptions in political theoretical discourses reinforce imperialism. These include assumptions of the primacy of unity in settler-states, and characterizations of constitutions as somehow acultural, ahistorical, or universal. This sets Tully's work apart from that of political theorists, such as Kymlicka and Taylor, who privilege the political goal of unity, and/or who do not seriously question the cultural and imperial entanglements of fundamental political institutions in settler-states. Tully's suggestions for contemporary constitutionalism, and the principles of mutual-recognition, consent, and continuity, can also be relevant for considering how non-Indigenous political theorists might relate to Indigenous political thinkers and Indigenous political thought. I will come back to some of these topics later in this chapter.

It is also worth briefly noting that Tully has also written explicitly on academic political theory and Indigenous peoples. The book chapter, "The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples for and of Freedom," investigates how political theory supports or hinders Indigenous peoples' struggles for liberation (Tully 2000). Engaging with theories and political aspirations articulated by Indigenous authors, Tully argues that settler-colonial states continue to be systems of internal colonization, where ongoing systems of domination seek to extinguish Indigenous peoples' rights to territorial jurisdiction and self-government, and incorporate Indigenous peoples into the dominant society (2000, 40). Governmental techniques of incorporation include both assimilatory difference-blind liberalism and the granting of group rights in exchange for surrendering "their rights as free peoples" (Tully 2000, 41). Societies of internal colonization depend on two invalid "hinge propositions" that legitimize these systems, which are first, that the state's exclusive jurisdiction was legitimately established or is in the process of being legitimately resolved, and second, that there is no viable alternative to the state's exclusive territorial jurisdiction (Tully 2000, 51). Tully's view of the field of political theory as assuming the legitimacy of settler-states, then, mirrors many of my own concerns with the primary texts of liberal and communitarian theorizing on topics of Indigenous peoples.

Tully goes on to contend that most Western political theory contributes to the colonial domination of Indigenous peoples either by implicitly or explicitly legitimizing these presuppositions or by defending and "serving as the language of governance and administration" for systems of internal colonization (2000, 43). On the other hand, theories that delegitimize systems of internal colonization and their hinge propositions are discursive techniques of resistance. While direct struggles for Indigenous freedom against systems of internal colonization are impractical, Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars can contribute to struggles of and for freedom by critically engaging with the hinge propositions of their societies (Tully 2000, 51, 58). In arguing that delegitimizing systems of internal colonization and their hinge propositions are effective discursive techniques for struggles for Indigenous freedom, Tully also offers a synthetic explanation of Anishnabi scholar Dale Turner's concept of "word warriors," and thus builds some Indigenous perspectives into their analysis (2006; 2000, 51). For

considerations of how non-Indigenous political theorists might respond to the imperial legacies of the discipline and the aims of Indigenous peoples, Tully's work highlights then, the importance of reflexive work to delegitimize core and wide-spread assumptions in disciplinary political theory and political practice.

Another text outside of liberal theorizing that engages topics of Indigenous peoples and politics is Karena Shaw's book Indigeneity and Political Theory: Sovereignty and the Limits of the Political. Like Tully's chapter, I came across Shaw's book after I was familiar with the rights and recognition theories. Shaw analyzes the ways in which sovereignty discourses in Canada enable or limit political possibilities of Indigenous peoples, beginning their investigation into these discourses with an analysis of Thomas Hobbes' narrative of the construction of the sovereign state. They suggest that Hobbes' misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples of North America as "savage" is less important than his articulation of the location of modern politics, where politics can only be imagined in the sovereign state. This foundation of modern politics, in Shaw's view, requires the misrepresentation of Indigenous people since "the framework through which representation occurs already tells us what they must be" (2008, 34). Indigenous people mark the boundaries of this sovereign state, as others living without sovereignty, who Hobbes produces as different to those on the inside.

Shaw goes on to identify a Hobbesian discourse of sovereignty in historical practices of state building in North America, in the state's treatment of Indigenous people in Canada and the United States, and in Indigenous people's political and legal claims. Despite varying contexts and histories, Shaw identifies a common core of sovereignty discourses, where sovereignty requires "a core of agreement, a resonance, and identity" (2008, 57). This identity is one of necessary superiority to Indigenous people on the outside of sovereignty, since it is by virtue of being different from the outside, and being superior, that the sovereign has legitimate authority. Like I found in modern political theory texts, Shaw's analysis connects the othering of Indigenous peoples of the New World to contemporary political outcomes in settler-colonial states. I will explore Shaw's argument about marginalization in more detail in the next chapter, and I will return to some of Shaw's conclusions about the responsibilities and challenges that Indigenous politics pose to contemporary political theorists in the following sections.

Shaw also makes a number of key points regarding the potential responsibilities and challenges of engaging Indigenous political thought in political theory scholarship. Shaw argues that the challenge posed to political theorists is not how to include Indigenous peoples, but foremost to reconceptualize their own ontological frameworks and institutions to avoid the marginalization or remarginalization of Indigenous peoples (2008, 208-209). Similarly, responding to the challenges posed by Indigenous politics and Indigenous political thinkers, Shaw suggests, will require changes to how we legitimize political authority, and requires reimagining the practice of political theory. This is an important point for the questions posed in this dissertation; the act of including Indigenous political thought in the study of political theory can reproduce Indigenous marginalization. The risk is particularly acute when the terms and practices of engagement do not challenge the premises and traditions of Eurocentric political theorizing that have previously placed Indigenous peoples at the

margins of not only political theory discourses, but at the margins of what counts as political.

Although these are not the only works of disciplinary political theory that engage with Indigenous topics, they offer a general sense of contributions to such topics that have been made within the discipline. Some additional works will be discussed throughout the remainder of the chapter. I switch gears now to consider the contributions offered and challenges posed by some Indigenous political thinkers.

2.3 Indigenous Political Thought: Land, Dispossession, and Refusal

My early explorations in the diverse political thought of Indigenous authors included reading books and articles published in academic journals and by academic presses from Indigenous scholars across disciplines, as well as work by independent Indigenous scholars and activists that include articulations of political thought. Although not all of these works are generally acknowledged as disciplinary political theory scholarship, I refer to these works as Indigenous political theory, rejecting existing disciplinary norms and offering a reorientation of political theory scholarship that acknowledges all political thought as political theorists' subject of study. As I suggested in the introduction, I view political thought as that which reflects on governance, social or collective organization, or the use of power within society. I also acknowledge that any concept of political thought should be dynamic and open to contestation.

Throughout this reading of selected works of Indigenous political thought, I pay particular attention to articulations of the individual and collective political goals of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous peoples' critiques of and challenges to existing political theory scholarship, and Indigenous perspectives on practices of the academy, including methodology. There are multiple reasons I choose this current focus. First, my reason for focusing on Indigenous political goals is that this dissertation is primarily concerned with the possibilities of a meaningful presence of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge within political theory discourses. Since knowledge production is a political endeavor, it is important to begin to understand the political thought, claims, and aspirations of various Indigenous peoples, so that we can consider the political implications of academic work for Indigenous peoples. Second, the purpose of focusing on Indigenous scholars' responses to and theories about academic political theory and academic practice is to consider what can be learned from such contributions, and what challenges they pose for existing theories and disciplinary practices. Finally, it is important to note that the engagement here is far from comprehensive; instead, it aims to discuss only a few Indigenous political thinkers and relevant insights and challenges posed by their work.

As discussed in the introduction, Indigenous scholars have long articulated their own political theories in various disciplinary and multidisciplinary debates within academia. At the founding of the discipline of Native American studies within the United States in the

1970s, many Indigenous scholars were writing about Indigenous political goals (see, for example, Deloria 1988). Importantly, Indigenous leaders working outside of academia also continued to share accounts of their political theories (see, for example Means 1980; Manuel and Posluns 2019). Although Indigenous political goals of the period were diverse, The Red Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States strengthened Indigenous nationalist coalitions, unified over their shared struggles for sovereignty and the freedom to practice Indigenous governance, laws, languages, and ways of life without colonial interference (Blansett 2018). Similar political goals are found in much the academic works and debates of Indigenous political theory that have gained prominence in North America over the last few decades. Acknowledging that more recent works are situated in long-standing traditions of Indigenous political theorizing, the bulk of the discussion here will focus on contemporary articulations of Indigenous political thought from the last few decades.

Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) scholar Taiaiake Alfred was one of the key figures in the Canadian context to offer new theories of Indigenous politics in recent decades (2005b;2005; 1999). Alfred was trained as a political scholar and political theorist, and much of their work thus responds explicitly to disciplinary political theory, offering a number of challenges and insights important for the present research. Beginning in their early works, Alfred argued that colonialism continues to insidiously oppress Indigenous peoples (1999). One of the ways this oppression persists is through the imposition of non-Indigenous values and governance systems on Indigenous peoples. Such values and governance systems are incompatible with traditional Indigenous values and practices, but have been adopted by many Indigenous leaders (Alfred 1999, 2005b). Alfred argued that one way Indigenous peoples can resist such outcomes and work to restore Indigenous nationhood is through a return to traditional Indigenous values, political practices, and and ontologies (1999). One of the contributions of this work is that Alfred clarifies the political importance of culture, a central theme that either informed the work of, or was developed alongside the work of Tully (1995). Both political values and political institutions and practices are, in Alfred's account, cultural, rather than universal. Indigenous peoples have their own cultures of political practice and values, and the imposition of contemporary political institutions in settler-states means that Indigenous peoples are not free to live according to their own political cultures (Alfred 1995). In the Canadian context, the imposition of non-Indigneous institutions is a fundamental injustice for Indigenous peoples (Alfred 1995).

In their writing on sovereignty, Alfred also challenges the legitimacy of the settler states, or internally colonized states, of Canada and the United States, arguing that the state's authority is based on myths of conquest and superiority (Alfred 2005a). At the time of European imperialism and settlement in North America, Alfred contends, European states acknowledged the territorial and political independence of Indigenous peoples, and European territorial control remained tenuous (Alfred 2005a). Yet, drawing on the work of Vine Deloria Jr., Clifford Lytle, and others, Alfred recounts that in Canada and the United States, historical myths of discovery, conquest, and European superiority have upheld a post facto claim to European sovereignty. In response to Indigenous challenges of state authority, the state has sought to "draw indigenous people closer," granting self-government, land rights,

or other minority rights that quiet Indigenous resistance while reinforcing the legitimacy of state sovereignty and non-Indigenous political concepts (Alfred 2005a, 38).

Alfred also argues that although many Indigenous peoples have advocated for Indigenous sovereignty, the concept of sovereignty implies a set of values that are at odds with most traditional Indigenous values (2005a, 43). A post-colonial future for Indigenous peoples ought to be post-sovereign, rejecting non-Indigenous political logics and institutions, and instead building Indigenous governments that reflect the "underlying cultural values of those communities" (Alfred 2005a, 41). Alfred suggests that most Indigenous traditional views are drawn directly from nature and natural orders, where relationships between humans and the earth are fundamentally partnerships, which confer responsibilities (2005a, 45). Alternatives to concepts of sovereignty then, could begin "with the restoration of a regime of respect," where respectful coexistence depends on "acknowledging the integrity and autonomy of the various constitutive elements of the relationship" (Alfred 2005a, 46). Again, in conversation with Tully, Alfred suggests transcending imperialism will require replacing assumptions about a unified way of knowing with a political community that recognizes multiple ways of knowing.

Alfred thus poses a number of significant challenges to both political practice and political scholarship in settler-states. They remind us of Indigenous peoples' longstanding and still present challenges to the legitimacy of settler-state authority, and suggest that settler-states' accommodations of Indigenous rights can in fact undermine Indigenous political aspirations by re-inscribing contemporary settler-states as legitimate. They also draw attention to the importance of culture in political practices, institutions, and values, which opens an important question of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples might move forward in creating political communities that no longer reinscribe the universalization of non-Indigenous ideas, values, and practices. For Alfred, it is clear that part of the response, for Indigenous peoples, ought to include efforts focused on resurgence of traditional Indigenous cultures.

In the Canadian context, the political thought of Glen Coulthard, a Yellowknifes Dene political scholar, has also been widely influential. Coulthard's view is that settler-colonialism depends on the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land and powers of self-determination (2014, 6-7). Over the last forty years, Indigenous politics in Canada have been dominated by politics of recognition, which both facilitate and conceal this dispossession. Challenging the politics of recognition in Canada and the theory of recognition advanced by Charles Taylor, Coulthard argues that recognition is most often asymmetrical and non-reciprocal, since reciprocity requires mutual dependency. State-Indigenous relations are not mutually dependent, but rather the colonial state is motivated in exchanges of recognition by a need for land, resources, and labor, and thus, they reproduce structures of domination and dispossession (Coulthard 2007, 450-451; Coulthard 2014). Coulthard's recommendations to Indigenous peoples in Canada are nuanced, but his general suggestions is that, rather than seek state recognition, colonized peoples ought to work towards a politics of self-recognition oriented towards reconstructing and redeploying cultural practices (2007, 456).

Coulthard's work and contributions will be discussed more in the following chapter, but there are three contributions particularly valuable for the present project that I will note here. First, Coulthard draws on some of the insights of settler-colonial theories to bring to the fore an attention to land and dispossession. Coulthard rightly points out that settler-colonialism was not only established through historical acts of Indigenous dispossession, but that Indigenous peoples in Canada today continue to be dispossessed of their lands, often for projects of resource extraction. While Tully frame's Indigenous struggles as ones for freedom, Coulthard characterizes Indigenous anticolonial or decolonial practice and theory as a struggle for land and informed by land. Making a similar argument to that of Deloria Jr. and Alfred, Coulthard suggests that Indigenous decolonial thought is informed by the "land as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations," which "can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms" (2014, 13). Coulthard calls this "grounded normativity" (2014, 13).

Second, Coulthard brings an attention to capitalism and the role of economic relations in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples in settler-states. This focus is an important reminder that it is not only political values and practices that are inseparable from culture, but also economic relations, practices, and values. Coulthard's analysis also, at a basic level, brings to the fore that capital is closely connected to political power. If we are to understand the power-relations that contextualize contemporary Indigenous politics and academic political theorizing, Coulthard's work may inspire an increased attentiveness to material conditions and relations. A similar and important point is emphasized by Sarah Hunt and Sarah de Leeuw in their article "Unsettling Decolonizing Geographies," arguing that decolonization involves more than challenging settler colonial thought or offering theories that challenge settler colonialism (2018). For Indigenous peoples in settler states whose everyday practices are tied to or lived in place, material survival is often at stake, and it is thus important to make visible the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, and to understand decolonization as grounded in material practices (de Leeuw and Hunt 2018).

Third, Coulthard poses complex challenges to theories of political recognition and mutual recognition between the settler state and Indigenous peoples (2007; Coulthard 2014). Coulthard suggests that when there is a pre-existing context of domination, the terms of such exchanges are typically set by the dominant party. In the context of political theory, if we are to consider projects aimed at building meaningful recognizing of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought, it is also important to consider who sets the terms of such exchanges.

Although Alfred and Coulthard engage in distinct lines of theorizing on settler-Indigenous relations, they both argue that Indigenous rights and recognition approaches to politics fail to provide viable post- or de-colonial alternatives to settler-state domination of Indigenous peoples. They also argue that political theories of rights and recognition tend to impose non-Indigenous concepts of rights, group-membership, and appropriate governance (Alfred 1999; Coulthard 2007).² Their recommendations for Indigenous political action also have similarities, calling for acts of Indigenous resurgence through a turn-away from liberal recog-

²It is also worth noting that other political theorists have offered challenges to Kymlicka and Taylor's assumptions about recognition, though these critiques do not typically offer specific analysis of Indigenous politics. For example, in their book *Bound by Recognition*, Patchen Markell argues that the pursuit of

nition, and thus a general, although not universal, refusal to engage in settler-state political institutions.

Another account of settler-state dispossession and theft is offered by Kahnawà:ke (Mohawk) scholar and political anthropologist Audra Simpson in their account of Indigenous refusal. Simpson argues that settler-colonial states seek to build a ruse of Indigenous consent, often through politics of recognition, which ultimately undermines [I]ndigenous political aspirations and deepens dispossession (2017). Simpson also argues that the "trick of law" in settler-states is to pretend that the appropriation of Indigenous lands was fully consensual, and consequently, that this theft was just (2017, 28). This trick has included converting treaties as forms of relationship, as they were understood by Indigenous peoples, into contracts, which produced Indigenous peoples defending their land as criminals. Through their ethnographic work with Kahnawà:ke (Mohawk) peoples, Simpson found that Kahnawà:ke constantly remind each other and non-Indigenous peoples that the land is theirs and that other political orders remain possible, and they refuse to accept state legitimacy. They, in other words, refuse to forget that dispossession is everywhere, and refuse practices of the state that could be viewed as their 'consent' to this dispossession. Simpson characterized this refusal as itself a political theory, both articulated by Kahnawà: ke people and demonstrated in their actions (2017, 21-22). Aligning with Coulthard, Simpson suggests that refusal and turning-away is a technique and possibility "for doing things differently, for thinking beyond the recognition paradigm that is the agreed-upon 'antidote' for rendering justice" and for "for producing and maintaining alternative structures of thought, politics and traditions away from and in critical relationship to states" (2017, 29,19).

Simpson also introduces a practice of refusal into their own academic writing on Indigenous peoples, which I think is particularly worth our attention in the exploration of political theorists' engagement with Indigenous political thought. Simpson's approach to their ethnographic work is to refuse to tell the internal struggle of those Indigenous communities' stories, but instead to tell the story of the constraints imposed on them by settler colonialism, stating that: "The mess of internal struggle over issues structured fundamentally by dispossession is our business" (2017, 22). This structure includes the placing of Indigenous peoples in a position where they must defend against their elimination and the further loss of land, country, and water, where Indigenous peoples must then also defend their attachments to land, country, and water. Operating from a belief that potential readers of their ethnographic work will not read it fairly, that their subject is already pre-figured, Simpson choses to write with an awareness of this "context of articulation" that is suspicious of Indigenous peoples

recognition "expresses an aspiration to sovereignty," where sovereignty is a condition of positive liberty and self-mastership (2003, 21). The politics of recognition, however, are often complicit in misrecognition, or a failure of acknowledgment, which Markell distinguishes from recognition. Individuals pursue sovereignty through recognition by the state, and the state's sovereignty also depends upon recognition by its subjects, creating a conundrum of recognition. Markell offers an alternative politics of acknowledgment, which instead of seeking knowledge of the other, is self-directed, seeking understanding of one's own ontological condition and the limits engendered by the contingency and unpredictability of the future, as well as an acceptance of the risk of conflict and misunderstanding (2003, 43).

(2017, 23). Their decision is also based off of their view of the disciplinary occupations of anthropology and political science; Simpson's interest in their own ethnographic work was the messiness of what people were grappling with and talking about at the local level, but this is not of interest to those fields. Thus, Simpson refuses to engage in such thick-description of the struggles of the peoples with whom they worked. Finally, Simpson also notes that a key consideration for their ethnographic works was to "not let the work I did harm us" (2017, 23). This is a central tenant of Indigenous methodologies as articulated by Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, which I discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

Before expanding on my considerations of these theorists for the current political project, I want to note one other Indigenous scholar, who offers an alternative perspective. Dale Turner, an Anishnabi scholar and member of Temagami First Nation also critiques existing rights and accommodation political theories, but comes to some different conclusions than Alfred, Coulthard, and Simpson. Similar to the previously discussed Indigenous theorists, Turner argues that despite their acknowledgment of the destructive historical treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada, Kymlicka's and Cairns' theories fail to incorporate Indigenous political philosophies and "do not seriously question the legitimacy of the Canadian state" (2006). For Turner, a central problem of current political relationships for Indigenous peoples in Canada is that non-Indigenous judges and politicians hold near exclusive power in determining the scope and protection of specialized rights. Consequently, for judges and politicians to see Indigenous claims as legitimate, they must be understandable within the dominant intellectual culture of liberalism, and further, must be seen as complimentary to this culture.

Turner suggests that in response to this power imbalance, Indigenous peoples should focus on facilitating cross-cultural dialogue through a division of intellectual labor (2006, 100,121). Indigenous philosophers should continue to philosophize within their Indigenous communities, defining the distinctiveness of their culture, and Indigenous "word warriors" should engage with European philosophies, defending Indigenous rights and nationhood, and critically analyzing how European thought distorts and marginalizes Indigenous voices (Turner 2006, 100-101,119). In Turner's theory, a pragmatic way forward for Indigenous peoples in Canada is to ensure the cultural persistence of Indigenous philosophies and to strengthen Indigenous voices in the dominant society's dialogues on Indigenous rights. While Turner's view does not depart fully from that of Alfred, Coulthard, and Simpson, their suggestion is one of both resurgence and direct engagement with the settler-states with the aim of securing Indigenous people's political aspirations through existing political institutions of the settler-state.

For each of these Indigenous scholars, then, their central political concern is the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land and practices of self-government. They have also suggested that a central issue with current approaches to Indigenous topics in contemporary political theory, as well as settler-state political practices, is a failure to challenge the legitimacy of settler-state authority. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, I share this concern about the statist assumptions of much of contemporary political theorizing. Political theorists theorizing about or in historical and contemporary colonial contexts, and who aim

to take Indigenous political thought and aspirations seriously, must question the legitimacy of the jurisdiction and authority of settler state institutions. This is not just a challenge posed to those engaging Indigenous political thought explicitly, but a challenge that ought to be taken up at the center of the political theory discipline.

Each of the Indigenous scholars discussed so far offer an account of their political thought, particularly focused on contemporary Indigenous politics within settler colonial nation-states. These are particularly central to my project because they speak to similar political contexts from which many non-Indigenous political theorists also theorize, as well as considerations of the disciplinary treatment of Indigenous political thought. However, since my overall attention in this project is to consider possibilities of a meaningful disciplinary presence for Indigenous political thought broadly, I want to briefly introduce another rich body of works of Indigenous political thought.

2.4 Indigenous Political Epistemologies and Ontologies

This section introduces a few examples of Indigenous scholarship that focuses on explicitly elaborating an Indigenous tradition of thought, including relevant epistemologies and ontologies, some of which has bearing on political questions, concerns, or judgments. Although these works are also typically contextualized by the settler-state, they do not center questions of Indigenous-state relationships, and instead offer political thought that speaks to broad considerations of politics, including Indigenous legal orders and ethical principles. Hunt and de Leeuw suggest that such works often aim to "decenter colonial frames of knowledge and to make Indigenous peoples' lived realities more visible on their own terms as an expression of self-determination" (2018, 9). Such works are important to the present research because they build understanding of Indigenous political values and ways of knowing in their own words. To some extent, each of the Indigenous scholars discussed thus far have also offered this type of elaboration on a tradition of Indigenous political thought, but I introduced them separately because they respond more centrally to questions of Indigenous relationships to settler-states and/or academic forms of knowledge production. The landscape of Indigenous political theory described includes examples published by independent scholars through non-academic presses and works across academic disciplines, few of which have been acknowledged in existing political theory discourses. Although there are other examples one could draw on that are non-textual, each of these examples of Indigenous political thought are written works.

Some existing works by Indigenous thinkers focused on expressing lived Indigenous theories, values, or laws elucidate what the author takes to be a pre-existing Indigenous tradition of thought, while others Indigenous authors aim to innovate on their inherited traditions, offering an account of a novel political theory. Many thinkers, however, frame their work as doing both. For example, in *Dancing On Our Turtle's Back*, Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg

scholar, activist, and author Leanne Simpson describes the political nature of Nishnaabeg thought, creation stories, embodied knowledge, and important Anishnaabemowin terms. Based on their interpretations of each of these elements of their inherited traditions, Simpson offers an original theory of Indigenous, and particularly Nishnaabeg, political and cultural resurgence (2011). Simpson explicitly notes that the interpretations of Nishnaabeg culture and teachings discussed in the text are their own, and that each community member must experientially come to their own dynamic interpretations over time (2011).

In another example, Nuu-chah-nulth elder Umeek (Richard Atleo) describes values and knowledge they believe are embedded in the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview and origin stories, while also theorizing how these values and knowledge ought to be interpreted in novel contemporary contexts. Umeek argues that certain philosophical propositions are inherent to the language and reflect truths of a spiritual world or dimension (2007). The central proposition Umeek discusses is *heshook-ish tswalk*, meaning "everything is one", which emphasizes an interconnectedness between physical and metaphysical or spiritual realms, from which he elaborates a theory of Tswalk. Umeek's analysis suggests implications of Tsawalk for how people ought to relate to one another and all living things. Umeek aims to both describe common cultural philosophies and teachings, or a shared tradition of thought and practice, while also interpreting this tradition of thought into a novel, contemporary political theory.

A significant number of works taking the approach of elaborating Indigenous political thought or political traditions largely irrespective of settler politics are found in Indigenous jurisprudence scholarship, where many Indigenous scholars have identified and described Indigenous legal orders, often including general reflections of judgments about how individuals in a particular community ought to relate to each other and their environment (see, for example, Black 2010; Borrows 2019; Miller 2001; Nursoo 2018; Watson 1997; Napoleon 2015; Napoleon 2022). As one example, we can look to Anishnaabe Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows' writing on resurgence, where they both recount what they take to be pre-existing Indigenous values, while offering original theorizing based on these values (2018). Acknowledging that Indigenous peoples are not naturally or inherently environmentalist, Borrows argues that Indigenous teachings must continue to be reproduced and acted on to promote living "harmoniously with the earth" (2018, 50). Borrows presents Anishnaabe teachings, which he argues deal "with inherent [ecological] limits while also seeking to enhance love for one another and the earth" (2018, 66). Reproducing and reasserting these teachings, Borrows suggests how they can be interpreted as guidance for recognizing generational and relational responsibility. Borrows offers an account of what he takes to be central to Anishnaabe teachings, while simultaneously offering his own suggestion for how to interpret such teachings to promote harmonious living. Borrows extensive scholarship on Indigenous legal orders also offers insight into other Indigenous legal and political traditions, often considering the interactions between Indigenous and Canadian settler-state legal traditions and systems (see, for example, Borrows 1994; 2002; 2005; 2010; 2016; 2019).

In this major body of scholarship by Indigenous scholars of Indigenous legal orders, there has also been extensive work to consider if and how scholars might recognize, understand, and work respectfully with Indigenous laws (see, for example, Napoleon and Friedland 2016;

Napoleon 2019; Napoleon 2013; Borrows 2016; Napoleon and Overstall 2007; Mills 2016). Considerations of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge in academic legal scholarship are likely to hold relevant insights for similar questions in the context of academic political theory. For example, on their recent writing on the issues of recording Indigenous laws, Val Napoleon considers whether by recording Indigenous laws or by critically analyzing Indigenous oral histories and narratives to draw out or interpret legal principles, if we might break or change Indigenous laws. Napoleon suggests that Indigenous laws have withstood centuries of colonization, and that students and scholars of Indigenous law should not fear breaking Indigenous laws, but that the process of recording Indigenous laws can indeed change laws as "nothing can be done without affecting or participating in change" (2019, 23) They argue, however, that the methodology they utilize in their projects of recording and rebuilding Indigenous laws supports the integrity of the Indigenous legal order being studied. Arguing that laws are collaborative and require some form of public memory, Napoleon's methodology includes studying primarily publicly available stories and oral histories and interpreting a broad range of narratives from different perspectives. The documentation of the work is also aimed specifically at providing a legal resource which may be useful in practice, where each generation interprets and applies the law in their own contexts and problems (Napoleon 2019).

Much of Napoleon's work, and the work of other Indigenous scholars theorizing on similar issues, is relevant to considering the possible opportunities and risks of projects that aim to record Indigenous political theories. While I do not comprehensively engage such works here, which is a limitation of the current project, I will share one reflection. I think it is important to consider Napoleon's views on the collaborative and public nature of Indigenous law, and consider whether the same might be true for Indigenous political theories. Similarly, how might we understand the relationship between Indigenous political thought and what some scholars identify as Indigenous traditions, cultural philosophies, or worldviews, and their relationship to Indigenous political thought?

I suggest that we can typically understand accounts of Indigenous worldviews and cultural philosophies as referring to spatially, relationally, and temporally situated traditions of thought, and perhaps in some cases, traditions of practice. Specific Indigenous political theories often emerge when an individual or group interprets their inherited tradition and expresses their own individual or collective political thoughts. I suggest, then, that we might understand political theories as an individual or group's expression of their political thoughts, which they may ascribe primarily or entirely to their inherited traditions. Finally, I want to suggest that one articulation of political thought cannot be understood clearly as a tradition (nor worldview or cultural philosophy); a tradition of thought indicates a transmission of thoughts, ideas, knowledge, or beliefs between individuals, and typically across generations. Thus, descriptions or accounts of traditions ought to include evidence that draws on more than one articulation of political thought. This suggests that there are opportunities for recording or documenting Indigenous political thought of one individual, which does not require comprehensive community involvement nor analysis of a wide range of stories and oral histories. Nonetheless, understanding the context of an individual political thinker will

aid in interpreting their theories and approaching their work relationally.

Despite limited acknowledgment of Indigenous peoples' political theories from within the discipline, much work is being done by Indigenous thinkers to share the traditions of thought they inherited and to share their own thinking. The examples offered in this section only begin to scratch the surface of relevant Indigenous scholarship. Such works may offer political theorists insights and understanding into Indigenous systems of thought and knowledge, as well as Indigenous peoples lived experience, articulated on the terms of Indigenous peoples. However, without attention to cross-disciplinary and non-academic literatures, political theorists seeking to engage Indigenous political thought will continue to overlook many relevant works. As is the case with Indigenous legal orders, political theorists are also likely to find that many traditions of Indigenous political thought, and the political thought of important Indigenous leaders and thinkers are not recorded in a written form. While the written form is not inherently superior to other forms of recording, and has its own risks, which Napoleon explores in the context of Indigenous law, there may be reasons to record some Indigenous political thought in a written form. This will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.5 Political Theory's Margins

Debates amongst political theorists about identity, difference, and representation have expanded over the last two decades to include attention to the disciplinary practices and beliefs of political theorists that have marginalized, misrepresented, or omitted non-dominant perspectives. This section considers what insights of these works might be relevant to considerations of possibilities for a meaningful presence of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought in academic political theory. As was discussed in the introduction, the existing work on these disciplinary questions has taken three general forms: critically analyzing historical practices and works of political theory scholarship that have marginalized, othered, or legitimized colonialism; offering theories on how political theory practices might be remade to avoid Eurocentrism; and studying texts, political thinkers, or traditions that have been marginalized in or omitted from existing political theory scholarship. The central problematic acknowledged by many political theorists in this space is that the very act of including the study of non-dominant texts risks reproducing the hegemony of dominant and often Eurocentric traditions of political theory that engendered the marginal status of non-dominant thinkers and traditions of thought in the first place.

Most work within political theory on topics of the marginalizing or othering of political theory is associated with the subfield of comparative political theory (CPT), a wide ranging and dynamic category of scholarship. Although few scholars of comparative political theory have reflected specifically on projects of engaging Indigenous political thought, many debates in this area of scholarship pertain to the present research area.³ Consequently, CPT

³At the time I started this research project, I could find no comparative political theorists writing on the unique challenges and questions of studying Indigenous political thought. However, as my research

scholarship offers significant insights that I find relevant to the present research focus.

The concept of comparative political theory was first introduced by Roxanne Euben in their 1997 inquiry into how "Western" political scholars might make sense of the contemporary phenomenon, where political theory scholars are increasingly ascribing to antifoundationalist assumptions, while in political practices outside of the academy there is a proliferation of foundationalist beliefs (1997, 29). Euben introduced CPT as a project that "introduces non-Western perspectives into familiar debates about the problems of living together, thus ensuring that 'political theory' is about human and not merely Western dilemmas" (1997, 32). They continue on to acknowledge that this presumes that political theory is about shared questions, emerging from shared dilemmas, rather than about shared answers. Euben's intention is that such a project can create a possibility of cross-cultural dialog, rather than incompatibility, and that such conversations would themselves expand the narrow focus of political theory. Further, engagement with other traditions might allow us an opportunity for self-reflection and interrogation of our own concerns, which shares resonances with Markell's articulation of a politics of acknowledgment (Euben 1997, 33).

Since Euben first articulated this image of CPT, their suggestion that such comparative projects can be understood as opportunities for self-reflection have been both reasserted and debated (see, for example, March 2009). An early proponent of CPT, Fred Dallmayr, similarly argued that the subfield is a response to cultural globalization, which mandates cross-cultural learning and understanding on the part of Western political theorists (1997). They observe that much political theorizing outside of the West attempts to reconcile Western political ideas with their own traditions, and suggests that CPT can move beyond this towards "reciprocal questioning and critique" amongst global traditions (Euben 1997).

Farah Godrej's work on comparative and cosmopolitan political theory introduces a more detailed inquiry into the challenges of expanding the disciplinary study of non-Western political thought. Writing on the need to examine the assumptions of political theory that explain the disciplines practices of othering non-Western texts and ideas, Farah Godrej asserts that the dominance of Western political theory is not only a result of what subjects theorists choose to engage. Instead, the practices and methods of political theory are also a form of dominance that obscures the parochial nature of practices and methods of inquiry (Godrej 2009, 577). In other words, Godrej clarifies that comparative political theory ought not to be just a project of reciprocal critique, but a decentering of Western approaches to political theorizing. This would require carefully examining one's own positionality in relation to the non-Western tradition being studied, and potentially, an effort to resituate oneself in the practices of inquiry native to the tradition in question (Godrej 2009, 578).

In their other works, Godrej also offers a concept of cosmopolitan, rather than comparative, political theory. Godrej's concept of cosmopolitan political thought suggest that many of the questions posed by comparative political theorists regarding engagement with non-Western political thought must be taken up at the center of the discipline, rather than

progressed, at least two journal articles began to broach these topics (Rollo 2018; Sherwin 2022). I discuss Sherwin's article at the end of the chapter.

at the margins, to re-envision political theory as a more cosmopolitan endeavor (2011, 4). Cosmopolitan political thought, as Godrej introduces it, "aims to move through and beyond the simple binaries of 'self' versus 'other'", as well as categories such as Western, Indian, or Chinese political thought, and moves towards engagement amongst traditions that are recognized as having multiple genealogies and porous boundaries (2011, 14). One of the promises of cosmopolitan political thought is that such interventions could provide new normative questions for political theorists to investigate, as well as possibilities for reflecting on how and why theorists might investigate these questions (Godrej 2011, 139-140).

Godrej's attention to the methods and guiding questions of political theory offers a similar take to that of Sarah Hunt, which was discussed in the previous chapter (2014). Both suggest the dominant disciplinary ontologies need to be destabilized, rather than simply including or studying Indigenous perspectives with existing hegemonic disciplinary practices. Thus, I find Godrej's argument that questions of engagement with non-dominant texts must be taken up at the center of political theory practices compelling. Another insight Godrej's work might offer to considerations of a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought within the discipline is their attention to the hybridity and porosity of traditions. To view Indigenous political thought as monolithic, static, or homogeneous would not only minimize the diversity of Indigenous political thought, but also risk re-producing marginalizing practices of evaluating the authenticity of claims to Indigeneity. One component of Godrej's articulation of cosmopolitan thought that I find troubling, however, is their assumption that such projects would speak to moral questions. Godrej's view is that cosmopolitanism might decenter the moral questions Western political theorists ask and how theorists go about these normative inquiries, but maintains that political theory is a moral enterprise. My concern with this assumption is that it narrows the scope of cosmopolitan political theory, or political theory in general, to include not all political thought, but only a subsection of political thought that has explicitly normative purposes.

Tully shares a similar concern regarding cosmopolitan political theory, and offers a rearticulation of comparative political theory as a deparochializing project (2016a). For Tully, such a project requires a re-parochializing of Western political thought back into its spatial-temporal context, in much the way projects of provincialization can seek to re-provincialize Europe (Chakrabarty 2009). Rather than offering abstracted and universal knowledge about the nature of politics, Western political theory should be understood as one form of particularly, abstracted political thought. We thus cannot presuppose that political thought necessarily takes the form of discussion of moral principles and judgments. Rather, political thought should be understood more broadly as reflections on a world of politics, which exist everywhere that people converse about the ways they govern or are governed. Deparochialization of political theory, in Tully's view, also requires studying the relationships between forms of power and political theory, making sense of political thought within their background traditions, which are in turn embedded in practices and places.

Tully also suggests that projects of departentialization can only be achieved through genuine dialogue, which requires both mutual understanding across traditions and a mutual concern for the forms of suffering particular to each tradition. The practice of genuine dialogue should include, in Tully's view, non-violent deep listening attentive to the situated dimensions of dialogue, non-attachment, empathy, an awareness of the interdependency of dialogue participants, and reciprocal elucidation or translation. Once dialogue participants grasp the parochial nature of their political thought through genuine dialogue, dialogue can reveal limitations of each tradition that would be imperceptible from critique within each tradition (Tully 2016b). The central argument Tully presents does not depart significantly from some aspects of the earlier articulations of CPT. Like Euben and others, the practice of comparative political theorists is to engage in dialogues across traditions and decenter Western perspectives. Tully, however, goes further than others to detail the specifics of effective dialogue. Like Godrej, and other scholars of comparative political theory, such as Leigh Jenco, Tully argues that the goal of CPT ought to be departochializing not only the subjects of PT, but also its methods, approaches, and guiding questions (2015). Tully also goes somewhat further than Godrej by arguing for a shift away from seeing PT scholarship as engaging abstracted or normative political theories, but rather the study of all political thought, regardless of whether this thought pertains centrally to abstracted, moral questions.

As I suggested in the introduction, I too have adopted a view of political theory scholarship as the study of political thought. Indigenous political thought may not always meet the guidelines of abstracted moral reasoning of dominant political theories, but they are nonetheless political thought, situated within their own spatial contexts and traditions of practice and thought. Relatedly, these debates raise the question, in my view, of what articulations or mediums of political thought ought might be engaged by political theorists.

The dominant traditions of the discipline of political theory have typically reproduced exclusionary logics that discount non-textual communications of political thought. However, political thought is often also communicated orally, including through the telling of narratives, including myths and memorized histories, and the telling of verbal instructions. There are also, however, forms of political communication that are neither textual or verbal, and thus do not centrally rely on communication through language. To make sense of this phenomenon, Toby Rollo introduces the concept of enactive practices, where intentional and norm-governed actions that bear on community conduct can be understood and taught without spoken or written explanation or supplementary information (2018). Although Rollo does not go so far, I want to suggest that we can also understand enactive practices of political communication as including non-verbal artistic or creative media, such as visual art and dancing. Such practices can be a vital part of political communication by enacting affective experiences or lessons. Thus, political theory scholarship that does not reproduce exclusionary logics that limit our expectations about the media appropriate to communicating political thought, might engage all forms of political thought, including those found in oral and enactive communications.

There are number of other tensions and questions that arise across these debates of comparative, departochializing, and cosmopolitan political theory scholarship that are important to the current considerations of Indigenous political thought. First, the concept of tradition plays centrally into debates about CPT. In general, the authors discussed so far paint much of existing political theory scholarship as situated within a tradition of "the West". Godrej

carefully unpacks the hybridity and interdependence of traditions, and Tully acknowledges that traditions are dynamic and have a multiplicity of political thought. Yet, I think that both accounts do not go far enough to acknowledge the dynamism, disunity, and situated nature of traditions.

As I argued in the introduction, traditions are best understood as the inherited ideas, practices, and behaviors that each individual is born into. In contrast to Tully characterization of traditions as "ongoing dialogues among members", my view of traditions includes practices that are non-dialogically based (2016a, 57). Traditions are not static, as they are often amended or replaced by those that inherit them. Consequently, traditions do not have a stable core idea or set of ideas. However, traditions are nonetheless passed on from generation to generation, and many traditions can be historically traced throughout time, even as they are continuously remade and contested. And while traditions will always be unstable, it is also possible to identify shifting family resemblances as one traces a tradition's historical evolution. I agree with British-American theorist Mark Bevir that social structures can generally be understood as traditions, rather than as regimes of power or epistemes (Bevir and Rhodes 2002, 14-15). A practical challenge, perhaps, to this concept of tradition, is to avoid misinterpretation based on other common concepts of tradition that imply historical stability and continuity. Throughout the following chapters, I return to the central assumptions of this concept of tradition to both offer further explanation and avoid confusion.

One of the implications of my view of traditions, is that I am hesitant to reinforce the characterization of dominant tradition of political theory scholarship as "Western". My explanation of this is a brief detour, but one that I think helps clarify my approach to discussions of traditions. While there are necessarily traditions of political theory scholarship that have been passed on for generations, and some of these ideas and practices were likely introduced by European scholars, I believe that characterizing current disciplinary traditions as broadly Western can have some unintended consequences. First, this characterization can obscure the extent to which academic political theory has a history of internal contestation and division amongst multiple competing traditions. One of my concerns is that speaking of academic political theory as Western reinforces a grand narrative of European developmental progress, even when the subtext notes that this tradition is pluralist and dynamic. Second, I am concerned such a characterization of the discipline re-marginalizes "non-Western" thinkers, obscures the influence and impact of contributions made by theorists who do not clearly fall into the Western category, such as Franz Fanon. There are, as is the case with any interpretive generalized category, some simplifications and concealments made for pragmatic purposes, but I think the work done by categorizing the discipline as Western poses more risks than practical advantages. We will be better served, I think, by describing dominant traditions of the discipline through historical narratives that do not presuppose their origins in something or somewhere called the West.

Finally, in conversation with these contemporary political theorists, two additional considerations arise for me that are relevant to my inquiries into the possibilities of a meaningful disciplinary presence of Indigenous political thought. First, across these accounts of comparative political theory are a number of claims about the purpose of such projects, that may

bear on our understanding of the possible aims of increased disciplinary engagement with Indigenous political thought. Godrej argues for a practice of cosmopolitan political theory aimed at decentering Western approaches to political theory that also facilitates engagement across traditions, while acknowledging that traditions have porous boundaries. Tully argues for projects of CPT aimed at re-parochializing Western political thought, and particularly those that engage in genuine dialogue to allow for both deparochialization and reciprocal elucidation. I return to this discussion in the context of the present project in the following section.

Second, there remains an outstanding question of how political theorist ought to navigate the knowledge/power relationships of political theories when engaging Indigenous political thought. Tully, for example, suggested that a key step in projects of deparochializing political theory is studying the complex relationships between political thought and power, but does not elaborate what this would entail in their discussion of deparochialization (2016a). They also warn of the risks of unequal power relationships in dialogues, where the more powerful can instrumentalize dialogues, listening to the less powerful and translating what the less powerful says into their own hegemonic traditions. Given Coulthard's critical challenges to the possibilities of mutual recognition in political practice, we might also be wary of the possibility of genuine dialogue in academic discourses (2014).

2.6 Indigenous Politics in Practice and Indigenous Political Thought in Theory

Throughout the literature I have discussed so far is a variety of works that explicitly discuss questions and issues of Indigenous politics, Indigenous political thought, and Indigenous ways of knowing, as well as works that speak to general considerations of disciplinary exclusions and marginality in academic political theory. I think we can benefit from seeing these works as speaking to, or particularly relevant to, one of two general issue areas or contexts. The first general issue is one of political practice in settler-states. Many of the works discussed this far consider how settler-state societies or particular groups, such as Indigenous peoples, might understand and navigate their political worlds. For example, most political theorists who write about Indigenous rights or accommodations in the state speak primarily to issues of broad political practice, as do many Indigenous theorists writing on Indigenous resurgence or refusal. The second general issue area the texts review thus far respond to, or may be particularly relevant to, is one of academic theorizing and practice. These works are generally explicitly relevant to considerations of how academic scholarship might include, engage, or support a meaningful presence of Indigenous or other marginalized perspectives in a discipline, or to considerations of documenting Indigenous thought, knowledge, or ontologies.

My discussion has included texts relevant to each of these issue areas, as questions about disciplinary and academic practice and theorizing are contextualized within broader issues of political practice in settler-states. Thus, many of the considerations and insights generated

in the broader literature on Indigenous politics and political practice in settler-states are likely to be of relevance to questions of political theorizing and academic practice. In their writing on decolonial and Indigenous methodologies, Smith argues that "research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions" (2012, 5). Political theorists are never working from a neutral political space. Thus, I want to suggest that the onus to recognize and evaluate the political embeddedness of projects of political theory scholarship falls on all political theory scholars.

Although some contemporary political theorists associate with a specific political project, whether of liberalism, communitarian, feminism, or otherwise, there is a general need for political theorists to increasingly situate our own work within our specific, embodied experiences of the political and social, and to genealogically investigate the historical origins of our own contexts and inherited traditions. This includes investigating not only our own positionalities, but also the origins of the epistemic authority granted by the academic institutions we embed ourselves within, and the broader political contexts in which we find ourselves. As Smith notes, central critical questions for researchers must then include: Whose interests does this research serve, who will it benefit, and who posed the research questions and its scope? (2012, 10). My position here shares resonances with some of the comparative, departochial, and cosmopolitan political theorists discussed in the previous section. To investigate one's own traditions and relations is to re-partochialize them, acknowledging them as your own and rejecting any suggestion of epistemic and political neutrality.

Through the engagement with Indigenous political thinkers discussed thus far, it is clear that political theorists working in settler-states are situated within a context marked by ongoing Indigenous political struggles and aspirations. As Alfred argued, and as was demonstrated in the brief discussion of the founding of Native American Studies, there is a long-standing history of Indigenous challenges to the legitimacy of settler-state political institutions and to the sovereignty of settler colonial states. Coulthard further suggests that for those working in settler states, part of the context they work within is one of ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands, and Indigenous struggles for land. Their attention to economic relations is also an important reminder that understandings of our political context would benefit from an attention to capital and the material, lived experiences of Indigenous peoples within settler states. A key challenge, then, posed to political theorists is how they might respond to and account for this political embeddedness of their own work and the discipline of political theory.

2.7 Disciplinary Engagement with Indigenous Political Thought: Opportunities and Challenges

While taking this political embeddedness of academic political theorizing into account, this dissertation focuses on the second general issues area to which the works reviewed thus far

are particularly relevant. One of the purposes of this chapter is to review the landscape of existing disciplinary political theory scholarship that aims to engage with Indigenous political thought or perspectives. In the beginning of this chapter, I offered a brief overview of some central works of academic political theory that engage with topics of Indigenous peoples. Most dominant disciplinary discourses on topics of Indigenous politics have considered how the state ought to accommodate or respond to Indigenous peoples' political claims or resistance. This typically includes works on rights, accommodation, and recognition, including the works of Kymlicka and Taylor discussed earlier. Notably, such debates figured centrally into political theory discourses of multiculturalism and diversity in the 1990s and early 2000s, but have received less attention in the last decades.

I found that these works typically assume the legitimacy of settler-state political institutions and prioritize a goal of political unity within settler-states. They also most often rely on generalized accounts of Indigenous political aspirations and fail to seriously engage with Indigenous perspectives. Such works, then, are prone to misrepresent Indigenous political aspirations. As became clear in the discussion of Indigenous political thought, theories that center Indigenous political aspirations as claims to the state typically fail to recognize that many Indigenous political goals are situated within broad challenges to settler-state political institutions. And, as is variously argued by Alfred, Coulthard, and Tully, the political projects of recognition, specialized group rights, or accommodations theorized in these political theory discourses are not an adequate response to Indigenous political goals, including goals of territorial sovereignty or self-government.

There are, however, some political theorists who have engaged more substantively with Indigenous political thought or who have considered Indigenous peoples challenges to settler-state legitimacy. The primary example discussed in this chapter is Tully, who has incorporated Indigenous perspectives into their work on contemporary constitutionalism and environmental political theory. As was discussed in the introduction, a number of other theorists have also drawn attention to the challenges posed by cross-disciplinary Indigenous theorists and contemporary Indigenous politics (see, for example, Ivison et al. 2000; Shaw 2008; Reinhardt 2016; Song 2020; Sherwin 2022; Ivison 2020). The few Indigenous political theorists in Canada and the United States who write to a disciplinary audience, including Alfred, Coulthard, and Turner, have also generated some disciplinary discussion. At a very general level, however, there is limited scholarship that takes Indigenous political thought seriously or that aims to substantively document an Indigenous political theory. There is, on the other hand, a substantial body of Indigenous political theory across disciplines on topics of Indigenous politics and political practice, as well as works that aim to recount, document, or present a comprehensive Indigenous political theory or political ontology.

The second general purpose of this chapter is to consider, in light of what disciplinary work has already been done, what insights and challenges relevant cross-disciplinary scholarship might offer for considering the possibilities of a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought in the discipline. First, I want to briefly address the question of whether it might ever be appropriate for disciplinarily-situated political theorists to study Indigenous political thought, particularly given the discipline's political embeddedness and colonial en-

tanglements. By posing this question, I do not suggest that academic political theory scholarship would ever be the only or primary location from which to study Indigenous political thought, as much important work is and will continue to be undertaken in institutions of education founded by and for Indigenous students, in Indigenous communities, and elsewhere. Similarly, Indigenous peoples' acts of refusal should be respected by all scholars, meaning that there are likely contexts and areas of Indigenous political thought that should not be pursued. In other words, there are feasible instances where disciplinary political theory could be deemed an inappropriate location from which to engage Indigenous peoples' political thought, insomuch that disciplinary or institutional engagement could draw or appropriate Indigenous thought into unjust or unwanted interpretations or applications. The question here is if academic political theory might be one location from which to engage some Indigenous peoples' political thought.

My suggestions is that despite colonial histories and entanglements, the "structure" of a discipline or institution is not fixed or unchanging. Political theorists have opportunities to imagine and contribute to the making of decolonial, anti-colonial, and anti-racist scholarship and institutions, where past limitations of disciplinary political theory may be addressed or transcended. The disciplinary risks of listening to, including, or engaging Indigenous political thought are not necessary or fixed, and are therefore insufficient reason to offer a sweeping rejection the appropriateness of engaging Indigenous political thought as disciplinary political theory.

We might also consider that despite the troubling entanglements of academic institutions, many Indigenous thinkers and scholars themselves continue to find some value in such institutions, or at least express hope that they could be of future value. While writing about the issues of recognition politics, for example, Alfred, Coulthard, and Simpson still continue to write their perspectives into academic discourses, even when their disclosures contain elements of refusal. Writing on the project of "Indigenizing the Academy" Choctaw scholar Devon Mihesuah and Wahpetunwan Dakota (Pezihutazizi Otunwe) scholar Waziyatawin Angela Wilson (2004) state that:

we are beginning from the presumption that the academy is worth Indigenizing because something productive will happen as a consequence. Perhaps as teachers we can facilitate what bell hooks refers to as "education as the practice of freedom." Perhaps we might engage in an educational dynamic with students that is liberatory, not only for the oppressed but also for the oppressors. Perhaps as scholars we can conduct research that has a beneficial impact on humanity in general, as well as on our Indigenous peoples. Perhaps the scholarship we produce might be influential not only among our ivory tower peers, but also within the dominant society. Perhaps our activism and persistence within the academy might also redefine the institution from an agent of colonialism to a center of decolonization. (Mihesuah and Wilson 2004, 5)

Of course, there is a difference between Indigenous peoples working within the academy, to Indigenize it or otherwise, and non-Indigenous scholars engaging Indigenous political thought.

However, the point here is merely that there is widespread (which is not to say universal) recognition amongst Indigenous scholars that the university in itself does not run entirely counter to Indigenous political aspirations. There are possibilities for the academy to move past extractive forms of engagement and instead offer benefits to Indigenous communities.

2.8 Conclusion

What then, might we learn from relevant literatures about the risks and possible avenues for creating or supporting a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought in political theory discourses? This section synthesizes and elaborates on the insights of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars discussed thus far. Exploring this question, I will also discuss perspectives offered by some Indigenous scholars of Indigenous and decolonial methodologies (Kovach 2021; Smith 2021), and some recent and relevant literature that emerged after my own research was substantially underway (Sherwin 2022). I recommend that we turn primarily to Indigenous methodologies scholarship and Indigenous theories for general methodological guidance and insights, rather than to traditional methods of political theorizing.

As was noted in the previous chapter, Hunt and de Leeuw pose many questions in their consideration of decolonizing geography that are relevant to considering the presence of Indigenous political theory in political theory (2018). They rightly point out that in considering what would amount to a meaningful presence of Indigenous ways of thinking in a discipline, that it is also important to consider Indigenous peoples. For example, can we claim to understand or have a presence of Indigenous political thought within political theory without also having a presence of Indigenous experts in the discipline? How might political theorists and departments build meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples? How might they materially support the political goals and political movements of Indigenous peoples locally and internationally? While these are centrally important questions that I touch on throughout this chapter, my goal in this chapter is to consider a narrower subsection of questions around the presence of Indigenous political thought in the discipline. In particular, my focus here is on when it might be appropriate for political theorists to substantively engage with or document Indigenous political thought that was articulated by Indigenous peoples outside of the discipline. Under what conditions, according to what principles, using what methods, and for what goals is engaging Indigenous political thought appropriate? This question is particularly pertinent for non-Indigenous political theorists, but does not assume that all theorists are non-Indigenous.

The goal here is not provide prescriptive and general claims about what a meaningful presence of Indigenous political theory in the discipline might look like. There are a multitude of ways engagement can take place, and each form of engagement will require new considerations. For example, some engagements with Indigenous political thought, and particularly those that engage with oral or enactive Indigenous political thought, are likely to require collaboration with Indigenous peoples or with Indigenous governments, groups, or organizations who own various Indigenous materials and knowledge. On the other hand, en-

gagements that take up Indigenous scholars' political thought as articulated in self-authored journal articles will bring up other considerations. Here, my goal is to synthesize and briefly discuss some of the general guidance and principles that the current literature offers and offer a few novel suggestions, which I will continue to expand on and consider in more specific contexts in later chapters.

Some of these general principles have already been suggested. First, in conversation with Tully and Rollo, I suggested an approach to political theory that recognizes all political thought as of possible value to engage. This includes a willingness to engage political thought that is expressed non-textually. This is particularly important given the centrality of oral and narrative forms of communication in many Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching. Second, some Indigenous scholars and scholars of comparative, de-parochial, and cosmopolitan political theory have argued for the importance of reflexivity and the re-evaluation of disciplinary methods and research questions. Engagements with Indigenous political thought that aims to avoid reinscribing the marginality of Indigenous perspectives similarly can benefit from reflection on who and what the discipline has previously omitted or (mis)represented and a re-evaluation of the methods and research questions theorists undertake. In the discussion above of the political embeddedness of academic political theory above, I also suggested that all political theorists have a responsibility to reflexively respond to their own personal political embeddedness and that of the discipline of political theory in general.

Given the existing political realities of Indigenous peoples in settler-states, however, I do not think that practices of self-reflexivity and re-parochialization go far enough to account for the political embeddedness of academic scholarship. Smith, writing to Indigenous scholars, argues that decolonization "is about centering our own concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (2012, 14). In an institutional, political, and relational context that has so often centered the political perspectives and interests of non-Indigenous peoples, I suggest that political theorists engaging Indigenous political thought should center the specific political goals of the relevant Indigenous peoples and communities they engage. This corresponds with, but goes further than, my earlier argument that political theorists should bring Indigenous challenges to settler-state legitimacy to the center of the discipline.

In their discussion of engaging Indigenous political theories of refusal, Simpson expressed a principle of ensuring that such engagements did not harm the relevant Indigenous peoples or communities with whom they were collaborating. Informed by this and the work of Smith, my suggestion is that when a theorist considers engaging an Indigenous person's political thought, they should also learn about the political aspirations of the Indigenous community or communities that the person is from, and ensure at a minimum, that neither the individual's nor the collective's political projects and interests would be harmed by the project. As Simpson notes, this requires longitudinal thinking (2017). What are the long-term, or even multi-generational, political aims of the community? What might undermine the success of future goals? How might others misuse or misinterpret information I disclose about or interpretations I share about this person or community? Further, in recognition of the unequal treatment of Indigenous peoples in one's broader political and institutional

context, I suggest that political theorists should move to privilege Indigenous goals and political aspirations over their own. Reflexivity on these matters does not create neutrality, so I argue that the condition of political partiality requires, at a general level, a counteracting response that centers Indigenous political concerns and goals.

Many key insights for engaging Indigenous political theory can be found in the work of Indigenous scholars writing on Indigenous and decolonial methodologies. For example, Margaret Kovach, a Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux scholar of Indigenous methodologies, argues that relationality is the central ethos of Indigenous methodologies, and refers to a similar sentiment expressed by other Indigenous scholars (2021, 35). For example, Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson makes a similar argument in their recent book on Indigenous research methods (2020). Kovach draws their relational orientation from Vine Deloria, who suggests that the Indigenous worldview is grounded in an animistic philosophy that assumes relationship between all life forms in the natural world. Similar to Coulthard's concept of grounded normativity, Kovach suggests knowledge is gathered through observation of these relationship of interconnection (Coulthard 2014; (Kovach 2021, 48)). Informed by this relationality, Indigenous methodologies emphasize doing research through respectful and responsible treatment of others, which includes practices of reciprocity, and an adherence to local norms and protocols of respect (Kovach 2021, 48; Smith 2012, 125,141). Both Kovach and Smith also argue that respectful relationships require practices of reflexivity.

The importance of a relational approach that similarly prioritizes "right relationship," and the connections between right relationship and treaties, has been discussed by many Indigenous scholars (Borrows and Coyle 2017; Starblanket and Stark 2018). Alfred also proposed a similar principle in their discussion of Indigenous alternatives to existing political practices and concepts grounded in non-Indigenous ontologies and cultures. They argue that such alternatives begin "with the restoration of a regime of respect," arguing that "Indigenous formulations are nonintrusive and build frameworks of respectful coexistence by acknowledging the integrity and autonomy of the various constitutional elements of the relationship" (Alfred and Corntassel 2005, 46). For many Indigenous scholars, then, respectful and right relationships are an important part of scholarly engagement.

In one of the only works that poses many of the same questions that I take up here, settler-Canadian scholar Daniel Sherwin suggests that treaties offer a relevant model for political theorists' engagements and relationships with Indigenous peoples (2022). Summarizing Anishnaabe scholars' perspectives of treaty relationships, Sherwin suggests that treaty relationships are built on respect, reciprocity, and renewal, and the principles of interdependence and independence, where parties of the treaty are already and always in relationship, but also maintain their independence. Sherwin suggests that when considering a treaty relationship between comparative political theory and Indigenous resurgence, this model would suggest a commitment to making already existing relationships between the two healthy, while maintaining their independence and "principled distance" as crafts (2022, 64). This concept of treaty political theory centers engagements across traditions of political thought as a relationship, which aligns with the relational ethos articulated by Kovach, and my suggestions about navigating the political relationships of engaging Indigenous political thought.

This, too, shares many resonances with Tully's suggestions of genuine dialogue across traditions, and their emphasis on treaty principles of consent, mutual recognition, and continuity in their work on contemporary constitutionalism (1995; 2016a) What I think is particularly valuable about Sherwin's proposal of treaty political theory is the specific attention to relationships of non-dominance, clarifying that engagements across traditions should allow for principled distance, rather than an expectation of incorporation into a single whole.

I have, however, one minor concern about Sherwin's articulation of principled distance that I think is worth drawing out. As discussed above, Sherwin gives an example of two traditions that would maintain their principled distance under the treaty model: comparative political theory and Indigenous resurgence. I think we must be careful, however, to not suggest that comparative political theory, political theory, nor Indigenous resurgence theory can be clearly understood as a singular epistemic community. With a shift towards treaty political theory, we might be served by emphasizing that such engagements between individuals brings into relationship those individuals' complex and multi-layered epistemic communities, traditions, or cultures. In other words, the epistemic communities and identities of one person practicing comparative political theory are likely to diverge significantly than those of another comparative theorist. It makes sense to me, then, that we think of principled distance at an embodied level, as a principle of non-domination when one enters relationship with any tradition or community that is not their own. I am not trying to suggest that disciplines and subfields do not have their own traditions, but rather that these traditions are diverse, dynamic, and typically inherited by individuals who have pre-existing traditions of thought and practice. I agree with Sherwin about the importance of the principles of distance and independence for respectful relationships, yet want to acknowledge the lived messiness of the distances this enacts.

Another of Sherwin's suggestions regarding treaty political theory is that the development of healthy relationships includes scrutinizing existing relationships. Again, this aligns closely with my own suggestions of attention to one's own personal, political, and disciplinary contexts and inheritance. Sherwin, like Shaw, emphasizes that for many non-Indigenous researchers, treaty political theory would focus on projects that are "corrective," examining the colonial and imperial entanglements of political theory, and thus the obstacles to good treaty relationships. I agree with the necessity of reflexivity, and correspondingly, Chapter Three is devoted, in part, to examining traditions of thought in the political theory discipline. However, I also want to suggest that many political theorists now have at their disposal many resources for self-reflexivity and critical interrogation into the discipline's entanglements, and that, in certain circumstances and contexts, there is room for theorists to begin approaching projects of political theory that engage Indigenous traditions and Indigenous political thought. Corrective projects of political theory need not be interpreted as separate from political theoretical engagement with Indigenous political thought. Indeed, both Shaw and Sherwin take much of their direction from engaging Indigenous political thought. We would be amiss, I think, to wait for an exact road map or clear turning point that indicates we are now ready to muddle-through projects that attempt to engage Indigenous political thought with care. These are, after all, relationships that we are already and always in, relationships that we can continue to turn away from, or that we can turn towards, even when we are likely to make mistakes.

Chapter 3

Explaining Indigenous Marginalization in Political Theory and Political Practice

3.1 Introduction: Departochialization and Decolonization

To address marginalization, oppression, domination, exclusion, or subjugation, or to resist its reinforcement or reproduction, it is important to attempt to understand how such outcomes or processes are caused, perpetuated, or refigured. Without such understanding, these outcomes can continue to be inadvertently reproduced, even when care is put into other considerations of how to best intervene in marginalization or oppression.

In the context of Indigenous political thought and disciplinary political theory, Indigenous peoples and their ontologies have been historically marginalized and misrepresented in political theory scholarship, as well as in political practices in settler-colonial states. Political theorists who aim to support a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought in the discipline can thus benefit from reflexively analyzing the diverse ways that political theory, political theorists, and disciplinary practices have caused or perpetuated the misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous knowledge, and Indigenous ways of knowing in both political theory and broader political practice. Such an understanding can contribute contextual insights to growing and diverse conversations on how political theorists may respond to their colonial inheritance and political embeddedness, while respecting Indigenous political thinkers and Indigenous communities.

As has been discussed in the previous chapters, political theory and political practice are often mutually constitutive. Consequently, understanding of the processes and practices of marginalization in political practice can provide insights for understanding marginalization in academic political theory, and vice versa. Much work has been done by Indigenous scholars across disciplines, settler colonial scholars, and political theorists to improve un-

derstanding of the mechanisms and practices of political theory and political practice that enable or reinforce the marginalization or oppression of Indigenous peoples in settler-state political practices. Some, although fewer, theorists have also offered explanatory narratives or accounts of the ways in which traditions or practices of disciplinary political theory have shaped the discipline's engagements with Indigenous political thought and Indigenous ways of knowing.

This chapter considers what can be learned from existing theoretical scholarship about the practices and traditions of political theory that reproduce the marginality, omission, or misrepresentation of Indigenous political thought, Indigenous ways of knowing, and Indigenous peoples in academic political theory in settler states. Scholars who theorize processes and practices of Indigenous marginalization in contemporary political practice in settler-states are likely to provide many relevant insights for the specific considerations of academic outcomes and practices. The focus on academic practice offered here does not suggest that it is more important to understand marginalization in academic environments than in broader political environments and practices. Rather, the purpose of the focus is to offer a narrow, specific analysis specific to considerations of the possible challenges and barriers of supporting a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought in academic political theory discourses and institutions.

This consideration of the academic traditions of political thought is informed by an engagement with two works of Indigenous methodology scholarship that offer their own ontological frameworks relevant to the study of Indigenous ways of knowing and the academic production of knowledge. I identify two compelling ontological claims embedded in the works of Margaret Kovach and Linda Tuhiwai Smith about Indigenous relationality and the capacity of Indigenous people as creative political agents (Kovach 2021; Smith 2009; Smith 2021). I suggest that these ontological claims can provide valuable insights for analyses of the historical and ongoing practices of Indigenous marginalization in disciplinary political theory and in settler-state political practice.

I suggest an interpretive and historicist approach to narrating conditions of Indigenous marginality, which takes seriously Kovach and Smith's ontological contributions through an emphasis on contingency, relationality, and creative Indigenous agency. Interpretive and historicist narrative explanations can reveal possibilities for contestation of political practices, power, and political beliefs. Interpretive and historicist approaches also resist the tendency towards objectification of Indigenous people often implicated in theories reliant on structuralist themes. Such an approach can equally be applied to producing descriptive narratives of marginalization of Indigenous people in academic political theory, in political practice, and in social life. Importantly, neither the ontological and political centering of Indigenous agency and relationality, nor a general interpretive historicist approach prescribe a particular methodology, as interpretive and historicist work can be undertaken using varied methodological tools.

The chapter then goes on to consider the contributions of various scholars in theorizing the processes of political practice and theory that contribute to the marginalization, oppression, or misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples. Glen Coulthard's account of Indigenous dispossession in capitalist settler-states and Taiaiake Alfred's account of the imposition of culturally alien political practice and values on Indigenous peoples both provide insights that help us to understand the broad political contexts political theorists work within (Alfred 1995; Alfred 2005b; Coulthard 2014). Although I think Coulthard's account has much to offer, I draw out some concerns I have about their reliance on structuralist themes in their explanatory narrative, discussing the tensions between a centering of Indigenous capacities for relationally situated, creative agency and a reliance on structuralist themes. I then consider some of the contributions offered by Karena Shaw and James Tully in their analyses of the roles political theory discourses in particular have played in naturalizing or legitimizing political assumptions that marginalize Indigenous peoples (Shaw 2008; Tully 1995).

Building off of these insights, I then apply the interpretive historicist approach informed by the ontological insights of Kovach and Smith to an investigation of current traditions of the political theory discipline. The purpose of such an analysis is to contribute to self-reflexive efforts of political theorists, as they seek to expose, confront, and counter the colonial, imperial, and dispossessive entanglements of their inherited academic traditions of thought and practice. Offering a historical narrative of the founding and evolution of political science, I provide evidence for the persistence of a developmental historicist tradition of thought in the discipline. This account shares similarities with both Tully and Shaw's accounts, but emphasizes the disciplinary history in particular, as well as the contingency of traditions of political theory.

Development historicism dominated the human sciences across much of Europe in the late 19th century, framing social history in organic terms, with this organic progress culminating in the most advanced social organization, the nation state. Although the developmental historicist tradition was largely contested and abandoned during the crises of wars in the 20th century, some of the core assumptions of developmental historicism persisted unchallenged. The assumption of the nation state as the natural location of the political continued to be taken up by many political scientists and theorists, along with the related assumption of Indigenous peoples as generally apolitical. I argue that both of these assumptions persist today across much of political scholarship, and that such assumptions help to explain contemporary political theorizing that frames Indigenous peoples' political aspirations as claims to the state. The narrative of developmental historicism offered in this chapter is limited in its brevity, but offers a small contribution to broader reflexive work being done to consider the limitations, closures, and entanglements of academic political studies.

3.2 Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Marginalization

The widespread material, discursive, political, and cultural marginalization of Indigenous people living in settler-colonial states is well documented. Settler-colonial states are necessarily implicated in histories of dispossession of Indigenous people from their land, and

consequently, the disruption of Indigenous people's spatially situated ways of social, political, economic, personal, and spiritual life. Many Indigenous people living in settler-states remain dispossessed from their land and resources, and many also face ongoing tactics of erasure and assimilation. Historical acts of dispossession and erasure of, and violence against, Indigenous people also have lasting, heterogeneous, and intergenerational implications for contemporary Indigenous people. Across disciplines, there is mounting empirical evidence of contemporary material disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, including economic, carceral, educational, and public health inequities (See, for example, Anderson et al. 2006; Brown 2019; Chartrand 2019; King et al. 2009; Paradies 2016; Speed 2019; Stein 2020; Walter 2009). There are also epistemic and discursive disparities, where Indigenous knowledge, beliefs, and worldviews are underprivileged in institutions of education, research, and government (Cech et al. 2017; Kidman 2020; Koggel 2018). Further still, there are often disparities in the support and allowances offered to Indigenous people who wish to practice their culture or language, when compared to the support and allowances granted to settler populations (Davis 2017; Khawaja 2021; Smolicz and Secombe 2003). Whether characterized as marginalization, dispossession, oppression, or through other descriptive terms, evidence for uneven, contextually varied, and persistent disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations across settler-states is vast.

For some theorists and scholars, Indigenous marginality or oppression is a general and omnipresent condition or experience for Indigenous people living on, or ancestrally connected to, territories now occupied by settler-states. In these accounts, marginality is often described as operating covertly, unconsciously, or spiritually, or as otherwise challenging to account for empirically. Alfred, for example, argues that "The forces that oppress us today are beyond elusive. The power of empire is not in machines, bayonets, barbed wire, or even soldiers. Its effects have become ever more present and damaging to be sure, but as a military or protest action target, it is almost invisible" (2005b, 58). Thus, whether there is visible empirical evidence or not, some theorists assert a ubiquitous condition of marginality or oppression for Indigenous people living under particular social relations or structures. With diverse perspectives on what marginalization or oppression entails, social and political theorists offer various explanatory narratives for such outcomes or conditions.

Beginning in the 1990s, a rich scholarship of settler-colonial studies emerged to interrogate diverse phenomena of marginalization and oppression under settler-colonialism, offering both general and particular explanatory narratives of the settler-colonial systems, structures, or practices that perpetuate the marginalization, subjectification, oppression, or dispossession of Indigenous people (Wolfe 1999). Although these settler-colonial theories are diverse, settler-colonial scholarship typically shares general key assumptions about the nature of settler-colonialism and its mechanisms of marginalization. Settler-colonial theorists typically posit that settler-colonialism is a structure, rather than an event, pushing back on postcolonial scholarship that characterized colonization as events in the past. The structure of settler-colonialism follows, in Patrick Wolfe's terms, a "logic of elimination", where Indigenous people are eliminated or displaced from a territory, and a new society is built on the invaded land (Veracini 2011; Wolfe 2006). The elimination of Indigenous people, although

primarily territorial, also involves the erasure of Indigenous histories, epistemologies, and cultures. How Indigenous people are eliminated, or as Veracini says, how Indigenous people "go away" is often varied, and can include assimilation, absorption, genocide, or forced removal of the Indigenous population (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Veracini 2011). Settler-colonialism often operates alongside or in coordination with other systems of oppression and marginalization, including racism, classism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy (Wolfe 1999). Some feminist settler-colonial scholars have further argued that patriarchy and violence against women is inherent to settler-colonial domination of Indigenous people (Hall 2009; Smith 2015). Often centering these key themes, settler-colonial studies provide a collection of explanatory narratives for the persistent marginality and oppression of Indigenous people in settler-states.

Settler-colonial theories often maintain overtly structuralist themes, explaining the experience or conditions of Indigenous peoples in settler states in reference to a key or stable structure inherent to or common across settler colonial contexts. The structuralist themes of various settler-colonial theories have been the focus of much debate over the last decade. Multiple Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have voiced some concerns about the costs and limitations of structuralist explanatory narratives, and others have challenged interpretations of settler-colonial theories as structuralist (see, for examples of both, Macoun and Strakosch 2013, Svirsky 2014, Konishi 2019, Veracini 2014). Structuralist themes in scholarship on Indigenous methodology, and the possible challenges and limitations of invoking structures in explanatory narratives, will be discussed further in later section.

3.3 Agency, Relationality, and Context in Indigenous Methods

Alongside theories of the structures and processes of settler-colonialism, there are diverse and expanding Indigenous methods for researching Indigenous peoples' knowledge of and experiences within settler-colonial states. Within each work of Indigenous methodology scholarship is typically embedded, explicitly or implicitly, social ontological claims about the settler-state and mechanisms of social constraint or change. As much as Indigenous methodologies scholarship is often informed or enriched by settler-colonial scholarship, the Indigenous methodology literature offers compelling ontological claims that can reciprocally inform and enrich theories of Indigenous marginalization and oppression. This section considers what insights offered Indigenous scholars of research methodologies might be relevant for choosing between competing explanatory narratives of Indigenous marginalization or oppression, or for developing novel research or theories aimed at explaining the condition and experiences of Indigenous peoples.

Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith of the Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi offers some of the most seminal and widely respected work on Indigenous approaches to decolonial research methodologies. First published in 1999, Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* offers

a valuable analysis of the relationships between Indigenous peoples and research or knowledge production. Particularly relevant for the current research, Smith's book focuses largely on the colonial and imperial legacies of Western knowledge production, and the continued impact of such legacies in academic institutions and contemporary exclusions of Indigenous peoples, the political aspirations, and their ways of knowing. The book also focuses on re-imagining Indigenous scholars' activities of research within institutions and Indigenous communities, connecting Indigenous political agendas of self-determination, rights, and sovereignty to complementary research agendas (Smith 2012). With their account of settler-colonialism and possibilities for decolonial research, Smith offers a number of insights that are relevant to considering approaches to producing knowledge about experiences and processes of Indigenous marginalization.

First, I want to suggest that Smith centering of the Māori capacity to "constantly imagine and reimagine, to create and recreate our world" provides insights for analyzing the presence of and treatment of Indigenous political thought in academic political theory (2012, 203). For Smith, Indigenous struggle is a key tool of both understanding and mobilizing creative acts of agency to imagine and bring about social change. Struggle can result in the reinforcing or reproduction of imperial power relations and material conditions where Māori remain marginalized, but when there is a critical recognition of the need for action and a creative alternative vision, struggle also holds opportunity for reimagining the world and disturbing the status quo. Decolonization struggles must offer "a language of possibility", so that different worlds can be imagined, believed in, and created through acts of agency (Smith 2012, 204). Smith doesn't deny the limitations of current conditions of marginality, both material and political, but centers the acts of creative imagination and agency that drive social change "against all odds" (2012, 203).

Smith's attention to creative acts of agency informs one of their overarching theses: that research involving, or that might have impacts on, Indigenous people ought to be developed and advanced in accordance with Indigenous aspirations, needs, and visions. This, for Smith, is not about adopting specific methodologies, but primarily about different and new ways of knowing, and an attention to the epistemic and historical contexts within which research problems are framed and understood (2012, 18, 286). Practices and institutions of research are complexly linked with colonialism and imperialism, where the collection and production of knowledge about Indigenous people has historically classified and represented Indigenous peoples according to Western theories, including culturally specific concepts of reality, time, and space (Smith 2021, 1, 49, 67). For Indigenous people, decolonizing research will involve centering Indigenous concerns and worldviews to understand the praxis of research, which Māori scholar Graham Smith calls "Kaupapa Māori theory" and "Indigenous transforming praxis" (2009, 49). Non-Indigenous researchers have adopted many approaches to gain access to Indigenous communities in a "culturally sensitive" way, but research undertaken using such strategies does not guarantee that the outcomes for the researched will be positive. Instead, non-Indigenous researchers should take up careful strategies that acknowledge the political embeddedness of research, and that will result in research outcomes that make a positive difference for Indigenous concerns or issues (Smith 2021, 228-31). Understanding research as deeply political, Smith centers Indigenous people as creative political agents who have their own theories, practices of knowledge production, and political aspirations.

Smith's account of creative imagination, in my view, offers a compelling account of social change. Without an ontological commitment to some form of situated agency, we are unable to explain intentional or premeditated social change, and all social change must be ascribed to contingency or external non-human forces. If such were true, there would be no reason to bother theorizing how humans ought to act, or according to what values or principles, since there would be no hope that humans could premeditate their behavior. If we accept that humans have the capacity to act intentionally on their beliefs, we must acknowledge that humans have some form of agency. As Smith advocates, it is important to acknowledge that humans have not only some capacities for intentional actions informed by their beliefs, but an ability to creatively adopt new beliefs or refigure their existing beliefs. In other words, humans' intentional acts cannot be explained solely in reference to beliefs that they are born or socialized into, or in reference to beliefs that are forced on the individual or taught by external sources. Within a given social context or within particular social relations, different individuals often embrace distinct beliefs and behaviors, acting creatively in ways that are not fixed, determined, or necessarily limited by their social context. While individuals will make sense of new experiences in the context of their inherited beliefs, the ways in which they assimilate a new experience into their understanding and shift their beliefs and their intentional actions will often diverge. While it is incoherent to think of humans as autonomous or able to transcend all social or material constraints, humans have the capacity to creatively amend, reject, or modify their beliefs and to act accordingly. Thus, the deep optimism of Māori politics teaches and reminds Indigenous people of their capacity to bring about alternative worlds. I will return to the insights Smith offers, but first want to turn to another Indigenous methodologies scholar that also provide relevant insights.

For Margaret Kovach, a Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux scholar of Indigenous methodologies, the central ethos of Indigenous methodologies is relationality. Kovach, like Smith, centers individual capacity for dynamic and active agency, but Kovach's central emphasis is on the relationality and contextualism of Indigenous people's knowledge, beliefs, and agency (2021, 204, 228). Kovach draws their relational orientation from Vine Deloria, who suggests that the Indigenous worldview is grounded in an animistic philosophy that assumes relationship between all life forms in the natural world. Knowledge is gathered through observation of these relationship of interconnection. In addition to the overarching interdependence of all life forms, Indigenous relationality suggests a contextualism at the level of place, community, and individual experience, where Indigenous knowledge is situated within and emerges from a particular web of relationships (Kovach 2021, 89). This is a similar argument to that made by other Indigenous scholars about the locality of knowledge, such as Cherokee philosopher Brian Burkhart who suggests that the human voice emerges from the voice of the land (2019). Burkhart thus refers to being, knowing, and meaning, and "beingfrom-the-land," "knowing-from-the-land," and "meaning-from-the-land" (2019, xiv). Kovach emphasizes that Indigenous meaning and epistemologies also have a spiritual and ethical context that is intertwined with relationality and holism.

Kovach's perspective on non-Indigenous researchers is informed by this relational ontology; non-Indigenous scholars will never substitute Indigenous people, but if one nonetheless aims to conduct "Indigenous research", they must be in respectful relationship with Indigenous people and all that will feel the consequences of their research (2021, 302, 309). Supporting Indigenous methodologies also requires a reflexive and contextualist approach, where White scholars must examine whiteness, and all scholars must examine the power, values, and beliefs about knowledge that they hold and that are embedded in academic institutions (Kovach 2021, 300).

For Kovach, this relational process of building knowledge and meaning is deeply interpretive and is closely aligned with other non-Indigenous interpretive methodologies that center the reflexive or relational contextualism of knowledge production (2021, 48). I want to suggest that, centering Indigenous relationality, Kovach emphasizes an Indigenous, contextualized holism, which aligns with many of the claims of philosophical holism and antinaturalism advanced by non-Indigenous interpretive theorists. For example, Charles Taylor's anti-naturalist approach to the human sciences makes similar ontological claims. Taylor argues that humans are self-interpreting animals, where "our interpretation of ourselves and our experience is constitutive of what we are, and therefore cannot be considered as merely a view on reality, separable from reality, nor as an epiphenomenon, which can be by-passed in our understanding of reality" (1985, 47). Humans' realities and experiences of self are transformed by their interpretations of and meanings that they ascribe to those very experiences. To appeal to an unchanging relationship erroneously assumes that there is only one pure or irreducible set of conceptual relationships within a language that is unalterable. If we accept Taylor's ontology, we instead find that humans' interpretations of the meaning of social, personal, and political realities continually remakes those realities. Such an ontological position also affirms a contextualist theory of meaning, where social realities gain meaning in reference to the human interpretations that inform and shape them (Bevir 2010).

Smith's centering of creative human agency and Kovach's acknowledgement of human agency are both also coherent with an ontology of relationality or contextualism. British-American political theorist Mark Bevir, for example, offers a conceptual framework that is both attentive to contextualism and human agency, which I introduced in the previous chapter. Bevir suggests that human agency is situated insomuch as each individual is born and socialized into a particular social context, where they are taught to accept certain beliefs and to perform certain practices. We can understand this contextualizing set of background beliefs and practices as inherited traditions, which are contingent and spatially and temporally variable. Individuals often maintain their inherited traditions, but can also creatively remake or reject beliefs and practices of their inherited traditions (Bevir et al. 2003, 7). Often such creative acts of situated agency occur when an individual faces a subjective or inter-subjective "dilemma" that reveals limitations or contradictions in one's inherited traditions, resulting in the individual amending, rejecting, or replacing an inherited belief or practice through acts of agency (Bevir 2010, 435). Individuals interpret and reinterpret their social world in the context of their web of beliefs, and in the process, alter and remake their web of beliefs and their social realities. Smith identifies this process as the acts of creative imagining that are crucial to bringing about new realities of decolonization. Individual agency is situated within inherited traditions, but this is nonetheless recognizable as agency in that individuals make and remake their beliefs, and act intentionally according to those beliefs.

While there are resonances across these Indigenous and non-Indigenous theories of agency, contextualism, and interpretivism, both Smith and Kovach offer particular insights that emerge from their own Indigenous epistemologies and the other Indigenous epistemologies they engage. For Smith, centering creative imagining and agency as a locus of social change is contextualized by a Māori, and perhaps broadly Indigenous, sense of hope and optimism (2012, 91, 203). Further, Smith's attention to agency is contextualized by a historical narrative of 500 years of Indigenous struggle, creative resistance, and survivance (2012, 146).

For Kovach, interpretivism and contextualism is deeply tied to a relational ontology, where context goes beyond Bevir's account of inherited traditions and social conditions. My suggestion is that Kovach's account offers a particularly compelling theory of interdependent contextualism, which disrupts decontextualized and positivist assumptions about the nature of human meaning and social organization. Kovach argues that meaning is situated not only within a contextualizing web of belief, but that it is also situated within a web of experience imbued with relationships to other living things and land. Not only are humans, in Taylor's terms, self-interpretive beings, but they are also rooted relationally. Whereas Bevir describes individuals as situated within "inherited traditions", Kovach goes further to emphasize that individuals are also situated within relations to land, kin, and beyond (2021, 89). In other words, the holism that Kovach invokes goes beyond meaning holism, to capture not only the interdependence of meaning but the interdependence of all life.

Although in Kovach's view interdependence of life is constant, relations of interdependence are in constant flux and fluidity (2021, 85, 214). Thus, webs of meaning and webs of relationality are dynamic, as they are constructed, re-evaluated, and modified. Relationships between concepts and the meanings that imbue such relationships are coherent in reference to a particular context of both webs of meaning and relationality. These social and relational phenomena cannot be understood through positivist or naturalist appeals to inalienable laws or structures. Such an understanding of context informs Kovach's overarching commitment to interpretive and historicist methodologies. Kovach, then, offers a rich account of the context of Indigenous agents, situated not only within traditions of thought and practice, but within relationships to place and other living beings.

Taken together, I suggest that Kovach's contextualism and Smith's account of creative agency contribute a compelling conceptual framework that resists both the objectification of Indigenous peoples and positivist decontextualism. Through their ontological accounts of processes of Indigenous resistance and struggle, they narrate social and political change as driven by creative and relational Indigenous agents, operating in the face of uncertainty, instability, and assault, to claim space, maintain epistemologies, and bring about their imagined futures. I further suggest that both Smith and Kovach's ontological commitments to, and their conceptual elucidation of, contextualism and human agency are compelling and valuable beyond each of their particular epistemic contexts. This is not to say that Smith nor

Kovach advocate that their ontological theories be generalized or universalized, but rather that they offer compelling insights that may be respectfully taken up by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars alike to inform research by, with, and for the margins. Throughout the following sections, I will return to these ontological insights contributed by Kovach and Smith, consider how they might specifically come to bear on interpretive or explanatory narratives of Indigenous marginalization in academic political theory.

3.4 Explaining Indigenous Marginalization in Political Practice: Structuralist Themes, Agency, and Context

Many Indigenous theorists have offered explanatory accounts of the processes and practices of settler-colonial politics that act to constrain, marginalize, or oppress Indigenous peoples. Such theories often maintain both elements of structuralist themes, and some acknowledgment or implied assumption of Indigenous peoples' creative agency and contextualism. This section considers what might be learned from some existing accounts of Indigenous marginalization in settler states about the treatment and presence of Indigenous political thought and Indigenous peoples in academic political theory.

First, I want to clarify what I understand as structuralist themes. Structuralism is most clearly identifiable when one invokes a stable and deterministic structure, whether a structure of knowledge, power, relations, or otherwise. However, Bevir suggests that some theorists maintain identifiable structuralist themes, even when they acknowledge the instability and contestability of these structures (2010, 424). Two of these themes are closely associated with the linguistic formalism of Ferdinand de Saussure, who was motivated by a positivist goal of establishing linguistics as a science. The first theme is a differential theory of meaning, where the meaning of words can be defined in relation to other words in a language. This theory of meaning stands in contrast to referential theories of meaning, where the meaning of words is defined by their relationship to an extra-linguistic object or phenomena, or a contextualist theory of meaning, where the meanings of words are defined in relation to a relevant web or network of beliefs (Wiley 2006). Differential theories of language or meaning are structuralist in that they indicate that a language has a particular structure, where a word maintains its relationship to other words in the language.

A second structuralist theme advocated by Saussure, and adopted later by both structuralists and post-structuralists, is a preference for synchronic explanation. Synchronic explanations seek to understand a language or other phenomenon in a particular moment, without explicit attention to change across time or context (Wiley 2006). Synchronic explanations of meaning are consistent with a differential theory of language, since the differential view a language assumes fixed relationships amongst words that should not vary across time or space. Thus, analyzing a social or political object of study at any one particular moment should produce a similar explanation of meaning. Synchronic explanations therefore

often appeal to various relatively stable structures, systems, or models to explain political or social outcomes, phenomena, discourses, or meanings. As Bevir points out, a "synchronic focus often leads to somewhat reified and homogeneous accounts of modern power, with little sensitivity to diversity, heterogeneity, and resistance within and over time" (2010, 425). Saussure's synchronic explanations stand in contrast to diachronic explanations, the latter of which seek to explain meaning or other social phenomena as it changes over time (Wiley 2006). Diachronic explanations typically rely on genealogical or historical methods, often acknowledging contingency, contestation, and ruptures. In their appeals to contextualism and relationality, Kovach resists the decontextualism of synchronic explanations and differential theories of meaning. The web of interdependent relationality that is, in Kovach's view, the central ethos of Indigenous epistemologies, are animate and shifting over time, and thus stand in tension with synchronic explanations (2021, 83).¹

Finally, the third structuralist theme identified by Bevir is a hostility to, suspicion, or neglect of human agency. Often, rather than being explicitly hostile to ideas of human agency, this theme appears as a general omission of reference to the creative or novel actions of individual actors in explanations of social outcomes. Although this theme was not articulated by Saussure explicitly, acknowledgment of individual actions and their implications is generally inconsistent with both a synchronic approach to explanation and a differential theory of meaning. Many explanations of Indigenous people's marginality that is informed by settler-colonial theories invoke one or more of these structuralist themes, particularly as much of settler-colonial theorizing is explicitly structuralist.

Some examples of theories of Indigenous marginalization offered by Indigenous scholars were introduced and discussed in previous chapters. For example, Coulthard's theory of Indigenous dispossession discussed in the previous chapter offers an explanatory narrative of the political and material condition of Indigenous peoples in settler states. Coulthard's account has been broadly influential, and as was made clear in the previous chapter, offers important insights for the considerations of the present project. Coulthard argues in their book Red Skin, White Masks that there are two key features of colonial domination in settler states, which both helps us explain the persistence of colonial domination, and provides insight for projects of decolonization and Indigenous political transformation and resistance. First, the process of Indigenous marginalization in Canada is primarily one of capitalist dispossession. Adapting Marx's original theory of primitive accumulation of capital in a dialogical engagement with Indigenous critical thought, Coulthard argues that primitive accumulation is not only an initial event in the founding of capitalism (2014). Rather, primitive accumulation is a continual necessity for the ongoing reproduction of capitalist modes of production. Capitalist systems of settler-colonialism are then predicated on the ongoing dispossession of both Indigenous people's lands and authority to self-determination.

This dispossession need not be explicitly violent or coercive, but can instead be maintained insidiously through the naturalization and internalization of settler-colonial hierar-

¹This analysis could also benefit from further consideration of how non-linear Indigenous temporalities might inform our choice of explanatory narratives (Rifkin 2017).

chies. This is where Coulthard argues for a second key feature of colonial domination in contemporary settler-states. Coulthard suggests that politics of recognition in settler-states reproduce the naturalized hierarchies of capitalist dispossession. The colonized grow increasingly attached to forms of master-sanctioned recognition and internalize colonial relationships of dispossession. One of Coulthard's key insights here is that in the real-world contexts of existing domination, exchanges of recognition amongst unequal partners, the "terms of accommodation usually end up being determined by and in the interests of the hegemonic partner in the relationship" (2014, 17). Thus, Coulthard argues that over the last forty years of Indigenous efforts to obtain state recognition to Indigenous rights to land and self-government in Canada have "encouraged the opposite" (2014, 24). Contemporary liberal politics of recognition will continue to reproduce colonial state power and domination, assimilating Indigenous political efforts to reproduce colonial state power.

In a bid to avoid economic reductionism, Coulthard acknowledges that capitalism interacts with other oppressive social relations—patriarchy, white supremacy, and totalizing state power—to produce and sustain colonial structures, behaviors, and relationships. Colonial power-relations interact, in Coulthard's view, with other axes of power to facilitate the reproduction of relatively stable and unchanging structures of domination, where hierarchical social relations facilitate ongoing dispossession of Indigenous people, even when liberal politics of recognition seek to conceal such dispossession.

In both their capitalist critique and their theory of the production of Indigenous people's attachments to "structurally circumscribed modes of recognition," Coulthard's explanatory narrative of Indigenous oppression maintains some structuralist themes (2014, 18). Although Coulthard's analysis speaks to a specific historical context, he presents some material and social relations of capitalist settler-colonial states as structurally fixed or necessary across contexts. For example, the capitalist mode of production and settler-colonial social relations are both inherently and necessarily structured by the practice of dispossession through primitive accumulation (Coulthard 2014, 151-152). Although Coulthard acknowledges that dispossession may be variably overt or covert, violent or noncoercive, he narrates a relatively ahistorical necessity of primitive accumulation in capitalist settler-colonial states.

At the same time, Coulthard narrative implies that Indigenous peoples have capacity for creative imagining and agency despite these structural constraints. Coulthard's Fanonian account of resurgence politics relied on the ability of the colonized to creatively turn away from state-sanctioned forms of recognition and towards self-affirmation and struggle towards freedom on one's own terms. Agency, in their account, seems to be most possible in this turning-away, or in the evasion or transformation of internalized colonialism and ideological attachments. Under the structural, material constrains of settler-colonial dispossession, Indigenous people's attempts to work within or transfigure settler-colonial society and the liberal politics of recognition will be constrained by, and may even reproduce, those same structures of dispossession. Therefore, Indigenous agency is somewhat limited within the socio-material structures of the settler-state, in Coulthard's account, which informs their suggestion that Indigenous people collectively turn towards prefigurative politics of self and collective recognition.

Coulthard's central suggestion is one of Indigenous resurgence, grounded in a refusal to engage with the settler-state and its forms of recognition that reinscribe Indigenous dispossession. Yet, Coulthard also considers the question of whether Indigenous people should vacate state negotiations and participation entirely, and explains:

Of course not. Settler-colonialism has rendered us a radical minority in our own homelands, and this necessitates that we continue to engage with the state's legal and political system. What our present condition does demand, however, is that we begin to approach our engagements with the settler-state legal apparatus with a degree of critical self-reflection, skepticism, and caution that has to date been largely absent in our efforts. It is only by privileging and grounding ourselves in... normative lifeways and resurgent practices that we have a hope of surviving our strategic engagements with the colonial state with integrity and as Indigenous peoples. (Coulthard 2014, 179)

For Coulthard, there remains some hope for Indigenous capacity to disrupt settler-colonial processes of Indigenous dispossession and subjectification. Ultimately, they critique the effectiveness of an engagement with the state that interpolates "the legal and political discourses of the state," but leaves open the possibility for the transformative power of Indigenous acts of agency grounded in critical self-reflection and Indigenous epistemologies (Coulthard 2014, 179).

As was discussed in the previous chapter, Coulthard's theory offers what I think are valuable general political insights regarding the experiences of Indigenous peoples in setter-states. Such insights are relevant to the present research as all questions of academic political theory in settler states are embedded in broader political contexts and relationships. Coulthard's attention, for example, to land and Indigenous struggles for land seems to capture the sentiment of many other Indigenous scholars and political thinkers, and their emphasis on the economic processes of Indigenous dispossession of both Indigenous land and authority are compelling. Coulthard also, alongside the work of Alfred and other Indigenous theorists, make a convincing case for the limitations of state-sanctioned practices of recognition.

Before discussing Coulthard's explanatory narrative approach in the context of Smith and Kovach's ontological insights, I want to briefly note other contributions made by other Indigenous scholars to our understanding of the domination or marginalization of Indigenous peoples in setter-state political practice. As another example, Taiaiake Alfred, as discussed in the previous chapters, offers a number of important insights for understanding settler-state oppression. Alfred argues that one of the key processes of this oppression is the imposition of non-Indigenous values and governance systems on Indigenous peoples, which are often at odds with traditional Indigenous political values and practices. A key part of the reason such oppression continues in contemporary politics of settler-states is the adoption of non-Indigenous values by Indigenous political leaders (Alfred 2005b; Alfred 1995). Alfred thus offers a number of insights for understanding Indigenous political domination in settler states; denied the freedom to live according to their own values and practices, Indigenous

peoples have been forced to adopt dominant political practice and cultures. As many Indigenous leaders have grown accustomed to these imposed political cultures, some begin to reinforce and endorse practices and values that are inconsistent with earlier Indigenous political traditions.

Although I think both Coulthard and Alfred's accounts offer invaluable insights, I have some concerns about assumptions adopted by each scholar in their explanatory narratives. In particular, I think that putting Coulthard's explanatory narratives into conversation with Smith and Kovach's theories reveals a number of ontological tensions, as well as opportunities for an increased attention to Indigenous agency and contextualism in narratives of Indigenous marginality or oppression in settler-states. The primary tensions brought to bear through this conversation concern agency and structure, an enduring tension that extends to debates well beyond the confines of this particular encounter of theorists. Although neither Smith nor Kovach articulate a strong disavowal of structuralist explanations, their respective centering of creative agency and contextualism pose challenges for narratives of structuralist constraint.

Although Coulthard's analysis includes both explicit appeals to relatively stable and unchanging structures of capitalist settler colonial states, and the capacity of Indigenous peoples to act creatively, particularly outside of state-sanctioned practices of recognition, their account of Indigenous marginalization relies largely, in my interpretation, on an explanatory narrative grounded in structuralist themes. The explanatory power of their account of primitive accumulation depends, in part, on appeals to a necessary structural practice of capitalist states, where Indigenous lands, as well as labor and authorities of self-determination, must be continuously appropriated. While claims to the consistency of economic practices of primitive accumulation in settler-states are likely to be historical defensible, Coulthard's argument is not communicated in interpretive historicist terms, but is instead largely synchronic.

My primary concern with appeals to synchronic explanations in Coulthard's work is that, though Indigenous people's capacities for agency are acknowledged at times, the centering of structural constraints often minimizes such capacities. Such a decentering of situated agency stands in tension with the ontological claims of creative agency centered in the work of both Smith and Kovach. As Smith notes, abstracted accounts of the structural or universal characteristics of oppression are not accurate to the lived realities of the "dirtiness" of political struggle, where "The end result cannot be predetermined. The means to the end involve human agency in ways that are complex and contradictory" (2012, 188). In appealing to relatively stable structures, Coulthard's abstracted accounts seems to me to overlook these contingent processes of social struggle, and therefore also neglect an important aspect of social change. While the concept of "structures" may be a useful explanatory tool at an abstracted and generalized level, "structures" are not immutable, but contestable within contextualized, relational, lived experience. None of this is to say that Coulthard's theoretical contributions are significantly undercut by their structuralist themes. Rather, my suggestion here is that their work be interpreted with an attention to relationally situated Indigenous acts of creative agency.

When we minimize or omit Indigenous agency from our political narratives, I would like to suggest, we take a number of ethical and political risks. When theorizing Indigenous

marginalization, a decentering of human agency can amount to a particular underemphasis or neglect of the capacity of Indigenous individuals to act as situated agents. In focusing on synchronic explanations, Coulthard at times narrates Indigenous peoples as operating within a given structure of which they are very unlikely or even unable to change the relatively fixed nature. When we instead adopt a diachronic explanatory approach, and recognize the creative capacity for individuals to act as situated agents, the ethical implications of a rejection of Indigenous agency becomes clear. If we fail to center Indigenous agency, our theories can position Indigenous individuals as hostage to their social and political context. This both misrecognizes Indigenous peoples' human capacities and minimizes the extent to which Indigenous people are already political agents who have and continue to modify their inherited traditions and social worlds. Similarly, I have some concerns about the implications and accuracy of narratives the center Indigenous co-option or subjectification as a key explanatory factor in Indigenous domination, which I will not expand on here.

Acknowledging this ethical problem of minimizing Indigenous peoples as creative agents, cultural historian Isaiah Wilner argues that we have failed to recognize the history of Indigenous influence by characterizing Indigenous actions primarily as reactive responses to "Western incursions" (2013, 88). By revisiting histories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous intellectual interactions in Canada, Wilner and Western Shoshone historian Ned Blackhawk find that through "their agency as makers, shapers, and long-distance communicators of worlds of thought—Indigenous people contributed to the formation of global consciousness: the modern perception that the world is one and that all people belong equally to it" (Blackhawk and Wilner 2018, 3). As Wilner puts it, when we assume total dominance of ideas and forces associated with the settler-state and colonizers, "In effect, the state wins twice—first with the sword and then with the pen" (2013, 88). My suggestion, is that even when we destabilize the totalizing power of structural constraints or dominations, explanatory narratives that center structures as a key factor in causing Indigenous domination can also risk misrecognizing Indigenous people's past and present influence.

Minimizing or decentering human agency in favor of structuralist themes poses not only ethical problems for our interpretations and representations of Indigenous people's past and present capabilities and actions, but can also have contemporary and ongoing political consequences. When we neglect situated agency, we may identify closures where they need not exist, limiting our own political imaginations and narratives. When narrating an inescapable structure of political constraints, the primary options for political resistance or change are typically either to completely withdraw from structurally constrained political processes or to radically remake current political structures, whether conceptual or material. Such narratives limit our imagined futures and normative judgments of what is politically possible, and in the process, can become beliefs that then go on to inform political actions and behaviors that are equally limited. Consequently, by narrating necessary structural constraints to Indigenous people's agency, we may inform political actions that act to reinscribe the marginality or lack of agency of Indigenous people in Canada. These possible political consequences are perhaps the foremost reason to seek theories of Indigenous marginalization in Canada that avoid structuralist themes or that explicitly and consistently narrate structures

as unstable and contestable.

However, a centering of Indigenous agency does not mean that material circumstances should not be considered in our explanatory approaches. An alternative approach to a reliance on structuralist themes could adopt a contextual theory of meaning and diachronic explanation to account for social inheritance, and the challenges of such inheritance, without minimizing Indigenous agency and the contestability and contingency of our social worlds. Social organizations of material production and consumption are part of the inherited beliefs, practices, and relations that we can understand agents and communities to be situated within. Of course, there are material realities, needs, and constraints of life that cannot be transcended by amending or contesting social and political practices, but our practices and traditions of interacting with materiality are socially mediated. Like other social relations, economic practices are contingent, unstable, and continually remade by the individuals and communities who engage such practices. Despite this contestability, there may still be substantial historical evidence to narrate the persistence of particular economic practices, relationships of power, and so on. Even still, such historical factors and the challenges they pose can be effectively communicated without implying or explicitly relying on structuralist themes.

Herein lies an opportunity for an explanatory approach that could account for both Indigenous people's agency, their relationality, and the contextualizing social inheritance of material conditions, relations, practices, and beliefs, while neither taking Indigenous agency as unrestrained autonomy, nor material or relational conditions as ahistorical and immutable. Instead of explaining Indigenous marginality in political theory and practice primarily in terms of structures, whether structures of knowledge, power, relationships, or institutions, or by relying on structuralist themes, I suggest that political theorists would benefit from explanatory, historicist narratives of creative agents situated in relational, historical, material, and spatial contexts. The suggestion here is grounded in an ontological claim that contextualized and relationally situated agents have the capacity to resist and remake their social meanings and social worlds. This ontological commitment is also intertwined with an ethical and political commitment to centering Indigenous historical and ongoing capacity for creative agency and effective struggle. Such a commitment does not result in methodological prescription. However, diachronic explanations are well suited to account for a contextualist or relational accounts of meaning that incorporate various historical, genealogical, narrative, and interpretive approaches.

Historicist and genealogical approaches can also lend themselves to a historicist mode of critique, denaturalizing particular social and political outcomes, beliefs, or discourses through an emphasis on nominalism, partiality, and the contingency of meaning, beliefs, actions, and historical events (Bevir 2015). We can take such a historicist and interpretive approach to critically narrating histories or genealogies of oppressive or marginalizing practices, in reference to contingent and contested traditions and the beliefs of individuals whose actions make up such practices. The critical self-reflection and self-recognition that Coulthard advocates Indigenous people undertake can thus be forwarded without appeals to structuralist themes or synchronic explanations.

3.5 Political Theory and Explaining Indigenous Marginalization

Just as some scholars have offered explanatory theories of Indigenous marginalization and oppression in settler-colonial states, other have offered analysis of the role of political theory texts and practices of academic political theory in perpetuating, reinforcing, or justifying broader practices of colonial domination and oppression of Indigenous peoples in contemporary settler-colonial states. One of the purposes of such historical analyses is typically to contribute to existing efforts to unearth and reckon with the colonial and imperial baggage of the discipline. With a better understanding of this baggage, political theorists might be better prepared to renew respectful relationships with others, and with Indigenous people in particular. The purpose of this section is to consider what we can learn from existing works that investigate the relationship of political theory to political practices that marginalize or oppress Indigenous peoples. In particular, however, my interest here is in a narrower question of what such works contribute to understanding the roles of political theory scholarship and disciplinary practices in informing or enabling contemporary political theory discourses that fail to take the challenges posed by Indigenous political thinkers to settler-state legitimacy seriously.

In their book *Indigeneity and Political Theory*, Karena Shaw analyzes the ways in which sovereignty discourses legitimize certain colonial practices in Canada, and enable or disable the political possibilities of Indigenous peoples navigating such political practices (2008). One of Shaw's central claims is that sovereignty discourses frame contemporary politics and understandings of what counts as "the political," and that such an understanding of the political naturalizes the marginalization of Indigenous peoples as different. Shaw begins their investigation into these discourses with an analysis of Thomas Hobbes' narrative of the construction of the sovereign state, demonstrating that it is not Hobbes' depiction of the pre-social "savages" of America that is key to understanding the ongoing reproduction of Indigenous marginality, but rather, the grounding assumptions undergirding his production of sovereignty (2008, 19).

Shaw explains that in the first book of *Leviathan*, Hobbes produces and naturalizes an ontology, where the production of knowledge, progress, and culture all depend on a shared epistemology of right reason and the right use of language. In his narrative of human nature, men have different passions but are equal in their constant pursuit of such passions and desires, and it is the differences in passions and desires that leads to conflict and violence amongst men. Naturalizing this state of nature, Hobbes sets up the necessity of a common authority to achieve peace. With this, Hobbes can now introduce the sovereign commonwealth, which will not only provide the common authority necessary for peace and order, but will also bind men together with a shared epistemology that enables common identity, reason, science, and progress. It is only after the sovereign is established and its authority is accepted that politics, the negotiation of rights and duties between subjects and their sovereign, emerges. The construction of the sovereign and its exclusions is itself portrayed as

a natural and necessary, rather than political, act. Of central importance to Shaw's analysis is Hobbes' articulation of the location of modern politics, where politics can only be imagined in the sovereign state. Indigenous people mark the boundaries of this sovereign state, as others living without sovereignty who Hobbes produces as different.

Shaw goes on to identify a Hobbesian discourse of sovereignty in historical practices of state building in North America, in the state's treatment of Indigenous people in Canada and the United States, and in Indigenous people's political and legal claims. Despite varying contexts and histories, Shaw identifies a common core of sovereignty discourses, where sovereignty requires "a core of agreement, a resonance, and identity" (2008, 57). This identity is one of necessary superiority to Indigenous people on the outside of sovereignty, since it is by virtue of being different from the outside, and being superior, that the sovereign has legitimate authority. This architecture consistently works to legitimize violence against Indigenous people as an inevitable cost of maintaining the necessary and naturalized sovereign state.

For Shaw, the stable core of sovereignty discourses, and their instrumentality in legit-imizing current political organizations, means that Indigenous peoples often engage in contemporary politics in ways that take up these sovereignty discourses. Sovereignty discourses thus become both the enabling and limiting condition for these forms Indigenous politics. Shaw writes that, "despite their flexibility and malleability... the discourses and practices of sovereignty continue to re inscribe themselves as the limit condition of political possibility, and to shape all options for political forms and expressions. Even those who have struggled most fiercely to evade these necessities, to reconstitute them, to resist their violences, still struggled to re articulate them in progressive ways" (Shaw 2008, 204). Yet, Shaw also notes that Indigenous political movements struggle against the closures of sovereignty discourses and assumed processes of legitimating authority. For Shaw there is no alternative, no "outside" to sovereignty discourses, yet through immanent critique and engagement with the critiques posed by Indigenous peoples, political theorists may open possibilities for problematizing and rearticulating what we take to be the political, challenging the violence of sovereignty discourses (2008, 206).

Shaw's analysis considers both the impacts of sovereignty discourses on political practice and, to some extent, on political theoretical scholarship. In my view, they offer some valuable insights for considering how political theorists typically reinforce the marginalization of Indigenous politics and the political challenges posed by Indigenous peoples in political discourses, and how political theorists might respond to such marginalization. As Shaw suggests, Indigenous peoples have typically been produced in contemporary political discourses as outside of modern politics. This is perpetuated, at least in part, by historically persistent assumptions about what counts as the political, which naturalize assumptions about both those outside of the sovereign state as different and the authority of the state as settled. These narratives of sovereignty have produced Indigenous peoples in particular as outside of the political, and have historically legitimated violences against Indigenous peoples. Yet, one of Shaw's key conclusions is that Indigenous politics and struggles require political theorists to respond not with acts of "inclusion," but by disrupting and reconceptualizing damag-

ing concepts and political discourses which Indigenous peoples are struggling against (2008, 207-209).

Thus, similar to the calls made by both Farah Godrej and Sarah Hunt discussed in the previous chapters, Shaw suggests that political theorists work to critically destabilize and reconceptualize dominant political discourses and ontologies, not just at the margins but at the center of political theory. Without such work, and by continuing to leave assumption of what constitutes the political intact, Shaw suggests that Indigenous peoples' struggles and ontologies will continue to be reinscribed as marginal. In their view, the challenges posed by Indigenous struggles to the legitimate authority of the state and to dominant assumptions about the political are "the question of the day," noting that other political sites also seriously throw into question many dominant ontological assumptions about the constitution of political authority (Shaw 2008, 212).

James Tully has also provided an account of the ways in which political theory and political discourses and ontologies have contributed to the oppression of Indigenous peoples and the marginalization of Indigenous political struggles. Their focus is primarily on the political outcomes of certain traditions of political thought for Indigenous peoples, but their analysis also provides valuable insights for understanding how traditions of political theory have contributed to the erasure of Indigenous political cultures within political theory discourses.

In Strange Multiplicity, Tully offers an analysis of the language of modern constitutionalism (1995). Also discussing the ideas and language introduced by Hobbes, Tully suggests that one of the central assumptions of modern constitutionalism is that nations should be politically organized as independent states, where the nation-state is culturally homogenous and unified. This, in Tully's view, was informed by a now outdated understanding of cultures as internally unified and bounded, where there are "exotic and incommensurable others in distant lands and at different stages of historical development" (1995, 11). This view of culture also assumes a view of history as the universal progression or evolution of nations towards the ideal of nation-states. This view of history and culture enabled European imperialism and a deafness to other cultures; seeing European cultures as the culmination of historical progress, Europeans could justify imposing their political cultures on others.

In my view, such a belief in historical progress and the universal applicability of European political culture helps to explain the ongoing misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples in some contemporary political theory discourses. The following section builds off of the insights of both Shaw and Tully to offer an interpretive, historicist account of the misrepresentation and exclusion of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought in academic political theory discourses.

3.6 An Interpretive Narrative of Marginalization

The accounts of Indigenous marginalization discussed thus far have focused primarily on explaining factors that have contributed to the marginalization and oppression of Indigenous peoples in contemporary political practice in settler-states. Tully and Shaw's analyses both consider explicitly how political discourses and works of political theory in particular have contributed to the marginalization of Indigenous peoples in practice, and also consider how theorists might undertake works of political theory that avoid reinscribing such outcomes. In conversation with these existing accounts, the current section of this chapter considers how traditions of belief and practice in academic political theory have contributed to the marginalization, omission, or representation of Indigenous political thought and ontologies in academic political theory discourses and institutions in particular.

This question, which is narrower than considerations of how broad political outcomes of oppression and marginalized are perpetuated, is of interest in this chapter because it can help theorists understand some of the barriers to supporting a meaningful presence of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political thought in the discipline. The assumption here is that by increasingly understanding the beliefs and practices that have enabled or supported the exclusion or misrepresentation of Indigenous political thought in the discipline, theorists will be better equipped to reflexively respond to and navigate their inherited traditions and the academic contexts they work within. This focus does not suggest that understanding broader political, imperial, and colonial entanglements of political theory is not also valuable. However, I think there is also much to be learned from looking more closely at the impacts of traditions of political thought on processes of academic knowledge production and authorization. Further, it is also worth noting that studying academic traditions relevant to disciplinary political theory is just one way we might better understand political theory's omissions and representations of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous thought.

This section takes an interpretive and historical approach informed by the ontological insights of Kovach and Smith discussed earlier in this chapter. The brief historical investigation I offer here focuses primarily on the ongoing impacts and resonances of the developmental historicist tradition of political thought. It is informed by both primary historical documents and the secondary literature on developmental historicism and the founding of disciplinary political theory and anthropology. I argue that persistent and redeployed beliefs associated with the tradition of developmental historicism can explain, in large part, contemporary political theory practices that engage Indigenous topics, which were discussed in the previous chapter. In particular, the narrative offered here explains anglophone approaches to political theory that frame Indigenous political aspirations as claims to the state, which also typically fail to take the challenges posed by Indigenous political thinkers to settler-state legitimacy seriously. The narrative offered here shares some of the key points also made by Tully and Shaw about dominant assumptions about the authority of the state and about what constitutes the political, and the underpinning of such assumptions in beliefs of linear progress and culture.

Developmental historicism is a tradition of thought, where history is framed in evolutionary or organic terms, where civilizations progress along a linear path. Inspired by Whig historiography that highlighted the exceptionalism of anglo-saxon heritage and ideas of organicism, the culmination of this development was typically seen as the unfolding and triumph of ideals. Most often, these were the ideals of nationality and freedom, which were seen as necessarily culminating in a natural unit of advanced society, the nation state (Bevir

2006). Seeing civilizations as linearly progressing towards the nation state, some developmental historicist sought to categorize civilizations into hierarchical stages of growth or development.

The developmental historicist tradition dominated the human sciences from at least 1880 to the 1920s, but can be traced back much further, prior to the founding of the academic disciplines found in Canada and the United States today. For example, throughout the 17th century, philosophers often believed that the social world could be understood in terms of natural laws, which if accessed appropriately through reason, could guide civilizational progress. Rather than progress being ensured by an evolutionary process, these early developmental historicists saw progress as a necessary and linear process propelled by the correct use of reason or divine providence. Such frameworks were consistent with racialized claims about the apolitical or developmentally inferior nature of Indigenous societies.

The emergence of political studies and anthropology departments in the late 19th century reflected the continued prominence of the developmental historicist tradition. The history of the discipline of anthropology is particularly revealing, since it was specifically developed as the appropriate discipline from which to study less developed, apolitical Indigenous societies. The institutionalization of ethnological, anthropological, and Volkerkunde studies in the mid-19th century originated, in part, from the Aborigines' Protection Society, which was founded by members of British Parliament and Quaker activists in 1837. The purpose of the society was to preserve Indigenous populations in British Colonies, usually through civilizing projects of assimilation, which included providing protection and health care, and the granting of equal rights (Nworah 1971).

Some members of the Aborigines' Protection Society helped to form sister and offshoot ethnological societies, which would later evolve into contemporary academic anthropological associations. Members of the society worked to establish a sister society in France in 1839, the Société Ethnologique, which was soon followed by their founding of the American Ethnological Society in 1842. In 1843, the Ethnological Society of London was founded, whose purpose was to advance understanding on human difference through the science of race and, in some cases the science of nations (Davis 1868). In the United States and England, these societies evolved into contemporary academic anthropology associations that persist into the 21st century.

When institutionalized ethnology and anthropology first emerged in the mid-19th century, many ethnologists and anthropologists were inspired by evolutionary theories, which reinforced their inherited traditions of developmental historicism. Many were focused on the documentation and cataloguing of races or nations at various stages of evolutionary development. For example, in his 1871 writing on primitive culture, early cultural anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor argued that all societies passed through necessary stages from savagery, to barbarism, and then to civilization (2016). For nearly a century, from the Aborigines' protection society, until the early and mid-20th century, anthropologists widely accepted some form of developmental historicism, and anthropology or ethnology was accepted as the appropriate discipline from which to study and document these uncivilized Indigenous peoples, their customs, philosophies, and beliefs.

Beginning in the early and mid-20th century, some anthropologists, such as Franz Boas, began to explicitly question, critique, and offer alternatives to this developmentalism or primitivism (Hsu 1964). By the 1960s, political anthropological studies of complex nation-states societies became widely accepted, opening up anthropologists' focus on primitive societies to the broader study of societies of all levels of political complexity.

Political studies departments emerged somewhat later than anthropology departments, with a focus on addressing questions of developed nation-state civilizations. In their historical investigation into the origins of academic political theory, John G. Gunnell argues that founder of systematic political studies in the United Sates was Francis Lieber, a German émigré who worked at South Carolina College and Columbia University (1993). Gunnell argues that Lieber offered the first study of the United States as a state in their Manual of Political Ethics, published in volumes in 1838-1839. Lieber became the first official political scientist in the country after being appointed to a chair at Columbia University in 1857, which was, at Lieber's request, given a designation of History and Political Science. Lieber's views of political science and political theory were heavily influenced by the developmental historicism of European thought, and Lieber was a strong proponent of a developmental historicist account of the nation state. Throughout his career, he argued that the sovereign state was the highest form of society, and that the state was a natural condition of man, necessary for man's development. He saw progress towards the state as evolutionary, with both the United States and England representing the culmination of this ideal (Gunnell 1993).

In Gunnell's view, two other thinkers influenced the foundational assumptions about the state that would shape institutionalized political studies in the United Stated: Swiss scholar and politician Johann Kaspar Bluntschli and American theorists Theodore Woolsey (1993). Bluntschli theorized that the state was an organism that began with the emergence of the white race, and was both moral and spiritual. They also claimed that the nation-state, and in particular, representative democracy in America, was the culmination of evolution and historical progress. Bluntschli also viewed the white race as a key feature of the pinnacle of development. Gunnell suggests that Woolsey, who studied abroad in Germany and England, adopted much of both Bluntschli and Lieber's views, also believing that the state was a natural entity, one which created rights (1993, 35). Woolsey taught such beliefs in their work as a professor of Greek at Yale beginning in 1830, and later as the president of Yale from 1846-1870.

Throughout the mid-19th century, politics was primarily studied in a broad field of political philosophy curricula across the United Stated. However, in the 1880s, the first political science departments were founded, and the subfield of political theory became a distinct part of political science curricula, focusing on "the theory of the state and the history of political thought" (Gunnell 1993, 35). The first Faculty of Political Science in the United States was founded by John Burgess in 1880, who wrote that the "nation state is the consummation of political history" (1934, 247). University of California, Berkeley's Department of History and Political Science was founded in 1883 by Bernard Moses, who was also a developmental historicist, writing about the nature and evolution of the state in

organicist terms. The earliest political science departments assumed that the territorially bounded and sovereign nation-state was the natural location of "the political," with most of the emerging curricula focused on professional training for civil-servants and the positivist science of state government.

Both political theory and other subdisciplines of political science were thus founded squarely within a developmental historicist tradition of thought, assuming the state as a natural culmination of human and societal development. Although it was not always explicit, the tradition often involved racial assumptions about the state as a product of white societies, which were seen as evolutionarily superior to other races. It is also worth noting that some political thinkers during the same time period wrote express critiques of these dominant statist developmental narratives, but such works had minimal recognition or impact in the academic dialogues of emerging political science departments (see, for example, Bakunin 1990).

The dominance of developmental historicist traditions and political scholars' associated beliefs in grand narratives of progress persisted into the 20th century. In the 1930s, such beliefs were clearly ascribed to within the American Political Science Association (APSA) and dominant texts of the field. For example, in the 1937 text A History of Political Theory, George Sabine argued that liberal democracy was the highest stage of social and human development. National socialism was merely an aberration on this progressive developmental path (Sabine and Thorson 2018). The same year, president of APSA and Harvard professor, Arthur Holcombe gave a presidential address, stating that the march of universal human progress was towards democratic republican ideas (Gunnell 1993, 130). The developmental historicist traditions persisted with a clear orientation towards liberal and democratic ideals.

By the end of the first world war, faith in these narratives became less ubiquitous as questions about the true progressive nature of history came to the fore. Nonetheless, the dominant traditions of political studies that followed evolved out of developmental historicism, retaining many of the traditions' beliefs. In the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, new modernist empiricist, positivist, and behavioralist approaches to political studies offered frameworks for studying the character and policies of territorial nation-states. Although the nation-state was no longer explicitly studied as the ideal and natural culmination of societal progress, most political scholarship of the twentieth century continued to take some version of the nation-state and its institutions as a primary object of study, implying the nation-state as a natural or ubiquitous unit of political society. This is not to say that representations of and beliefs about nation-states remained stable or continuous across the twentieth century, but there nonetheless remained a persistently redeployed assumption of the territorial nation-state as the location of the political, which had long been reinforced by developmental historicist.

Occupied with questions of the modern nation-state, there was little reason for political theorists to suspect that the study of Indigenous political theories would be relevant to their work. In the United States, Indigenous peoples were largely assumed to be assimilated into the dominant political order, and the so-called Indian problem thus solved. Rather than offering explicit characterizations of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous societies, political

theory scholarship of the mid-20th century remained overwhelmingly silent on topics of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous politics. When the Red Power movement started in the United States in the 1960s and continued throughout the 1970s, American political theorists paid little attention. We may view this as one result of the ongoing dislocation of academic political theory from contemporary political issues throughout the same period. Gunnell writes that "By the mid-1980s... political theory's concern with social relevance could be safely displaced into a range of philosophical projects" (1993, 276). Many of these philosophical projects concerned legitimizing the nation-state or reconciling the nation-state with liberal ideals, and largely ignored historically contextualized questions of internal or settler-colonization or the legitimacy of territorial jurisdiction of the state.

Returning to the topic of contemporary political theory, I suggest that many traditions of thought and practice inherited by contemporary political theorists maintain vestiges of developmental historicist traditions. In particular, dominant traditions of political thought often maintain two key assumptions of developmental historicism. First, despite a general renunciation of developmental historicisms' assumptions of hierarchical civilizational progress, many contemporary traditions of disciplinary political thought imply that the nation-state as the given unit of political society. It is through developmental historicist beliefs that the nation-state originally became the focus of political studies, and unlike the discipline of anthropology, there has been limited self-conscious disciplinary debate about how a rejection of developmental historicism might also put into question this statism.

There is a second common assumption across traditions of contemporary political theory I associate with the developmental historicist tradition. Contemporary political theorists tend to imply and even explicitly narrate Indigenous culture, what makes Indigenous peoples distinctive, as more or less apolitical. This assumption was originally associated with developmental historicist beliefs that Indigenous peoples' political organizations and societies are less than developed, when compared with the nation-states emerging in Europe and the New World. Politics and political history only started, in this view, when civilizations reach an advanced level of development. While this assumption is intertwined with the assumption that the nation-state is the location of "the political," it is a somewhat distinct assumption about the nature of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous society. Combined with the assumption that political science's rightful objects of study are nation-states, such a judgment of Indigenous societies put Indigenous peoples and their perspectives squarely outside the concern of political scholars. While this apolitical or non-state status was once an explicit claim of developmental historicists, contemporary theory scholarship typically fails to interrogate this assumption.

Both assumptions are recognizable across multiple areas of contemporary political theory scholarship. For example, contemporary political theorists of multiculturalism typically argue or imply that Indigenous culture can be fully accommodated for within settler-state institutions and political practices without discussion of whether Indigenous culture, political practices, and beliefs are compatible with ideas and practices of nation-state politics. Both assumptions, then, help to explain the dominance of contemporary approaches to Indigenous rights, recognition, and accommodation theories discussed in the previous chapter. These

embedded assumptions of developmental historicism in contemporary political scholarship may also help us explain the general lack of attention to Indigenous political thought by comparative political theorists. While such scholars have advocated for broader inclusion of thought from other nation-states, few theorists from settler-states have acknowledged the multiplicity of Indigenous nations and political ontologies within their own borders.

This initial explanatory narrative does not suggest that there is a developmental historicist episteme or institutional structure of the academy necessarily limiting political theorists' scope of study. Rather, it invites political theorists to critically examine and challenge their inherited traditions. Anthropologists have and continue to reckon with the traditions of developmental historicism that are intertwined with the disciplines founding, refiguring the discipline towards the study of all societies, rather than just the primitive or savage. This is not to say that a project of decolonizing anthropological studies has been completed or successful, rather that there are disparities between reflexive disciplinary understanding and acknowledgments of the developmental historicist legacy. A comparable project of this scale within political science, a reckoning with the disciplines' origins in imperial and colonial beliefs, may be warranted, but is only just beginning to be undertaken by political theorists. With this understanding of the historical reproduction of our inherited disciplinary beliefs and practices, we may be better equipped to critically examine the covert assumptions of developmental historicism in our own thinking.

Other scholars have also pointed to these dominant assumptions amongst political scholars as a cause of political science's exclusionary treatment of Indigenous politics, Indigenous peoples, and their political perspectives. For example, in the article 'Why Does Political Science Hate American Indians?' Kennan Ferguson argues that the nation-state is the default unit of analysis in political science, and that this default assumption is one of the central factors enabling political scientists' failure to consider Indigenous peoples (2016). Similarly, as discussed in the previous section, Tully's account of modern constitutionalism also emphasizes the cultural injustices rendered by assumptions of nation-states as the given unit of political society.

What I hope to add here is an initial historical explanation that traces the contingent historical reproduction of assumptions about the nation-state as the given unit of political study and the apolitical nature of Indigenous cultures in traditions of thought in political studies specifically. Shaw's account shares some similarities; they trace the dominance of discourses of sovereignty, which naturalize the sovereign state and the marginality of Indigenous peoples. The account I have offered though, in my view, is more consistent with the ontological insights I found compelling in the work of Kovach and Smith.

In my reading, Shaw's concept of discourses maintains some structuralist themes that decenter contextualism and creative, relationally-situated agency. For Shaw, there is a stable core of sovereignty discourses, a set of relationships between concepts, an episteme. Assuming a differential theory of meaning, Shaw can study sovereignty discourses somewhat synchronically, taking Hobbes' "paradigmatic" articulation of sovereignty as a model of the episteme, whose core conceptual relationships remains relatively stable across subsequent temporal and spatial contexts (2008, 17). Shaw does acknowledge variation in discourses

of sovereignty, but nonetheless maintains that they continue to produce and naturalize difference (2008, 8-9). Shaw's view of sovereignty discourses incorporates some elements of anti-naturalism insomuch as they acknowledge that the construction of the political was naturalized by Hobbes, but such a construction of the political has become stabilized, inscribed in our current political institutions and organizations. While there may be some possibilities for imminent critique, Indigenous political movements typically continue to operate within this naturalized political reality, which structurally depends on and re-inscribes Indigenous people's political marginalization.

The narrative of developmental historicism I focus on here, does not invoke a relatively stable epistemic structure. Rather, some of the assumptions originally naturalized within the developmental historicist traditions have been reproduced into new contexts, even as historical accounts of developmentalism have waned. By explicitly understanding the historical origins of our inherited traditions of thought as contingent, my intention is to center theorists' capacities to creatively critique and creatively decenter their inherited traditions. The contribution offered here is cursory, and it would be valuable to analyze in more detail the varied ways developmental historicist traditions continue to inform specific works of political theory scholarship and disciplinary practices today.

3.7 Conclusion

While narratives with structuralist themes can have significant strategic value, I argue that they enable an overemphasis of closures and a futility of Indigenous political action within and against settler-colonialism. As a consequence, such narratives of Indigenous marginality can reify or reinscribe the very political and social conditions of Indigenous people that they seek to disrupt. By adopting methods that assume a contextualist theory of meaning and relationality, and an Indigenous capacity for situated agency, comparative political theorists will be better equipped to develop explanatory narratives of disciplinary processes that have constrained, marginalized, oppressed, and misrecognized Indigenous people and their political perspectives. Such narratives can challenge homogenizing and totalizing explanatory narratives of Indigenous marginality by centering the historical and ongoing acts of Indigenous agency that have shaped and continue to shape contemporary politics and political thought.

Through anti-naturalist analyses of inherited but contestable traditions of practice and thought, an interpretive historicist approach can support mid-level explanatory theories of political outcomes in reference to traditions that informed the beliefs and actions of multiple individuals. Explanatory narratives of this approach would not invoke unchanging or stable traditions of thought or practice, but may nonetheless identify and trace traditions that have proliferated and evolved across contexts. As political theorists utilize these explanatory narratives to inform efforts of decolonization and engagement with Indigenous political theory, the resulting projects can be attentive to Indigenous agency and the historical, political, and relational contextualism of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous theorists.

Chapter 4

Indigenous Politics and Political Thought in British Columbia, Canada, 1849-1927

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the political history and general political traditions of thought contextualizing First Nations political leaders and organizers in British Columbia, Canada. In particular, it traces the recorded history of First Nations' political aspirations and anticolonial political organizing from the early colonial period until 1927. It identifies some key political theorists and traditions of political thought in the region, revealing the centrality and consistency of issues of Indigenous territorial rights and jurisdiction in the political theories of Indigenous leaders in British Columbia, as well as consistent political action to assert and defend such rights. This political organizing consistently involved coalition building amongst culturally, politically, and regionally varied British Columbia (BC) First Nations communities.

The specific goals of the research presented in this chapter are threefold. First, the goal of this research is to provide a historical narrative of Indigenous political actions and relevant non-Indigenous political actions throughout British Columbia. This historical account begins with the first European contact with Indigenous peoples of British Columbia, and recounts the political relationship between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous settlers, traders, and government from early contact until 1927. The historical narrative offered is linear, focusing primarily on Indigenous political actions and organizing, while also synthesizing relevant utterances that reveal Indigenous political thought throughout the history. Importantly, the goal here is not to provide a comprehensive general political history of early British Columbia, nor is it to provide a comprehensive history of BC politics relating to Indigenous peoples. Rather, the goal here is much narrower, focusing on the history of political actions taken by Indigenous peoples from 1849 until 1927.

The focus on this time period was chosen for two key reasons. First, based on my own experience growing up and studying in British Columbia, the early history of colonial and Indigenous politics in British Columbia does not seem to be commonly known or taught. For scholars working in the British Columbian context, there are general historical accounts of provincial history to turn to, but most general accounts do not provide detailed accounts of Indigenous politics, nor Indigenous perspective and political actions (see, for example, Barman 2007). Some other existing works analyzing the early history of British Columbia cover narrower relevant topics, including the making of the reserve system and dispossession of Indigenous peoples (Harris 2002; Harris 1997), racial politics and Asian immigration (Roy 1990), strategies of British imperialism in the province (Perry 2001), and the first years of British colonization in the province (Mackie 1992). There are two key works that focus on the early history of settler and Indigenous peoples and politics in the province, which are important resources for understanding the broad historical and political context of Indigenous politics in the province: Paul Tennant's Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989, published in 1990¹, and Robin Fisher's Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890, originally published in 1997 (Fisher 2011; Tennant 2011). However, both texts focus largely on actions taken by the settler government and missionaries, rather than on Indigenous actions and Indigenous perspective on historical events. Fisher acknowledges this themself in the preface of the most recent edition of their book (2011). In contrast, the history of Indigenous politics in the region from the mid-20th century onwards seems to me to be more generally known and studied. For example, a number of scholarly works detail Indigenous protest and political actions from the later 20th century (see, for example, Belanger and Lackenbauer 2014; Blomley 1996; Larsen 2008).

The second reason I focus on the period from 1849 to 1927 is that it provides valuable context for understanding more recent Indigenous political actions and political thought in the region. It's worth noting that the year 1927 also offers a natural stopping point for this first narrative account, as 1927 ushered in new federal policy that made most Indigenous political organizing in Canada illegal. The BC First Nations political history post-1927 shifted substantially in both content and form. It is particularly important context, as this period builds understanding of the early relationships, interactions, and conflicts between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous settlers in the province. Without a basic understanding of how the colonial project unfolded, and the responses of Indigenous peoples to settlements and colonial government, it would be difficult to understand the significance and longevity of ongoing Indigenous political actions and thought in the province. In particular, by recounting this history, I will suggest that Indigenous challenges to dominant forms of political thought and colonial political practice are not just emerging in the province, but have rather been persistent and clearly articulated by Indigenous peoples from the time of

¹The rigor and depth of Tennant's book is presently unmatched. The current chapter often references Tennant's historical account, particularly where Tennant's account depends on his original interviews with relevant Indigenous political actors. Tennant is also referenced where other important primary source materials could not be accessed.

early European settlement in the province onwards. Thus, the first goal of this chapter is to introduce a historical narrative of early Indigenous political actions in the province. I include brief descriptions of non-Indigenous and colonial government political actions, where such information is relevant for understanding Indigenous resistance and mobilization. The purpose of the historical narrative is closely connected to the second and third goals of the chapter.

Second, the goal is to identify any political beliefs or traditions of political thought that have been common or widely shared amongst Indigenous political leadership in British Columbia over time. Understanding the general intellectual context of political thought in the region could help us better understand contemporary politics and contemporary Indigenous theorists from British Columbia, and may provide new theoretical insights. This goal does not seek to find a stable tradition of Indigenous political thought, but rather investigates whether any dynamic and evolving traditions of thought have been particularly widespread or influential across politics in the region.

The third goal of the chapter is to identify and engage with selected Indigenous political theories across the history of Indigenous politics in British Columbia. Whereas the second goal was to identify any general traditions of political thought in the region, the third goal is to pause and further engage with particular political theories, either articulated by a group or by an individual political leader. There are few, if any, BC First Nations political thinkers who are formally studied as political theorists, nor is there substantial scholarship on Indigenous political thought of the region. The Canadian Indigenous theorists that are somewhat familiar to political scholars, such as Glen Coulthard or Leanne Simpson, are not from British Columbia and are contextualized by distinct political histories and Indigenous cultures. Consequently, most non-Indigenous political scholars currently have little understanding of Indigenous political thought from British Columbia, nor the Indigenous thought leaders of this region. Thus, both the second and third goals of the chapter are to contribute an initial account, however incomplete, of the history of Indigenous political thought from this region.

The political theories engaged more deeply in this chapter were selected because they seem to me to provide insights on either widely shared traditions of Indigenous political thought in the region, or to represent shifts, developments, or unique contributions to political thought amongst British Columbia First Nations. For each political theory looked at more closely, the chapter pauses to identify some of the key theoretical positions articulated by the relevant actors and to analyze the theoretical contribution or innovation of the theory. The broader historical narrative offered in the chapter provides interpretive context to both identify and analyze particular utterances of Indigenous political thought. However, each of the political theories looked at more closely were selected not only because of its historical or theoretical significance, but also because the historical moment has a historical written record that is insufficiently intact to allow for identification of Indigenous theoretical positions, claims, or insights. It is near certain that many Indigenous political theories across the history of British Columbia were not textually recorded. Engagements with other mediums of historical documentation, such as oral histories, are likely to provide insights

into Indigenous political theories of the region that are not accounted for in this chapter. Further, I characterize historical utterances of Indigenous peoples speaking to settler-state representative or audiences as often containing "Indigenous political thought" or "Indigenous political theory" with some apprehension. I do not mean to imply that what counts as political thought is defined by engagements with the state or imperial authorities. An investigation into Indigenous peoples speaking in their own languages within their own communities would also be a rich area of study to engage Indigenous political ontologies. My assumption is, however, that such work would require close relationship building with contemporary Indigenous communities, and considerable time and resources, making such work much more locally specific. To provide a regional analysis, as I hope to do in this chapter, is thus realistic to work with the written record in publicly available archives. I assume, then, that Indigenous peoples speaking or writing to settler-state or colonial authorities and audiences in English, a language that was new or foreign to many Indigenous peoples in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, nonetheless conveyed some of their political thought and ontologies in their utterances. Thus, what I look at more closely in this chapter is both impacted by the limitations and biases of the largely colonial written record, and my own limited and partial judgements about what articulations of Indigenous thought seem to convey an Indigenous political ontology, or seemed to add something new to political discourses in the region.

The first set of theories looked at in more detail in this Chapter are the political perspectives shared in the first three petitions made by First Nations chiefs to the colonial government in the 1860s. These petitions marked the first explicit efforts of BC First Nations to claim their title or ownership of their territories in the historical records I engaged. The second utterance of Indigenous political thought I focus on is found in the first transcribed meeting between First Nations leaders and provincial representatives, when Nisga'a and Tsimshian chiefs visited Victoria in 1887 to demand freedom on their own land, asserting their land ownership and territorial rights. Third, attention is given to a petition written by the Cowichan tribe in 1909, which offered a new legal approach to asserting territorial rights in reference to British laws. Fourth, and finally, dedicated attention is also given to a 1913 Nisga'a petition, which offered a detailed account of exclusive Aboriginal territorial rights and a novel account of Indigenous sovereignty. Both the Cowichan and Nisga'a petitions had significant impacts on the Indigenous organizing and claims that followed, catalyzing a new period of inter-tribal political collaboration.

It is important to note that this third goal of the chapter, engaging more closely with selected historical Indigenous political theories, does not claim to be comprehensive. First, there are many potential political theoretical utterances noted throughout this chapter that could be more closely engaged. This chapter aims to engage only a few examples, adding richness to the historical narrative. Second, the engagement with each of these examples is also limited. Because this chapter serves the dual purpose of offering a comprehensive historical narrative and engaging with some Indigenous theories, the discussion of individual theories is often brief and could benefit from more detailed analysis elsewhere.

Because this chapter focuses primarily on building understanding of political context and

broad epistemic context, future engagements would also benefit from closer attention to the relevant cultural context for each case of Indigenous political thought. A further limitation of the political thought identified in this chapter is that most examples engaged here emerge from Indigenous-settler state encounters, which are necessarily moments riddled by unequal power conditions. Unfortunately, publicly available historical archives offer minimal documentation of early post-contact Indigenous political meetings, statements, or utterances. Future engagements on this topic might benefit from working more closely with First Nations' private archives to identity other early accounts of Indigenous political thought that can be publicly shared, but that were not originally intended specifically for a settler-state

audience.

My reading of the historical record is also necessarily impacted by my own assumptions and positionality going into this research. As a non-Indigenous scholar without personal relationships with or connections to most of the First Nations peoples, cultures, and places I discuss in this chapter, my interpretations of each example of Indigenous political thought in this chapter are necessarily limited. Thus, my interpretations may misrepresent the meaning or significance intended by the speaker. Those with relationships to the historical figures identified in this chapter and those with connections to the relevant First Nations groups or communities are likely to have more insight into the cultural and relational meaning and significance of historical documentation of Indigenous political thought. Having lived for most of my life within the land now called British Columbia (primarily on Coast Salish territories of the shíshálh Nation and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw [Squamish Nation], and some brief time living and working in Xa'xtsa Nation [Douglas First Nation] and Skatin Nation territories), some of my personal relationships with land and peoples do inform my analysis, although I do not claim any form of expertise of First Nations cultures or places. More on my personal relationships, disciplinary background, theoretical assumptions, political biases, and how these impact the present work, can be found in the introductory chapter. Overall, I approach the historical record analyzed in this chapter with an attention to my own cultural inheritance of primarily non-Indigenous political theory concepts and language. Consequently, I aim to regularly offer Indigenous people's utterances in their own words, and I aim to interpret such utterances in relation to other examples of Indigenous political thought from proximate regions and periods, acknowledging that such efforts do not displace or counteract my own embedded assumptions and biases.

Necessarily, the three goals of the chapter are closely interwoven. For example, the history of Indigenous organizing in the region both facilitates the identification of Indigenous political thought and thinkers, and provides interpretive context for understanding these theories and the political outcomes such theories have informed. Other political theorists interested in Indigenous political thought may use this historical narrative as an entry point to engage more deeply with articulations of Indigenous political theories identified throughout the narrative, or key political actions which can be speculatively studied from a political theory lens.

The interwoven nature of the goals of the chapter also reveals a key theoretical orientation of the chapter. The approach taken here assumes that political practice and political the-

ory are mutually constructed and interdependent. Consequently, the approach to political theory taken here assumes that theory ought to be interpreted as both emerging from a relevant context of actions and pre-existing traditions of thought, and that theories also act to inform novel political actions. Although the present chapter does not explicitly consider the relationship between BC First Nations political thought and dominant historical traditions of political thought, the chapter is attentive to fact that Indigenous political thought over the period was contextualized not only by actions of the settler state, but by non-Indigenous traditions and concepts of political thought. While centering Indigenous political thought, some examples of Indigenous political thought considered in this chapter are discussed in relation to political thought embedded in the utterances of settler-state officials and representatives. Future analysis of this history could benefit from more explicit consideration of contextualizing dominant political thought of the period.

Relatedly, one of the theoretical contributions of the chapter is to develop and demonstrate one of many possible approaches to engagement with Indigenous political thought. The theoretical approach taken in this chapter goes beyond the study of political texts written by BC First Nations, conducting original historical archival research that unearths previously unstudied textual accounts of BC First Nations' political utterances. While there are indeed published books written by BC First Nations individuals that deserve political theorists' closer attention, the historical approach taken in this chapter builds a foundational understanding of the political-theoretical and historical landscape that contextualizes theory of the region. Historical analysis can both reveal the historically influential Indigenous political theorists and the varied forms through which political theorizing has been communicated in the region. Often, this includes identifying and interpreting explicit political reasoning and thinking communicated by Indigenous leaders, but it can also include somewhat speculative interpretation of political actions, reading non-explicit political utterances and historical context to interpret the political thinking motivating documented political actions. The assumption adopted in this chapter is that political theories can be read not only from the texts Indigenous peoples have penned, but also from non-textual sources, such as oral histories, and that political theories can often be interpreted from political actions.

The chapter also forwards another broad theoretical goal. By focusing on First Nations political organizing and the impacts of such organizing, the chapter develops a historical narrative that centers Indigenous peoples' situated agency. Through this history, we can see how key Indigenous agents strategically and creatively communicated their political perspectives and grievances, and collaborated to build cross-regional identities and political agendas to forward their particular political projects. We see how Indigenous leaders made and remade dominant traditions of political thought regarding Indigenous identity, working both within and against adjacent political traditions of Eurocentrism and anti-Indigenous beliefs. This history reveals a narrative of Indigenous leaders as pivotal historical agents and instigators of regional, national, and international political regimes and political thought, challenging historical accounts that erase Indigenous agency or narrate Indigenous peoples as mere recipients or victims of international power regimes.

The historical narrative and analysis offered throughout the following sections finds that

BC First Nations political leaders have maintained a consistent political commitment to resisting land dispossession, beginning with the initial waves of British colonial settlements. This finding is supported by dozens of examples of relevant First Nations political actions over time, and a closer analysis of selected acts of resistance or political mobilization. This history of resistance reveals a common and persistent belief amongst many BC First Nations that they maintain the authority to self-govern within their territories, which includes a rightful authority of territorial jurisdiction, and other rights, such as land use and resource use rights. The normative explanation of and grounding of these rights sometimes varies, but near universally, these rights are understood by BC First Nations theorists as rights that pre-date colonialism. This finding contributes new insights to contemporary debates of Indigenous political struggles, demonstrating the persistence, longevity, and consistency of Indigenous challenges to settler-state authority. Indigenous challenges to the central assumptions of dominant traditions of political theorizing are thus not new, but contextualized by a long history of Indigenous political survivance.

4.2 Methods

This chapter offers a historical narrative, informed by analysis of both primary documents obtained through original archival research and of secondary research documents. From these documents, I interpreted what political actions Indigenous peoples have taken over time, what theories and beliefs motivated these actions, and the impacts of these actions on shaping local, provincial, and national political discourses and outcomes.

The interpretive approach taken here philosophically analyzes the meaning of human actions and utterances, implying that First Nations political theorists, like all humans, act for reasons or according to beliefs. Far from claiming autonomy, this approach understands humans as situated-agents, acting within and against a background of inherited traditions (Bevir and Rhodes 2005). This similarly aligns with the concept of relationally situated Indigenous agency introduced in the previous chapter. In agreement with radical historicism, this chapter also rejects developmental historicist assumptions of historical continuity and progress, nor does it depend on grand narratives. Instead, the following narrative identifies contingent, unstable, and aggregate traditions of Indigenous political thought that do not assume homogeneity of Indigenous traditions.

Many of the archival records the present research engages with were created by or document the communications and perspectives of colonial officials and non-Indigenous Canadians. In engaging such documents, I took special care to consider what has been left out or omitted from the archive. I also used many archives from Indigenous organizations and newspapers and activist organizations, which helped me develop an analysis of Indigenous perspectives, actions, and political aspirations. Most archival materials were accessed digitally between 2020 and 2022, while some non-digitized archival documents were accessed in person in February 2020. The physical archives visited, Royal British Columbia Museum Archives and the Legislative Library of British Columbia, are both located in Victoria,

British Columbia, Canada.

The digital archives used in this analysis include:

British Columbia Points to the Past Archive

British Columbia Sessional Papers Archive (University of British Columbia)

Center for World Indigenous Studies: Chief George Manuel Memorial Indigenous Library

City of Vancouver Archives

Colonial Despatches: The colonial despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871

Library of Parliament, Canada

Lipad, Linked Parliamentary Data, University of Toronto

Simon Fraser University Summit Institutional Repository (Nass and Skeena River Area Collection)

The Gale Daily Mail Archives

Times Colonist Newspaper Archive

Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Library & Archives, including First Nations Digital Documents Source

Search terms used across archives included combinations of various terms for British Columbia Indigenous peoples, along with various political terms. Searches were typically non-case specific and did not limit results to only those with an exact phrase, meaning that word order did not alter search results. Variations on British Columbia Indigenous peoples included "British Columbia Indian," "British Columbia Indian chief," "Aborigines British Columbia," "First Nations British Columbia," and "Aboriginal British Columbia." Each of these searches was made alone and in combination with words including "protest," "petition," and "blockade."

The historical record of early contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples from first contact until the mid-19th century also primarily relies on colonial government documents, including official correspondence and policy documents. While parts of the early history of First Nations political actions and aspirations in BC have likely been passed down through oral histories in First Nations communities across the province, there is little publicly accessible archival materials that offer firsthand accounts of this history. Consequently, the first portion of this historical narrative relies primarily on a careful reading of the colonial archive and secondary literature that similarly relies on solely or primarily colonial sources.

The Colonial Founding of British Columbia

Early histories of British Columbia typically center the thought and actions of European settlers, colonists, and political figures, offering historical narratives of colonial processes that often reveal accounts of assimilation, settlement, and dispossession. Yet, from the time of substantial European settlement and onwards, First Nations peoples of British Columbia also continuously shaped, engaged with, and resisted political and colonial practices, thought, and institutions, across the local, provincial, national, and global levels. Some scholars have narrated particular historical acts of Indigenous resistance or influence in British Columbian politics and political thought, revealing glimpses into First Nations' acts of agency in these political landscapes. This and the following sections unite the insights of the existing literature with archival evidence to build a chronological historical narrative of Indigenous political persistence, resistance, and impact in British Columbia, centering acts of situated-agency by First Nations' political actors wherever possible.

Nonetheless, to understand First Nations peoples' actions to resist dispossession and maintain land rights across British Columbia, it is also important to understand the colonial governments' historical policies and actions on land and Aboriginal title. Such colonial policies and actions provide important context for understanding Indigenous actions over the same time period. Consequently, the present section begins with a historical narrative of early contact and the colonial approach to settlement and land acquisition across the province. After providing this historical context, the following sections focus primarily on the political actions and political thought of Indigenous political actors in the region.

Prior to 1857, few non-Indigenous peoples inhabited the land now known as British Columbia, Canada. Indigenous peoples inhabited this region for an estimated thirteen thousand years prior to European contact. While estimates of the pre-contact First Nations population of British Columbia range widely, the population was likely in at least the hundreds of thousands, with more recent archeological work suggesting the coastal region in particular was even more densely populated than previously though (McMillan and McKechnie 2015). Far from being a desolate wilderness, the coasts of British Columbia were the home of large populations of Indigenous peoples living across many major village communities.

European Arrivals to British Columbia

The first known non-Indigenous contact with BC First Nations occurred in 1774, when Spanish explorer Juan Perez and the crew aboard the ship Santiago had a peaceful encounter with some Haida individuals off of the coast of Kiis Gwaii, the Northernmost island of Haida Gwaii (Fisher 2011, 1). Over two days, the Haida visited the ship on canoes, bringing otter furs, handmade goods, and art to trade with the Spaniards, received clothing, beads, and knives in exchange. The Spaniards then traveled to Nootka Sound, making the first known brief contact with Indigenous peoples on Vancouver Island, trading with Nuu-chah-nulth peoples off the Hesquiaht Peninsula territory, at Yuquot. Four years later, in 1778, James Cook's crew became the first documented non-Indigenous peoples to make landfall in British

Columbia, spending a month in Nootka Sound, also trading for otter skins. Over the next ten years, sea otter pelt trading in the region boomed, with Cook claiming to sell finer pelts for up to \$120 each in China. British and American fur trading ships increasingly flooded to the region, with an estimated twenty-one vessels trading in British Columbia for the 1792 trading season (Fisher 2011, 2).

Over the next fifty years, trading continued to expand throughout British Columbia, but few non-Indigenous traders settled or sought land in the territory which would become British Columbia, and there were no recognizable disruptions or challenges to Indigenous jurisdiction over their lands. Over this period, there were some instances of disputes and violence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous traders in the region, usually over trade or trade interactions. For example, in 1803 Mowachaht Nation attacked and killed most Europeans aboard a trade ship named Boston, either because of a spate of insults Mowachaht had received from these traders and others before them, or because Mowachaht was dealing with economic hardship and saw the attack as an opportunity to secure valuable goods (Zaat 2011). Into the mid-19th century, however, trade relations between Europeans and First Nations remained relatively amicable.

Throughout the early 1800s, disputes over the borders of American and British territorial claims to North American escalated, and an increasing number of Americans began to settle in Oregon. At the time, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the primary British fur trading company in the region, acted as the de facto colonial government across much of the North American territories claimed by Britain, issuing its own paper money and, at times, operating as an agent of the Crown. Starting in the early 1820s, Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River was the center of fur-trading on the Pacific Northwest Coast and was operated as the headquarters of the HBC. However, as conflict over American and British land-claims escalated in Oregon, the HBC began to build a stronger presence on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, Fort Victoria. At the time, James Douglas was the Chief Factor of HBC, the second highest position within the company, and Douglas was sent to Vancouver Island to found Fort Victoria as a trading post in 1843. Unlike most HBC officers, Douglas was of mixed African and European ancestry, born in British Guiana, and was later married to a mixed-race Cree woman. In 1846, the United Kingdom and United States settled land disputes in the region, signing the Oregon Treaty which established the border between the two territories at the 49th parallel, with the exception of the area of Vancouver Island extending south of the 49th, which would remain British territory.

In 1849, Britain established its first formal colony in British Columbia, the Colony of Vancouver Island, encompassing all of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands located in the Salish Sea, between Vancouver Island and the mainland of British Columbia. The colony was leased to Hudson's Bay Company for ten years, and Fort Victoria became the official headquarters of HBC in 1849 on the condition that the HBC create a British colony, the Colony of Vancouver Island. This agreement gave Douglas significant colonial power as Head Factor, and he was appointed as the second Governor of the colony in 1850, after the first appointee stepped down. Although few non-Indigenous peoples inhabited the colony, Douglas began to undertake the wishes of the British authorities, and started to negotiate

land purchases from First Nations peoples of the colony. The first instructions that Douglas received came in 1850 from Archibald Barclay, the HBC secretary in London, which specified that Douglas should negotiate with the Chiefs of any tribes that occupied land through cultivation or built houses, taking the "natives as the rightful possessors of such land" (as cited in Tennant 2011, 18). According to Barclay, uncultivated land, however, should be considered waste and be open to colonization.

At the time, the key British legislation specifying procedures for British settlement of Aboriginal territories in North America was King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763. The Proclamation mandated that Indigenous Tribes and Nations' possession of land could not be infringed upon if the land was not ceded by these Aboriginal inhabitants or purchased by the Crown. To protect Indigenous peoples from fraud and abuses in land transactions, subjects of the Crown could not privately purchase Indigenous lands without the Crown's license (King George III 1763). While Douglas' initial treatment of Indigenous lands may have complied with King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763, the instructions relayed from Barclay offered a much narrower understanding of Indigenous land possession than conveyed in the Proclamation.

From 1850 until 1854, Douglas negotiated fourteen land purchases from some Indigenous groups on Vancouver Island, which became known as the Douglas Treaties. In exchange for approximately 927 square kilometers of land, Indigenous peoples variously received money, blankets, and other goods. The treaties maintained Indigenous rights to existing villages and agricultural sites, as well as hunting and fishing rights on the sold land. The first of these purchases, negotiated with members of the Teechamista, a Songhees community, was a verbal agreement where the First Nations negotiators were asked to sign a blank piece of paper (Duff 1969). Douglas later filled in the paper with language borrowed from the New Zealand Company's treaties with Māori provided by Barclay, and the following land purchases also adopted the same language (Tennant 2011, 18).

These purchase agreements have faced mounting criticisms over time, questioning, for example, their validity, whether First Nations negotiators understood what they were signing, and whether the First Nations' negotiators had the authority to sign over swaths of collectively held territories (see, for example, Vallance 2015). However, in contrast with Barclay's initial instructions, the purchase agreements secured the entirety of First Nations' traditional territories, acknowledging Aboriginal title beyond lands that were previously cultivated or occupied with homes. Douglas additionally did not purchase village sites or cultivated, enclosed lands, leaving those to the First Nations' communities he negotiated with (Tennant 2011, 20). By 1854, Douglas' attempts to secure land purchased with local First Nations on Vancouver Island came to halt, although the reasons for this are unclear. The end of treaty-making did not pose an immediate issue, as by 1852 fewer than 500 British people had migrated to the colony. Over the next five years, there were no significant changes in the colony that impacted Indigenous peoples.

Intensifying European Settlement of British Columbia

In 1857, the demands for settlement lands shifted abruptly. An influx of tens of thousands of British and American men arrived in British Columbia, seeking their fortune in the newly discovered gold of the Thompson River. In response, the British Parliament made mainland British Columbia a formal British Colony in 1858, appointing James Douglas as the first governor of the colony. Douglas complied with a request from British authorities to step down from his role as Chief Factor of HBC in his acceptance of the second Governorship. Colonial policies and practices of expansion and settlement across the two colonies provide important context for understanding the Indigenous political actions that followed.

In 1858, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the colonial secretary, sent Douglas instructions for the establishment of the new colony. Lytton's correspondence explicitly acknowledged that land that had not yet been ceded was possessed by First Nations and that all negotiations, bargaining, or treaty making for such land would secure Indigenous subsistence, while also "diffusing the blessings of the Christian Religion and civilization among the natives" (Lytton 1858b). In a second correspondence, Lytton encouraged Douglas to consider settling Indigenous peoples of the colony "permanently in villages," suggesting that this would allow the Natives to be civilized, adopting British laws and religion. Lytton stated that his suggestions was motivated both by a concern for protecting against possible aggression against settlers, as well as the possible aggression of non-Indigenous peoples against the native populations (Lytton 1858a). Douglas' response articulated his agreement with Lytton's plan, and illustrated the first clear articulation of what would become the reserve system in the Colony:

I conceive the proposed plan to be at once feasible, and also the only plan which promises to result in the moral evaluation of the native Indian races, in rescuing them from degradation, and protecting them from oppression and rapid decay. It will, at the same time, have the effect of saving the colony from the numberless evils which naturally follow in the train of every course of national injustice and from having the native Indian tribes arrayed in vindictive warfare against the white settlements... Anticipatory reserves of land for the benefit and support of the Indian races will be made for that purpose in all the districts of British Columbia inhabited by native tribes. Those reserves should in all cases include their cultivated fields and village sites, for which from habit and association they invariable conceive a strong attachment, and prize more, for that reason, than for the extent or value of the land. (Douglas 1859)

In this reserve system, Douglas also expressed an intent to respect the Indigenous population as rational beings who can think and act for themselves, but also emphasized that they would need to be trained in self-reliance, indicating that Indigenous self-government would not be successful without colonial intervention (Douglas 1859). Douglas also expressed in correspondence to Lytton that reserve lands should not be reduced in the future, with the

exception of allowing the sale of a portion of a reserve to advance Indigenous settlement on the remaining reserve lands (Fisher 1971, 4; Tennant 2011, 28, 31).

Douglas' reserve system on mainland British Columbia marked a departure from the earlier treaty process he undertook on the Vancouver Island colony. On some accounts, Douglas may have lost funds and goods to trade to continue the treaty process when he relinquished his role as Chief Factor to the HBC (Fisher 1971, 4). However, on other accounts, Douglas' access to treaty making funds was irrelevant, as Douglas anticipated that "Indians" would be assimilated into European culture, religion, and law (Tennant 2011, 36). Regardless of circumstances, the reserve system replaced Douglas' efforts to secure treaties with the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia.

In the new colony of British Columbia, Douglas' reserve system came quickly into effect. The reserve system was implemented both through Oblate missionaries and through Douglas' direct oversite. Missionaries were tasked with establishing villages to settle "Indian" populations into. Douglas oversaw the policies, surveying, establishment of reserve lands, and also oversaw Indigenous land pre-emption. Douglas' overarching and consistent instructions on establishing reserve lands to his surveyors was that the extent of reserves should be defined by Natives themselves. In his final months as Governor in 1864, Douglas' communicated policy on reserve lands showed some inconsistency. In a correspondence with the legislature Douglas indicated that reserves should be 10 acres per family, while he indicated to surveyors that the reserve land should be 10 acres per family, at a minimum. Douglas' successors later adopted the policy as communicated with the legislature, designating reserves of 10 acres per family (Tennant 2011, 31-34).

As the reserve system rolled out, a new challenge overtook the province as the smallpox epidemic of 1862 ravaged the colony. This epidemic was not the first in the history of British Columbia, but it was the most devastating to First Nations populations. While death and population records for the period are incomplete, some experts estimate that rough fifty percent of the Indigenous population of British Columbia was killed during this epidemic, with the first and most devastatingly hit communities being the Indigenous villages surrounding Fort Victoria (Rijn 2006).

Just two years later, in September 1864, Douglas retired as Governor of the colonies. Douglas left the position confident in the reserve system he had established, claiming that it had brought about "the happiest effects on the minds of the Natives" (as cited in Fisher 1971, 4). Frederick Seymour, a careerist governor, was appointed as the second governor of the colonies, and Joseph Trutch, a surveyor and engineer, was appointed as Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, the latter of whom Douglas personally recommended (Fisher 1971, 7). In the following years, Seymour largely deferred to Trutch on decisions about Aboriginal land and reserves, and Trutch proceeded to reshape the direction of land policy in the colonies. Throughout his career, Trutch consistently espoused beliefs common in Britain that the time; that Indigenous peoples were savage, beastly, lawless, violent, or uncivilized, and generally undeserving of rights afforded to the white immigrant population (Tennant 2011, 39). Trutch believed that any land in Indian Reserves was wasted land, and by 1865, he had already begun reducing the reserves that had been established under Douglas (Abbott

2017, 39; Fisher 1971, 9).

The two colonies were united into one colony, the Colony of British Columbia, in 1866, which left Seymour as governor and Trutch as Chief Commissioner of Land and Works. The unification of the colonies shepherded a period of injustice and eroding rights for the First Nations of British Columbia. In one of their first actions, the Colony's legislature eliminated Indigenous peoples' rights to pre-empt land in British Columbia (Tennant 2011, 246). Most Indigenous peoples were thus forced to live in reserve lands, deepening segregation.

Over his tenure as Chief Commissioner, Trutch acted on his belief that Indigenous peoples were inferior and had no rights to land claims, finding many reasons to survey and reduce nearly all existing reserves in the province. In some cases, he said that reserves exceeding ten acres per family must be reduced to meet current provincial policies, relying on Douglas' statement to the legislature. For others, he stated that the surveyors must have made mistakes in allocating so much land to reserves. In other instances yet, he asserted that Indigenous reserve lands were unproductive because Indigenous peoples had not fully put them into cultivation with European farming methods. In their analysis of this period, Tennant argues that Trutch's views on Indigenous people became widely accepted by settlers because such views served the white population (Tennant 2011, 41).

It's also important to note the role of the church in the process of colonizing First Nations peoples and land in British Columbia. With the creation of the colony in 1858, Oblate missionaries that were active in the Pacific Northwest of the United States were now authorized to establish missionaries north of the border. They established their first mission in the central south interior of mainland British Columbia, on Okanagan Lake, in 1860. In 1863, the first residential school in what would become British Columbia was opened in Mission, east of the colony's capital, New Westminster, on the Fraser river (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 98, 100).

From early European contact until the influx of European settlement in the late 1850s, the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia did not pose significant resistance to some presence of settlers. However, as the settler numbers swelled, and with Seymour and Trutch's hollowing of Indigenous reserves beginning in 1864, Indigenous peoples across the province began to organize politically and resist colonial land dispossession. The following section picks up in the mid-1860s, offering a historical account of Indigenous political aspirations and actions, and the political theories that informed both, over the following century of First Nations political mobilization across the province.

4.3 Indigenous Politics in British Columbia: 1865-1900

This section develops a historical narrative of the political organizing and some of the theoretical perspectives of First Nations leaders from the territories that would soon become the province of British Columbia, from 1864 until 1900. This period was characterized by pri-

marily regional or "tribal" political mobilization within language groups, with communities coming together to organize political opposition and resistance, often to increasing dispossession of Indigenous land. The period was also characterized by Indigenous appeals and claims made primarily to representatives of the colony or provincial governments. Across this section, the analysis interprets Indigenous political thought expressed across numerous political actions, and particularly focuses on the political theories relevant to two key moments.

The first is a series of petitions at the beginning of the period, which are the first known and documented acts of Indigenous peoples in the province collaborating to make an explicit claim that Indigenous peoples remain the owners of the land of British Columbia. The second moment occurs in the middle of this period, in 1887, when Nisga'a and Tsimshian chiefs met with the provincial premier and other provincial government representatives in Victoria. This meeting was first well-documented interaction between Indigenous leaders and the settler government over the period, providing a unique view into the complexity of the leaders' political thought. It is also of particular interest because the meeting made the province's unwillingness to acknowledge Indigenous territorial rights explicitly clear, which precipitated a shift in Indigenous political tactics towards direct engagement with the Dominion government, and by the early 20th century, direct engagement with the British Crown.

Across this section, a narrative emerges of the persistence and relative stability of Indigenous political thought and goals across this period of early Indigenous interactions with settler governments. Both political actions and documentation of Indigenous political thought across the period demonstrates a stable belief amongst Indigenous peoples that they continued to be the owners of the province's unceded land base, even where settlers were occupying the land. There was also a persistent belief that Indigenous peoples were entitled to compensation for all lands occupied by settlers, and an increasingly explicitly communicated belief that Indigenous peoples also held a number of land use rights that persisted even in areas where settlers had been granted occupancy rights. Finally, the analysis demonstrates that at least some Indigenous leaders of the period also believed that Indigenous peoples maintained a right to self-govern on their territories, and that such jurisdiction was not incompatible with the rule of British law. While the purpose of this chapter is expressly not to homogenize historical Indigenous political thought from the region, it nonetheless points to an overwhelming spatial and temporal consistency of central political beliefs held by political leaders across the province.

The Tsilhqot'in War

The first documented instance of organized Indigenous political resistance or uprising against non-Indigenous settlers was the Tsilhqot'in War, which occurred in March 1864, just before Governor Douglas retired. This was the first well-documented act of Indigenous resistance to settler encroachment on Indigenous lands, and it is also one of the most violent early colonial conflicts that occurred in Canada. The war is an important starting point for the present historical analysis because it is both the first well-documented organized act of Indigenous

resistance to settlement, and is an event that shaped the Indigenous resistance and political mobilizing that followed in the province.

The war was preceded by and precipitated by a number of interactions between Indigenous peoples and settlers, as well as plans to expand colonial development into Tsilhqot'in territories. In 1862, the Chief Commissioner of Land and Works, decided to start construction of "bridle road", which would connect Tsilhqot'in territories to Bute Inlet, where the Homathko River met the ocean. On March 22, 1864, a Ferry arrived up the Homathko River through Bute Inlet, carrying road building supplies, workmen, and provisions for the workers. Tsilhqot'in workers were hired to work on the road, and on some accounts, they may have not been compensated for their work (Hewlett 1973, 64). Sometime in the same year, a white man who was part of a work party made a threat towards Tsilhqot'in individuals in Bute Inlet. The man was questioning the Tsilhqot'in individuals, seeking to find out who had stolen flour from a storehouse in the Inlet. On one account, a Tsilhqot'in individual being questioned responded, "You are on our country; you owe us bread" (as cited in Hewlett 1973, 62). The white man questioning them wrote down the names of each of the Tsilhqot'in individuals, saying that each person whose name he wrote down would die. The threat played into a suspicion amongst Tsilhqot'in and other Indigenous peoples of British Columbia that smallpox was intentionally spread by white men to kill off the "Indian" population. The population of Tsilhqot'in peoples had already been decimated by smallpox in the previous two years, and the Tsilhqot'in individuals in Bute Inlet took the threat seriously. Today, there is ongoing debate about whether settlers intentionally spread smallpox, but there is little doubt that the devastating impacts of the pandemic on First Nations communities was due, in large part, to settlers' apathy and inaction (Rijn 2006, 554).

Thus, at least some of the Tsilhqot'in peoples were disaffected. They faced settler expansion into their territory facilitated by the bridle road, and feared that settlers intended to kill them. Further, there was a possible belief that unpaid Tsilhqot'in workers were being treated unjustly. Some Tsilhqot'in began to plan a war on the settler occupiers of their land (Borrows 2015, 708). A party of Tsilhqot'in warriors started an attack at dawn, once roadwork was underway, on April 19, 1864. This, launching a surprise attach at dawn, was a typical war technique of the Tsilhqot'in (Hewlett 1973, 60). The attack started at a ferry site, where a Tsilhqot'in leader, Klatsassin, had arrived with his two sons, and some other Tsilhqot'in men and women. Someone in the group killed the ferry keeper, and the group then looted and destroyed the ferry site, damaged the ferry, and proceeded up river. Until May, an evolving group of Tsilhqot'in warriors traveled throughout their territories killing other road workers and white settlers. By May, approximately 19 individuals were killed by the Tsilhqot'in, all white men except Klymtedza, a Tsilhqot'in woman who had tried to escape with her non-Indigenous husband. All non-Indigenous persons were expelled from the territory, and thus the Tsilhqot'in achieved their immediate goal of defending their physical security against threats of murder through smallpox or other means, as well as their territorial integrity (Borrows 2015, 708).

Under Seymour's oversight, the colonial government responded by organizing parties to enter Tsilhqot'in land and apprehend those responsible for the killings. Seymour encouraged white retaliation for the killings, writing in a letter, "That Europeans should thus run down wild Indians in their own hunting grounds in summer and drive them to suicide or surrender appears to me, I confess, little short of marvellous" (Seymour 1864c). From mid-May until August, at least three separate "expeditions" entered Tsilhqot'in territory, ranging in size from twenty-eight to sixty-five men. These men were primarily white settlers, but some Indigenous peoples also joined the groups. The groups found bodies of most of the killed settlers, and were shot at by Tsilhqot'in on multiple occasions, with at least two expeditioners wounded. Most Tsilhqot'in peoples eluded the group for months, but in August, a group of eight Tsilhqot'in men were captured under false pretenses. The Tsilhqot'in men had made an agreement with the settler expedition, who they believed promised that their peaceful surrender would not result in an infringement of their freedom nor their execution (Hewlett 1973, 67-70; Begbie 1864). To their surprise, the Tsilqot-in group was apprehended by the colonial expedition, jailed, and transported for a trial.

Some of our documentation of the war is attributed to a Reverend, R. C. Lundin Brown, who visited with the Tsilhqot'in prisoners regularly before their trial. In his first visit, Brown reported that he told the prisoners that the law is "Thou shalt not kill", to which they responded that they "meant war, not murder" (Brown 1873). The Tsilhqot'in men believed that killing as an act of war was not murder, and that they should not be tried at murderers. Nonetheless, at the trial, five Tsilqot-in men, Telloot, Klatsassin, Pielle, Tahpit, and Chessus, were found guilty of capital offenses and sentenced to be hanged. One of the other three was transported to a second trial, and he escaped on route to his trial. The final two Tsilhqot'in men had no charges brought against them (Seymour 1864b). The next year, two additional Tsilhqot'in men, Ahan and Lutas, surrendered for their involvement in the killings, were tried, and Ahan was hung. Seymour had the option to offer all of the Tsilhqot'in men clemency, but clemency was only extended to Lutas (Hewlett 1973, 71-72). The hanging of the men was intended to put a stop to Indigenous resistance to settler-colonialism in the colony. As Rev. Lundin Brown wrote, reflecting on the hanging, "Terror must be struck into all the Indian tribes" (Brown 1873, 111).

In the long term, the Tsilhqot'in uprising may have been somewhat successful. The plans for the bridle road were abandoned, and into the 21st century, Tsilhqot'in territories remained generally uninhabited by settlers. The Tsilhqot'in act of war demonstrated a strong belief in their right to exclusively occupy their territories, as well as a willingness to defend that right at a high cost. However, in the short term, Seymour's response to the uprising also influenced the direction of Indigenous political organizing across the province. Prior to the Tsilhqot'in uprising, many First Nations peoples with experience of the British colonial government would have understood the substantial coercive power that colony representatives and settlers wielded. The violent colonial and government actions south of the border had also made clear that settlers could quickly subjugate Indigenous peoples. Once the Tsilhqot'in acts of war were met with armed incursions into Tsilhqot'in territories and acts of jurisdictional enforcement by the colonial government, Indigenous leaders likely recognized the futility of waging war to defend against land dispossession. Consequently, the following century of Indigenous political actions adopted various alternative and creative techniques of resistance

and political claims, including coalition building, lobbying, petitioning, and protesting, but largely forwent armed insurrection and war.

Early First Nations Petitions to the Provincial Government

Nonetheless, Seymour continued to fear a violent insurrection of Indigenous populations, and hoped to avoid an ongoing "Indian War" through gestures of amity. Shortly after taking office in 1864, and with the Tsilhqot'in War still waging, Seymour asked the missionaries to invite Indigenous peoples to a celebratory luncheon on the Queen's Birthday at Government House in New Westminster. With an estimated 3,500 Indigenous peoples in attendance, the luncheon too became an act of Indigenous political mobilization. At the luncheon, First Nations Chiefs presented Seymour with a written and signed petition (Seymour 1864a). At the time, this form of political organizing, the petition, was an accepted and common way for colonial subjects of the British Empire to communicate with colonial authorities.² Over the following two years, two additional major petitions written by Indigenous leaders were delivered to Seymour. As the first large-scale acts of Indigenous non-violent political mobilization against colonial invaders, these petitions offer insight into the early political concerns, political thought, and political organizing that would further lay the groundwork for Indigenous politics in the province.

Throughout the three petitions, the Indigenous authors consistently asserted their ownership of their lands, lands now claimed by the province, with some of the petitions asserting other Aboriginal rights or demanding compensation for lands already usurped by settlers and the colonial government. The first luncheon, petitioners appealed to Seymour to protect their land, establish clear reserves, and to compensate them for land occupied by settlers. The full text of the petition presented to Seymour reads as follows:

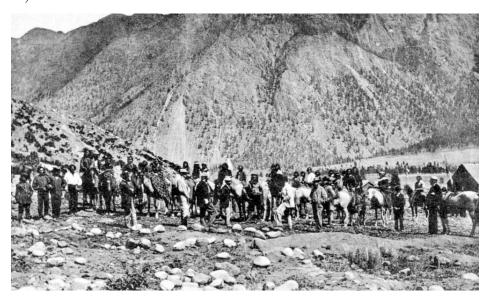
The assembled Indian Chiefs of the Districts of New Westminster, Fort Yale, Fort Douglas, and Lillooet have resolved to address the Governor, the Representative of Queen Victoria, through their Representatives as follows:

We beg to speak to you. We, the native Indians, are gathered to welcome you, and to show you our good dispositions. We know the good heart of the Queen for the Indians you bring that good heart with you; so we are happy to welcome you. We wish to become good Indians, and to be friends with the white people. Please to protect us against any bad Indians or bad white men. Please to protect our land, that it will not be small for us; many are well pleased with their reservations, any [sic] many wish that their reservations be marked out for them. Please to give us good things to make us become as good as the white men, as an exchange for our land occupied by white men. Our hearts will always be good and thankful to the Queen, and to you Great Chief. We finish to speak to you. (Seymour 1864a)

²For a closer analysis of the medium of petitions in this context, see Harvey 2014.

The petition signatories were fifty-five Chiefs from villages across the territories that would become the province of British Columbia.³ The petitions make at least two key assumptions of the Indigenous signatories clear. First, it is clear that they view the land as their own, including the land occupied by settlers. Second, the signatories expect compensation in exchange for white people occupying their land. The language used implies that settler occupation of land is not synonymous with land ownership. Their demand for compensation likely referred to promises that were widely made by the colonial government under Douglas in their early meetings with Indigenous inhabitants of the province, promising compensation for settlement of Indigenous lands. Seymour provided a written response to the petition, which threatened harsh punishment for "bad Indians", and claimed that "there is plenty of land here, for both White men and Indians." Nonetheless, he replied to the chiefs that their reserves "shall not be disturbed" (Seymour 1864a). Yet, just a year later, Seymour agreed to Trutch's proposals to re-survey and reduce reserve lands.

Figure 4.1: First Nations Meeting Governor Seymour, photographed between 1862 and 1866 (Gentile 1862)



The second petition was issued the following year, in 1865, when First Nations peoples were again invited to New Westminster for a celebration of the Queen's birthday, and Seymour estimated that six thousand individuals attended. On May 23, 1865, the Indigenous

³It is not immediately clear what regions and Indigenous groups of the province were represented by the signatories. The historical forward of the petition suggests that the chiefs represented Indigenous groups from the Coast Salish and Interior Salish ethno-linguistic groups. However, it's possible that some of the chiefs represented different regions of the province. While each chief signing the petition named the village they represented, few of the village names are recognizable today or according to today's spelling. Some names share similarities to Nation names or place-named of today. For example, Chief Skaouemot representing the Village of Kaoutene may be from one of today's Kootenay bands (also spelled Kutena and Ktunaxa). However, it would take extensive historical research to verify the region each Chief represented.

peoples in attendance assembled and drafted an appeal that would be delivered to Seymour by four of the chiefs. Their message was short:

The Indians whom we represent have gathered and [illegible] at New Westminster to celebrate the Queen's birthday, to show our good disposition and attachment to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and not as may be thought for the feast which your Excellency is as good as to provide for us. The prayer and hope of the Indians is that your Excellency will constantly preserve their lands to them and protect them against the bad White men and bad Indians. (Seymour 1865)

In this petition, the chiefs made a clear claim to ownership of their land. Their only political requests were first, that this ownership be preserved and upheld, and second, that they be protected from those that acted against them. The chiefs, then, accepted some form of British legal protection, while maintaining their land ownership must also be preserved and protected. ⁴

In 1866, a third petition was drafted and signed by a group of 70 Stó:lō chiefs, which was hand-delivered to Seymour with all of the signatory chiefs present. The Stó:lō are a large subgroup of the Coast Salish with territories reaching from the central south interior to the southwest coast of the province, often referred to in historical documents as the Lower Fraser Indians. The petition was written by an Indigenous boy in both English and Chinook, a language widely spoken by Indigenous peoples across the Pacific Northwest, often for the purpose of facilitating trade. Amongst other things, the petition asked the governor to protect their land, again invoking their ownership of the land. It also made the case that they should be able to access their ancestral fishing grounds and rivers without cost, implicitly asking Seymour to uphold their fishing and water rights. As Harvey has argued, the petition suggested that Indigenous laws govern rights to occupy and use territories persisted, and recognized the much of the Lower Fraser region remained the rightful territory of the Stó:lō (2014, 69-71). Again, the demand of land and water access in the petition likely referred to promises made by colonial representative under Douglas, who promised Aboriginal use rights even on lands that were sold or ceded to the colony.

The third petition, compared to the earlier two, likely represents a smaller percentage of Indigenous peoples across the province, yet it also helps to reveal the political thought and reasoning shared by Indigenous political leaders at the time. Across these first years of mobilization, there was a pervasive conviction that Indigenous peoples had exclusive territorial rights to the lands of British Columbia. Even while using language that demonstrated supplication to the British Empire, Indigenous chiefs did not hesitate to make clear, speaking on behalf of Indigenous peoples across the province or across their region, that the land was theirs. The petitions also show a clear conviction that all promises or agreements made by representatives of this Empire must be upheld by current representatives of the Queen. Consequently, the chiefs expected compensation for settler's right to occupy Indigenous lands,

⁴For a more detailed analysis of this and the 1866 petition, see Harvey 2014.

and that such an territorial concession did not interfere with Indigenous rights to otherwise use the settled land. In exchange for granting settlers a right to occupy their lands, some of the chiefs also seemed to understand that they would, in exchange, gain both compensation and protections under British law. These beliefs would go to remain the core beliefs of most subsequent Indigenous political leaders of British Columbia, shifting only minimally, but articulated in English with increasingly clarity and complexity.

Reserve Reductions and the Indian Act

During and after these petitions, a number of key contextualizing historical events took place across the late 1860s and the 1870s. First, the reduction of reserves and disregard for Indigenous land title continued under Seymour's watch, despite his assurances to First Nations chiefs that reserve lands would not be reduced. Reviewing the Lower Fraser Indian reserves in 1867, which were established three short years earlier, Trutch claimed that lands left uncultivated was evidence that the land had no value to the Indigenous peoples' and that it went against public interest to leave these lands in reserves. These lands, located in the south of British Columbia, contained fertile farming land coveted by White settlers. By 1868, Trutch successfully used this reasoning of under cultivation to reduce the Lower Fraser Indian reserves by forty thousand acres, opening those acres for White males to settle through preemption (Tennant 2011, 40-42; Fisher 1971, 11). Indigenous peoples effected by this policy change issued multiple petitions to Seymour (Fisher 1971, 16). In 1868, both the Whonuck and the Matsqui tribes wrote petitions. In the former, the chiefs expressed frustration that their best land had been set aside for settlers with the new reservations, and that the land that the new reservation gave them was of poor quality for farming (Fisher 1971, 16; Harvey 2014, 80).

Second, in 1871, the Colony of British Columbia joined the Dominion of Canada, which shifted colonial power over Indigenous peoples and lands. Rather than creating an opportunity for a return to colonial recognition of Indigenous land rights, joining the Dominion served to cement Trutch's political agenda. Term 13 of the colony's agreement with the Dominion, which was likely written by Trutch himself, specifies and constrains the Dominion's power over Indigenous peoples and their lands (Fisher 1971, 22). It states that the Dominion will hold trusteeship and management of Indian lands, and that "a policy as liberal as that hitherto pursued by the British Columbia Government shall be continued by the Dominion Government after the Union" (Privy Council of the United Kingdom 1871). Representatives of the Dominion had little knowledge of the policies of the BC Government, and likely assumed that the policies in the colony were similar to what had been practiced in the other provinces. Across the rest of Canada, governments had followed practices closer to what had been outlined in the Royal Proclamation; Indigenous land title had been extinguished through treaties or had been otherwise compelled to surrender territory, fundamentally acknowledging Indigenous peoples' prior land title. Thus, with Term 13, the Dominion likely assumed that the Colony's land in British Columbia had been ceded through treaties. Once the Terms of Union were agreed on, however, the Dominion government had inadvertently

agreed to uphold both Trutch's denial of Indigenous title and the 10-acres per family policy. In contrast, according to the 1875 Land Act, any male and adult British subject in the province was entitled to claim between 160 to 320 acres of land each (Legislative Assembly of British Columbia 1875). Further, the Dominion government continued to pursue treaties outside of British Columbia over this period. In 1877, they finalized treaties across the other provinces west of Ontario, designating Indigenous reserves ranging in size from 160 to 640 acres per family, far exceeding the 10 acres per family standard in British Columbia.

With this shift to Dominion oversight of Indigenous peoples and lands, the lives of First Nations peoples of British Columbia became closely regulated under federal laws. In 1871, the provincial legislature of British Columbia stripped Indigenous peoples, the majority population in the province, of their rights to vote (Tennant 2011, 246). While the federal government briefly granted "status Indian" men the right to vote from 1885-1898, Indigenous men did not gain the unconditional right to vote in Canada until 1960. Instead, under the Dominion government, First Nations peoples of British Columbia would be paternalistically governed according to the 1876 Indian Act, and its predecessor legislation. In 1877, Indigenous lands and peoples were governed through an Indian Branch of the Department of the Interior, a department designed to pave the way for settlement. In 1880, a the Branch became its own Department of Indian Affairs, which installed Indian Agents across the dominion to enforce and oversee the trusteeship of Indigenous lands and care of Indigenous peoples across the dominion.

The Indian Act, administered through Indian Affairs, aimed to shape most parts of Indigenous political and social life, explicitly motivated by assimilatory ends of civilizing Indigenous peoples. For example, it specified who counted as an "Indian" through strict membership laws; to be considered "Indian" by government officials one needed to be registered and have "Indian status." Only status Indians were allowed to live on reserve lands, and actions could cause one to lose their status. Importantly, the Indian Act also instituted political disunity amongst Indigenous groups, designating "Indian Bands" that corresponded with reserve lands, rather than pre-existing language, political, and social groupings. Under the Act, the only sanctioned form of Indigenous governance was imposed band councils, modeled on a settler municipality government structure. By 1880, the Indian Act explicitly allowed the federal government to depose of traditional governance structures, such as "life chiefs" or "hereditary chiefs" wherever the Department of Indian Affairs had instituted a band and council (Tennant 2011, 51). The Indian Act continued to be revised over the following years to improve its assimilatory ends, some of which will be detailed in the following chapter section.

Expanding First Nations Protest Tactics of the 1870s and 1880s

Meanwhile, First Nations political resistance to settler-colonialism in British Columbia expanded from the earlier focus on petitions to include protests shortly after the Union. Protests over these decades largely repeated the arguments and claims made by the three petitions of the 1860s. In 1872 and 1874, two large rallies were organized. The first was

organized by Stó:lō chiefs and held outside the land registry office in New Westminster, which hundreds of Indigenous men and boys attended. The second was organized by the same chiefs, and drew attendees from the Coast Salish communities of the mainland coast and Lillooet peoples from the interior. At the protest, fifty-six chiefs approved a petition addressed to Israel Powell, the Indian Commissioner. The petition reiterated the complaints they said they had been making for years; the land left to them was too small. The petition accused White settlers of trying to exterminate Indigenous peoples (Tennant 2011, 53-54). Other pan-tribal organizing also increased throughout the 1870s. In the interior in 1879, the Okanagan and Shuswap tribes collaborated in what the reserve commissioner of the time, G.M. Sproat called "concerted action" to enforce their land rights (as cited in Tennant 2011, 54; Harris 1995).

First Nations also made claims and complaints to the Dominion government. For example, in 1876, Dominion Governor General Lord Dufferin traveled to New Westminster to meet with Indigenous leaders from across the province. Over 3,000 Indigenous peoples attended the meeting, representing at least five separate language groups in the province. Dufferin listened to many speeches, which expressed grievances about the inadequacy of reserve sizes, how the settler-government was failing to compensate for Indigenous lands that were dispossessed by settlers, and the violation of other Aboriginal rights. The grievances made clear that both Governor Douglas and Seymour had promised that these issues would be resolved, and they appealed to the Dominion government to uphold the promises that were made on behalf of the Dominion and the British Crown. Dufferin gave his assurances that British law was impartial and just, and assured the attendees that the rights of Indigenous peoples would be given special protections (Carlson 2005, 7-8).

Over the 1870s and 1880s, the federal government and some provincial members of the legislature did place mounting pressure on the Government of British Columbia to adjust their land policy in British Columbia by either increasing reserve sizes or otherwise acknowledging Indigenous land title. However, the provincial government consistently evaded these requests, with the now Lieutenant-governor Trutch and the Premier G.A. Walkem intentionally concealing information and misleading other members of the provincial government and the public (Tennant 2011, 46-49). A report on the "Indian land question" created by a provincial government committee investigating the issue was never made public. By the 1880s, representatives of the federal government continued to renounce the provinces treatment of Indigenous peoples and their lands, but their efforts to convince the province to acknowledge Indigenous land title began to wane. The province briefly gave into federal pressure to increase reserve sizes in the 1870s, but these reserves were again reduced by Trutch's brother-in-law, Peter O'Reilly, when he took office as Indian Reserve Commissioner in 1880. By the late 1880s, resistance from federal and provincial government representatives to the provinces mistreatment of Indigenous peoples and their lands largely waned (Tennant 2011, 52).

Throughout the 1880s, First Nations organizing in Northern British Columbia intensified. First, in 1881, Chief Mountain led a protest delegation from Nisga'a, a tribe from the North Coast of British Columbia just south of Alaska, to Victoria. The delegation came with com-

plaints about O'Reilly's reductions of reserve lands. At the time, Nisga'a also refused to allow an Indian Agent to be stationed on their territories. In 1885, the first delegation of BC First Nations to travel to Ottawa to lobby the Canadian government, with the delegation included three Tsimshian chiefs, another major group of First Nations from the north coast, John Tait, Edward Mathers, and Herbert Wallace. They met with Prime Minister Macdonald, in Wallace's account, "to tell them our troubles about our land" (Tennant 2011, 54). Like chiefs taking part in previous protests and petitions, these chiefs explicitly viewed the land as theirs and expressed that colonial dispossession in the province was their primary political concern. Across the Northwest Coast, First Nations communities were holding meetings to discuss these problems of dispossession, and in 1886, Nisga'a and Tsimshian chiefs, the former from Lax-Kw'alaams (formerly called Port Simpson), met and decided to collaborate and seek meetings to discuss the issue with the provincial and federal governments. For much of the 1870s and 1880s, then, First Nations groups in British Columbia worked independently and collaboratively to advance claims and demands to resist land dispossession and uphold early agreements made with colonial representatives. Across this time, the political beliefs and reasoning of First Nations leaders saw little departure from the first petitions of the 1860s. demonstrating the relative stability of political thought in the region and over time.

Direct Negotiations with the Province: Theories of Indigenous Rights and Freedom

The Nisga'a and Tsimshian chiefs secured a meeting in Victoria in 1887, which offers another entry point into understanding the historical political thought of Indigenous peoples of the region. The chapter looks more closely at this meeting for two key reasons. First, and most practically, the chiefs in attendance wanted the provincial government to take the meeting seriously and wanted to make sure that their position was clearly stated and recorded. The chiefs requested a verbatim transcript of the meeting, which had not been offered or requested in earlier meetings between colonial officials and First Nations. This request was granted, and with the transcript of the meeting intact, the meeting provides a particularly rich opportunity for the historical study of Indigenous political theories of the region. Second, this moment is worth further attention because of the complexity and detail of the political thought expressed by the chiefs at the meeting. Most notably, this meeting offers the first well-documented clear articulation of British Columbia First Nations' belief in their right to self-govern. The chief's theory also provides additional insight into regional beliefs about the compatibility of British justice and Indigenous law and self-government, a compatibility that was also implied by earlier petitions of First Nations leaders from other regions of the province.

It is important to note that while the meeting was granted transcription, the format of the meeting otherwise disadvantaged the First Nations delegation. The delegates arrived in Victoria with Methodist missionaries who were to serve as translators, but the provincial premier, Smithe, excluded the missionaries from meetings. Smithe believed that it was the Methodists who were causing unrest in the north, and likely thought that the Chiefs would be unable to articulate a coherent demand without a translator, nor follow the conversation. One of the Nisga'a Chiefs, Charles Barton, interpreted instead, despite his clear preferences that their chosen interpreter be allowed. Besides Barton, Richard Wilson of the Tsimshian Nation, and Arthur Gurney and John Wesley (son of Chief Mountain) from the Nisga'a Nation attended. The provincial government representatives included Premier Smithe, Indian Reserve Commissioner Peter O'Reilly, and Attorney-General Alex Davie. A Dominion representative was also present, Indian Commissioner Powell.

At the meeting, the chiefs stated that they spoke on behalf of their people, and would not answer questions that they had not discussed with their people before attending the meeting. The chiefs' message focused on a number of key claims and grievances. With Barton translating, Chief John Wesley stated that their request was first, for a larger reserve. Making this claim, Wesley specified that the reserve ought to include their hunting grounds and areas for harvesting timber, making a clear claim for the pre-existing right to the hunting grounds. Wesley demanded that second, after reserves were expanded, that a treaty ought to be made. Premier Smithe challenged him on this, asking what a treaty meant, and where he had heard of such a thing. Wesley stated that they wanted their agreement to be set into law, just as has been the case with treaties between the colonial government and other "Indians," which had been set into the laws of England and the Dominion. Smithe, blatantly lying, responded that "There is no such law either English or Dominion that I know of; and the Indians, or their friends, have been misled on that point" (British Columbia Legislative Assembly 1887, 256). Smithe then made a familiar argument, pointing to an apparent contradiction in the chief's request to be treated equally to White men, on the one hand, and a request for an exclusive right to hunting grounds: "All white men are of the same flesh and blood, and there is no difference between them, except that the white man knows and has been taught more. Now you are going entirely out of position, and want to be placed in a better position" (British Columbia Legislative Assembly 1887, 256). Barton translated Wesley's response, stating:

As I said before, we have come for nothing but to see about the land which we know is ours, as he says, for you to settle it. All of the villages of the Naas River have counselled together that the do not want to cause you and trouble, all they want being peace. By hunting grounds he (Wesley) means that by the laws among the Indians every chief has a hunting ground, and fishing ground, and goes there to dry salmon all the winter; and that they do not want to be interfered with on that account, but they never refuse anyone to go on that ground to hunt. These chiefs keep these hunting grounds free, not to themselves, and quarrels have never been known upon them yet; but there is a chief on every inlet, and he calls it his own where he hunts. And right on this very hunting ground there is a little timber, which they wish you to give them the right to cut, as they always thought it was theirs. It is not only a hunting ground, but a fishing ground, and there is timber there. (British Columbia Legislative Assembly 1887, 257)

Wesley made a clear claim that chiefs were not only the rightful owners of their territories, but that they had rights of jurisdiction and use on those lands. Immediately, as was the case in most recorded interactions between BC First Nations and the settler government, the provincial representatives shifted the discussion towards surveying reserves, ignoring the question of land title and land rights.

Barton again attempted to redirect the conversation, restating the true intentions of their delegation. Speaking to the Indian Reserve Commissioner, Barton stated: "You see, Mr. O'Reilly, that this is not what we came for, to argue about this land; but to tell you that we want to be free on the top of this land" (British Columbia Legislative Assembly 1887, 259). When O'Reilly and others again attempted to redirect, asking what was omitted from reserves, Barton refused to answer these irrelevant questions, and reiterated, "Sirs, —I have come before you now to speak for my poor people's rights, and I wish to explain to you, as has said before, that we want justice to be done to us" (British Columbia Legislative Assembly 1887, 259). The provincial representatives did not acknowledge this demand of justice.

The chief's demands, and views of what justice would look for their communities, were complex. They wanted the rights of their people to be respected. This included pre-existing rights that they held prior to colonization; their rights to land occupancy, use, and jurisdiction ought to be upheld. Their people ought to be able to continue to live according to their laws on their own land. Although they did not explicitly state the goal of self-government, their demand that they ought to be free on their own land implied such an understanding. However, the chiefs clearly stated that they were also amenable to laws of the Dominion and of Britain. The chiefs demanded equal treatment for their people under these laws. It is clear throughout the conversation that the chiefs did not see their own freedom and right to live according to their own laws as at-odds with the colonial government's legal system. For the chiefs, it was imperative for this just outcome that a treaty be struck. In my interpretation, they believed that a treaty would provide the necessary security or assurances that their territorial rights and jurisdiction would be respected. If the boundaries of their reserve were open to re-evaluation, their rights to govern on such lands, or exercise their equal rights under the colonial government's laws, to harvest timber or mine, for example, were also under constant threat. The boundaries of reserve lands across the province had been in flux as both O'Reilly and Trutch aggressively reduced reserves, so the chief's beliefs that a treaty was necessary to secure the territorial foundation of their rights was not unfounded.

However, the responses of the settler government representatives neglected fundamental aspects of the chiefs' positions. Smithe, O'Reilly, and Davie feigned ignorance about treaties and about what the chiefs meant when they demanded their freedom on their own lands. Smithe contested that the "Indians" were not slaves, after all, so they need not worry about their freedom. In discussing rights, they exclusively acknowledged the chief's requests for equal rights under colonial law. It was clear, however, that these were not the only rights for which the chiefs sought acknowledgment. Rejecting any conversation of treaties, Smithe and O'Reilly also repeatedly stated that it was false information that reserves could be reduced and that any northern First Nations peoples might be removed from their land as reserve boundaries were reformulated. Their tactic was pure deception and disinformation; they

claimed that the chiefs were entirely misled about the Dominion or British entering any treaties, and they claimed reserves would not be changed. Meanwhile, O'Reilly himself was rapidly shifting and reducing reserves around the province, and O'Reilly would have been well aware that just ten years earlier the Dominion government had entered new treaties in other provinces.

The meeting amongst the First Nations delegates and provincial government ended with an agreement for a public commission to come north and discuss the Nation's grievances further. The provincial and federal governments each appointed a commissioner to conduct the public commission, who Davie specifically instructed to dismiss any claims to land title and redirect any mention of land title to a discussion of reserves (Tennant 2011, 59). The province, then, had no intention of the commission serving as a genuine discussion of the claims brought to them. Nonetheless, with some documentation of testimonies and speeches made by First Nations peoples during the brief five-day hearings, the commission records offer another entry point, not taken up here, to further analyze the political theories undergirding the stance and actions of the Tsimshian and Nisga'a leaders. In particular, further attention to the commission documents could help clarify the normative basis of the land and Aboriginal rights claims made by these north-coast groups, as well as clarify their beliefs about treaties. The ultimate result of the commission was that the provincial government came to the conclusion that the northern coast Indigenous peoples had been left with too little government oversight, allowing them to freely agitate and evade assimilation. The province thus decided to establish closer administration of the region through the Northwest Coast Agency of Indian Affairs. One of the Tsimshian communities, Metlakatla, responded by giving up their political fight for their rights in Canada, and relocated to Alaska, where the American government promised them reserves that could not be reduced.

Throughout the remaining years of the 19th century, political beliefs and aspirations similar to those of Nisga'a and Tsimshian chiefs were communicated by other First Nations leaders. For example, in 1888, Franz Boas transcribed a conversation with Chief Joseph of the Squamish Nation, a Coast Salish First Nations group. Chief Joseph asked Boas to help get a message to the Queen, explain that he had a complaint regarding White men unjustly stealing his land. Chief Joseph also specifically invited the Queen to come and see his land. Boas, when publishing based on these conversations, sanitized Chief Joseph's stories to be devoid of any mention of current political struggles. Yet, it is clear that one of Chief Joseph's motivations for engaging with Boas was to communicate their political position to a new audience.

In another example, in 1894, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation in the central-interior region of British Columbia, formerly referred to as the Canoe Creek Band, sent a petition to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, asking that their petition be forwarded to Ottawa. The petition offers an early expression of the normative grounding of First Nations' territorial rights. The first statement in the petition highlighted the Nation's historical and ancestral connection to their land, now partially held as a reserve, and made clear that they "cannot and will not leave the place where our old ones are resting" (Durien 1894). The Nation also made clear that they had the right to access and use their waterways and

hunting grounds as needed "from time immemorial" (Durien 1894). Although we have many recorded instances of BC First Nations asserting their pre-existing title and use-rights to their territories, this petition provides an early example of some of the reasoning and beliefs that underly the Nation's claim to land title, reasoning that was likely shared with some other Nations across the province. For the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem, they maintained these rights for two key reasons. First, there was a clear historical chain of land and use rights that were passed from their ancestors from time immemorial. Second, in saying that they cannot leave the land of their ancestors, the Nation made clear that their identity and life plans were necessarily tied to these places and the practices enables by their land use and land rights. They could not leave the land, because if they did they would cease to be, insomuch as their entire ways of living and deriving meaning would be severed. The Nation thus made their claim to land and use rights clear, and requested that their rights to their reserve land be upheld and undisturbed, and that their rights to water and hunted grounds now currently outside of reserve lands be restored.

An Indigenous Blockade and Treaty Eight

A final key event in Indigenous political organizing took place at the close of the 19th century, just as news of the Yukon gold rush spread. In 1898, an influx of European prospectors flooded northern British Columbia en route to the Yukon. First Nations peoples from the Beaver (Dunne-za) ethno-linguistic group understood this influx as both a threat and an opportunity to assert their Aboriginal rights. Adopting an approach not previously seen in Indigenous organizing in the region, hundreds of Beaver peoples blockaded prospectors at Fort St. John, interrupting their travel to the Yukon. The blockaders demanded a treaty.

Federal Northwest Mounted Police responded to the blockade, and the federal Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton quickly informed police that they could promise a treaty. At the same time, the federal government was already negotiating Treaty 8 with Indigenous peoples with territories directly east of the Beaver people, in what would become the province of Alberta. The federal cabinet authorized the extension of the treaty to British Columbia, noting that it would be dangerous and cause ongoing trouble to the Dominion and provincial governments to continue enforcing an artificial boundary between Indigenous peoples west and east of the border. The federal government sent a proposal to the province, offering to pay for all treaty costs, and requesting that the province confirm their willingness to relinquish claims to lands that would become reserves under the treaty. The provincial government did not indicate any willingness to provide sufficient reserve lands for a treaty, and instead the federal government had to find a solution. The federal government had transferred ownership of some tracks of land in British Columbia for infrastructure development by the province, so the federal government opted to place reserves within these areas, where the province could not easily claim land title. The reserves offered under treaty far exceeded the Trutchian policy of the province, offering 640 acres for each family of five (Tennant 2011, 66-67).

The negotiation of Treaty Eight in British Columbia was inconsistent and controversial, but it was nonetheless a pivotal moment in Indigenous political organizing in the province.

Although treaties were signed in 1899, the negotiation process of Treaty Eight in British Columbia stretched until 1915.⁵ In their mapping of Treaty Eight lands that year, the federal government claimed that 27% of the area of British Columbia was covered by the treaty, and thus ceded to the settler government. Yet, some Indigenous groups in that area were never consulted ⁶. Nonetheless, the province's failure to contest the treaty acknowledged, at least tacitly, that Aboriginal land title remained unceded across much of the province.

4.4 Indigenous Politics in British Columbia: 1900-1927

In the early 20th century, First Nations political organizing in British Columbia remained extensive. From 1900 until 1927, a number of new political tactics characterized political efforts to advance Indigenous peoples' political goals. First, across the period, regional organizing across the province intensified, with a number of new pan-tribal coalitions formalized. Second, an increasing number of First Nations leaders intensified their efforts to bring their claims to the Crown directly, sending delegates to London and asking Ottawa to bring Indigenous peoples' petitions and claims to the Crown. These two new developments were often interconnected, with appeals to the Crown emerging from pan-tribal organizing. Third, in the latter half of this period, a substantial portion of First Nations political organizing was directed at voicing opposition to a joint federal and provincial government Royal Commission on Indian Affairs. Organized opposition to the commission effectively ended in 1927, when a disastrous amendment to the Indian Act outlawed all political organizing for First Nations land claims, curtailing momentum from over sixty years of Indigenous political organizing in the province.

Most documentation of Indigenous political thought from this period are petitions and statements publicized by individual tribes and inter-tribal groups. While this section refers to and briefly analyzes the content of a number of influential political documents published by these Indigenous authors, this section looks at two petitions in more depth. The first is a 1909 petition to the King of England written by the Coast Salish Cowichan tribe. This petition is of particular interest because it was the first of BC First Nations petitions to rely heavily on British law to make a case for the continued existence of their territorial rights, and it was also a key catalyst in bringing about a new era of province-wide collaboration amongst First Nations. The second is a 1913 petition from the Nisga'a Tribe, which was informed by and in many ways adopted the new legal approach of the Cowichan petition. However, the Nisga'a petition also offered a more specific and detailed account of Aboriginal rights than was found in earlier petitions. Both petitions garnered widespread support of

⁵Today, the Nations included under the treaty include Doig River, Halfway River, Prophet River, Saulteau, West Moberly, and Fort Nelson First Nations.

⁶For a comprehensive history of the treaty process see, for example, Fumoleau and America 2004.

Indigenous leaders across the province, with many declarations of support issued for both petitions.

It is worth briefly noting some of the broader social and political conditions that contextualized BC First Nations politics in the early 20th century. By 1900, the province was divided into 15 Indian Agencies, each overseeing its own region or district. The Agencies and Indian Agents exercised supervision of "Indians," making day to day decisions about local matters, often even within Indigenous peoples' homes. The primary goal of Indian Affairs and the agencies was to oversee a strict program of colonial assimilation. The residential school program also continued throughout most of the 20th century as an important tool of this colonial assimilationist project.

A New Approach: Direct Appeals to the Crown

In 1906, a delegation of BC First Nations chiefs traveled to London to bring their complaints about broken promises made by Crown representatives to King Edward VII, and became the first delegation to get audience with the King. The delegation included two Coast Salish representatives, Cowichan Chief Charlie Isipaymilt and Squamish Chief Joe Capilano, one Interior Salish representative, Secwépemc (also referred to as Shuswap in English) Chief Basil David, and a Stó:lō translator, Simon Pierre. The Cowichan had also written a petition to the King in 1901, but little came of the effort (Foster et al. 2008, 253). The plan for the delegation was inspired by a trip taken by other BC First Nations leaders in who were able to meet with the Pope in 1904. After the return of this delegation in 1904, Indigenous peoples met throughout the province to discuss strategies of how to bring their land claims and grievances to the Crown, with meetings held across Salish territories, in Nanaimo, Quamichan, Vancouver, and Kamloops. By 1906, a plan emerged to bring a petition to the King, with Chief Joe Capilano taking a leading role in the effort. Capilano later claimed that his visit to the King represented 200,000 Indigenous peoples of British Columbia with whom he had met prior to his departure (Carlson 2005, 18).

The purpose of the trip was to bypass the Canadian and provincial governments, who had made it clear that they did not intend to uphold their earlier promises to Indigenous peoples, nor would they acknowledge Indigenous land title. The petition brought to England acknowledged this, stating that the government was made up by white people living on Indigenous lands, so they cannot expect the government to provide redress, especially since First Nations peoples cannot vote (Carlson 2005, 9-10). Before leaving to England, the delegates drew substantial media and public interest. In his speeches to Indigenous audiences prior to leaving, Capilano refused to provide an English translation to non-Indigenous spectators and interviewees. Similarly, the delegation revealed little details about their goals for the meeting with the King in their meetings with non-Indigenous government representatives. This secrecy fed into growing anticipation and interest amongst non-Indigenous peoples in the province (Carlson 2005, 11). Leading up the meeting, the delegation was consistently misled by both Canadian and British officials in attempts to stymie their political goals. The officials expressed doubt the that Chiefs could meet with the king, despite an appointment

already being scheduled, and they also forbid the Chiefs from laying their petition before the King. Nonetheless, the meeting occurred.

In a copy of the petition that was reportedly brought to the King, the chiefs made their grievances about broken promises regarding land and compensation clear, as well as their continued assertion of land title and rights. In a copy of the petition published by the newspaper, The Daily Colonist, the delegates state, "In other parts of Canada, the Indian title has been extinguished, reserving sufficient land for the use of the Indians, but in British Columbia the Indian title has never been extinguished, nor has sufficient land been allocated to our people for their maintenance" (Victoria Daily Colonist 1906, 8). The petition went on to explain that the promises made on behalf of the Crown by Sir James Douglas assured Indigenous peoples that large tracts of land would be left for their use, and that they would be remunerated for lands occupied by White settlers. Yet, they stated, they have been denied the renumeration for their land that they were promised. Further, land that was set aside for them had now been given to White men, leaving the Indigenous peoples only the worst quality land. While a few points are made to persuade the King that the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia are not savages, the petition does not state any other grievances, making clear that the delegation's sole purpose was to gain the King's support for Indigenous territorial rights and compensation for all settled lands in the province. The petition thus echoed the same key beliefs expressed nearly twenty years earlier by the north coast chiefs in Victoria. Reports on the outcome of the meeting vary widely, although the chiefs reported that the King made promises to right previous wrongs (Carlson 2005, 22-24). Yet, there was no sign in the coming years that King took any actions.

Figure 4.2: First Nations Delegates to England, Chiefs Capilano and Isipaymilt, with other Indigenous leaders and sub-chiefs (Matthews 1906)



Shifting Legal Strategies and Regional Indigenous Organizing

Over the following ten years, Indigenous groups across Canada made numerous additional attempts to have King Edward VII or the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council (JCPC) address their claims and grievances. In part, these efforts were encouraged by increasing tensions and disagreement between the provincial and federal governments in 1907 over who had title to reserve lands (Wickwire 2005, 191). The JCPC was the final court of appeal for British colonies, and Indigenous leaders at the time widely believed that the court would likely affirm BC First Nations' pre-existing rights and title, while any Canadian court would be likely to act in self-interest and deny such claims. These efforts to bring a case before the JCPC were also closely connected with new regional organizing amongst and between Indigenous groups.

The first key event in this organizing was the 1909 Cowichan petition to the King, which ushered in a new period of legal strategy in BC First Nations politics. The Cowichan worked with two white lawyers in the drafting in this petition, Arthur O'Meara and a prominent lawyer from Toronto, John Murray McShane Clark, as well as Charles Tate, a missionary who had also helped with the 1901 Cowichan petition (Foster et al. 2008, 251, 253). The petition, like many before it, focused near exclusively on making the case that they, the Cowichan, were and remained the rightful owners of their territories. The first statement in the petition reads:

1. THAT from time immemorial the Cowichan Tribe of Indians have been the possessors and occupants of the territory including the Cowichan Valley containing a large area and situate within the territorial limits of the said Province of British Columbia. (Cowichan Tribe 1909)

By the end of the petition, it is expressly clear that the petitions sole focus is to restore their possession of their territories, concluding that:

YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY that steps be taken to protect the usufructuary right of your petitioners in all of the said land, or, that in the alternative the whole question of rights of the said Tribe be submitted to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council for decision and determination. (Cowichan Tribe 1909)

The Cowichan's goal was to finally, after decades of protesting and petitioning, to restore their territorial rights to their land. The reference to usufructuary rights in the petition likely relied on a characterization of Aboriginal title as usufructuary rights in an 1888 court case, St. Catherine's Milling. The use and meaning of this terminology has been since scrutinized and debated by both academics and the Canadian courts (see, for example, Slattery 2000). It's likely however, that the Cowichan used the term to mean unalienable Aboriginal land title. While the purpose of the petition and the underlying Indigenous political beliefs regarding land rights communicated in the petition aligned closely with earlier petitions

by First Nations in the province, the Cowichan petition offered a unique legal approach to defending such claims.

The approach taken in the petition aimed to demonstrate that Aboriginal land title has always been recognized by the King's predecessors, relying near exclusively on reference Britain's own laws governing colonization and land title. While making a case in reference to previous promises made by Crown representatives was common across petitions, the decision to support this in reference to British laws was novel. Most importantly, in the eleven page petition, the Cowichan relied strongly on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to make their case for land claims.⁷ This was the first time in provincial history that First Nations invoked the proclamation in a petition. The petition also advances a complex argument invoking the 1888 St. Catherine's Milling case and the British North American Act. Finally, the petition argued that Article 13 of the Terms of the Union were in violation, as the province had not conveyed a single reserve to the Dominion since the Terms of the Union agreement was signed. In requesting that their claim be referred to the JCPC, they also offered a legal basis for the request.

The 1909 Cowichan petition does not demonstrate a significant break from Indigenous political thought of other regions, nor a shift from earlier articulations of Indigenous political thought in the province, but it does demonstrate an innovative use of the reasoning and political language of the British Empire to advance their own political ends. This innovation, and particularly the use of The Royal Proclamation of 1763 as a legal defense of continued Aboriginal land title, quickly spread after the Cowichan petition went public, which became in some instances a largely successful strategy. In the case of the Cowichan petition itself, O'Meara delivered the petition to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, who contacted Ottawa requesting an explanation of the issue (Wickwire 2005, 201). The Liberal government of the time then hired legal counsel, T.R.E. McInnes, to analyze the Cowichan claims. McInnes concluded that the claims made in the petition had merit, that there was indeed unextinguished "Indian title" in British Columbia. McInnes stated that as trustees of the Indians, the Dominion government had a responsibility to force the province into a resolution through the courts (Foster 2020, 9-10; Foster et al. 2008, 251).

Based on the Cowichan petition and McInnes' report, the Dominion government developed a plan over the next year to have the issue of land title heard before federal courts. In 1910, the Deputy Attorney General and the Dominion Deputy Minister of Justice decided on ten questions that would be heard at the courts, seven regarding reserve lands, and three regarding "Indian title." O'Meara and Clark approved the questions on behalf of BC First Nations, but Premier McBride refused any court proceedings unless the questions of title were removed. Over the next months, both Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous organizations lobbied and petitioned McBride and the provincial government to reconsider to no avail.

⁷For a detailed and valuable account of the legal argument of the 1909 Cowichan petition and the government's response, see Foster et al. 2008. However, Foster and Berger's account should be read with caution, as their historical narrative focuses primarily on the role of non-Indigenous actors in the development of the petition.

The petition was also an important catalyst for a new era of inter-tribal collaboration and collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the province. In 1909 three new organizations were created. Indigenous groups across coastal BC came together to create the first inter-tribal political organization in the province, the Indian Rights Association (IRA), whose goal was to have a legal case on land title and rights inspired by the Cowichan petition heard before the JCPC. O'Meara started a new organization of non-Indigenous British Columbians, called the Society of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia. The society lobbied the provincial government to grant Indigenous rights and raised money for Indigenous political activities and legal actions. Over the same period, Indigenous representatives were also meeting and organizing throughout the interior, and Interior Salish chiefs formed the Interior Tribes of British Columbia (ITBC) (Feltes 2015, 470; Tennant 2011, 87; Wickwire 2005, 192). These organizations also showed explicit support for one another. The IRA aligned itself with the demands and claims of the Cowichan petition, and at a 1910 meeting, the ITBC created a declaration in support of the IRA's appeals and claims. These southern interior chiefs also demanded a treaty process, compensation for all lands held by the province and settlers, larger reserves, and government recognition of their permanent land title (Indian Chiefs of the Southern Interior of British Columbia 1910). The lawyers O'Meara and Clark began working with each of the Indigenous organizations, and anthropologist James Teit built broader inter-tribal support for the IRA in his travels across the province (Wickwire 2005, 202; Foster et al. 2008, 251).

Across the province, bands and tribes aligned themselves with the IRA's demands. For example, in 1911, the Lillooet tribe issued a declaration of unanimous agreement with the IRA's position, and made a clear claim to their unceded territorial rights (Lillooet Tribe 1911). In 1911, nearly one hundred chiefs, representing many coastal and southern interior First Nations, met with Premier McBride in one of the largest efforts to press the provincial government to acknowledge Indigenous land claims since the petitions of the 1860s. The delegation urged McBride to recognize Indigenous rights, including land title, and offer more generous reserves, but McBride was dismissive (McBride 1911). The efforts of the ITBC also continued into 1912, pressing the federal government to bring their case to the Crown. In a letter signed by over sixty ITBC chiefs, they demanded to know the status of their claim to the crown, and reiterated their claims to land rights, as well as fishing and hunting rights (Interior Tribes of British Columbia 1912).

In 1910 and 1911, the Dominion government decided that they must force BC to court using a last-ditch strategy proposed by McInnes in 1909. They would sue homesteaders in the Skeena claiming that their provincial Crown grants were invalid, and that the land was actually "Indian title" land, which the Dominion held as a trust for their "Indian" wards. However, in the 1911 election, Liberal Prime Minister Laurier was replaced by Conservative Prime Minister Robert Borden, whose views were more aligned with the province. While there was some initial indication the Borden might follow through with Laurier's plans, the federal efforts to sue the province never materialized. In 1912, McKenna, Borden's new Special Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and McBride set out a plan to settle all differences between the governments regarding Indigenous lands, focusing solely on reserves and again

ignoring any questions of land rights and land title. The agreement set out plans for a royal commission to lay out new reserves in British Columbia, which would take place from 1913-1916.

The McKenna-McBride Commission and the Nisga'a Petition

With the new federal resistance to acknowledging First Nations' land title in British Columbia, the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission became another catalyst for Indigenous resistance, legal organizing, and inter-tribal collaboration across the province. During the commission, McKenna and other commissioners traveled across the province to conduct hearings, investigates the current status of reserves, and attempting to quash all discussion of Indigenous land title. Across the commission, hundreds of Indigenous peoples testified, expressing fears that their reserves would be reduced without their consent and that reserves were already too small. Many also asserted their Aboriginal title outside of reserves and demanded treaties, but the commissioners would either deflect these topics, dismiss the Indigenous witnesses making such claims, or close the hearings (Tennant 2011, 96-97).⁸ The commission quickly faced Indigenous resistance. For example, the IRA issues a resolution in 1913 rejecting the commission because the commissioners were biased, and maintained that the issue of land title must be settled before any discussion of reserves (Indian Rights Assocation of British Columbia 1913).

Perhaps the most influential Indigenous action of this period was the Nisga'a petition of 1913. In 1907, Nisga'a chiefs had undertaken a political restructuring to better respond to colonial political systems and land dispossession, creating the Nisga'a Land Committee. With the McKenna-McBride commission underway, the Nisga'a Land Committee intensified their efforts to have their case for territorial rights heard by a the JCPC, writing a statement to be distributed to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as well as a petition to the King George V and the Privy Council. The petition followed much of the same format and content of the Cowichan petition, with some notable exceptions.

Unlike previous petitions, the Nisga'a petition makes an explicit claim of Indigenous sovereignty at the time of British settlement in British Columbia, stating, "From time immemorial the said Nation or Tribe of Indians exclusively possessed, occupied and used and exercised sovereignty over that portion of the territory now forming the Province of British Columbia which is included within the following limits," after which, the petition describes in close geographical detail the precise boundaries of the Nisga'a territory (Conference of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia 1915). In the following passage, the Nisga'a go on to state, "Your Petitioners believe the fact to be that, when sovereignty over the territory included within the aforesaid limits (hereinafter referred to as "the said territory") was assumed by Great Britain, such sovereignty was accepted by the said Nation or Tribe, and

⁸The transcripts of the commission hearings offer another rich opportunity to study the varied political thought of Indigenous leaders across the province, containing many clear articulations of the normative and political reasoning undergirding various Indigenous political claims.

the right of the said Nation or Tribe to possess, occupy and use the said territory was recognised by Great Britain" (Conference of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia 1915). The Nisga'a then continues on to provide evidence of the Crown's recognition of the tribe's right to possess, occupy, and use their territory. Invoking the concept of sovereignty in these passages, the Nisga'a claim that their nation or tribe exercised sovereignty over their territories prior to British colonization. The Nisga'a also acknowledge that they, as a Nation, accepted Great Britain's claim to sovereignty over the same territories, and that at the same time, Great Britain acknowledged and accepted the Nisga'a Nation's right to possess, occupy, and use the same territory. Thus, the Nisga'a position their acknowledgment of British sovereignty as an agreement amongst Nations, where Nisga'a Nation's pre-existing land and use rights were acknowledged and upheld by the British Empire, and that reciprocally, their Nation would respect British Sovereignty and accept their new role as British subjects.

Quoting at length from the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the petition establishes that according to the Proclamation, Nisga'a people maintain possession and use rights of their territories. Some of the passages of the Proclamation contained in the petition include the following:

And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to Our Interests and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians, with whom We are connected, and who live under Our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds. (Conference of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia 1915, 5)

The following passages of the Proclamation enclosed in the petition also emphasize that unceded lands are reserved for the use of Indigenous peoples, and that such lands should not be surveyed by any colonial representatives. All non-Indigenous persons on such unceded lands, intentionally or not, are also required to vacate their settlements according to the Proclamation (Conference of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia 1915, 6). The Nisga'a then outline that no part of their territory has even been purchased by or ceded to the Crown, and that consequently the Proclamation has been violated and Nisga'a continue to hold tribal title to their entire territories.

The Nisga'a theory of rights forwarded in the petition has two additional characteristics that set it apart from most earlier articulations of Indigenous political thought in the region. First, the Nisga'a clarify that they are "claiming to a hold a tribal title to the whole of said territory both by aboriginal right and under the said Proclamation." Thus, the rights claimed are not only by nature of Britain's express acknowledgment of such rights in the Proclamation and elsewhere, but also because they have inherent or at least pre-existing Aboriginal rights. In the Land Committee's statement, the Nisga'a further specify that this claim of Aboriginal rights is a claim to "the rights of men" as the territories aboriginal inhabitants (Conference of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia 1915, 1). Nisga'a then, argue, that they hold

Aboriginal rights irrespective of British laws and acknowledgment. This does not differ in some respects from the position articulated by the Nisga'a and Tsimshian chiefs who met with the premier in 1887, who also invoked both British justice and justice according to their own principles. Yet, this 1913 articulation offered new and more detailed accounts of both.

A second interesting development in this claim to rights is that the Nisga'a asserted that these Aboriginal rights were and remain exclusive rights to possess, occupy, and use the land. While some earlier claims of BC First Nations land title and other territorial rights likely implied that these rights were exclusive, the Nisga'a petition is one of the first places this belief is made explicit. This claim helps to make clear why any settlement or settler-activity on unceded Nisga'a territory would violate Nisga'a peoples' Aboriginal rights.

As was done in earlier petitions, the Nisga'a requested that this case of Aboriginal rights be brought to the JCPC. Ottawa, and in particular, a recently appointed Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, quickly attempted to avoid any British involvement with the Nigsa'a case. Scott was an extreme assimilationist, who over his government tenure would come to advance some of the most destructive federal policies on Indigenous peoples in the country's history. On Scott's recommendation, parliament passed an order-in-council in 1914 that Indigenous claims to the lands of British Columbia would be addressed by the federal Exchequer Court, with a right to appeal to the Privy Council. However, this case would only be allowed under three extremely prohibitive conditions: that "Indians" would surrender title completely for treaty benefits if the court did determine that they had land title, that they would accept the reserve recommendations of the McKenna-McBride commission as the final say on reserves, and that the "Indians" accept only legal representation selected by the Dominion. Indigenous peoples across the province rejected these terms, and intensified their efforts to collaborate across tribes to find other avenues to have their demands for rights and title met. A Nisga'a delegation including Chief W.J. Lincoln and O'Meara went to Ottawa in 1915 to lobby that Nisga'a land claims be adjudicated by the colonial secretary, which Scott rejected, suggesting that they take their case to the Royal Commission hearings (Titley 1986, 143-144). Thus, the Nisga'a petition was cast aside by the federal government as the Commission moved forward.

In 1916, the commission made its report, suggesting many changes to reserves, for none of which they had obtained consent from the relevant Indigenous tribes or families. Overall, the commission's recommendations suggested that 87,291 acres be added to reserves across the province, and that 47,058 acres be removed from reserves. However, the land to be removed from reserves was high value and sought after land, and the land the commission recommended be added to reserves was generally low quality land in undesirable locations, and worth considerably less (Tennant 2011, 98). In 1916, a Nisga'a delegation traveled to Ottawa for six weeks, demanding that the McKenna-McBride report not be implemented until their petition was addressed in Britain (Tennant 2011, 93). While the commission's findings were not immediately implemented, as they required Indigenous peoples' consent, the province and federal government continued to treat the Commission's Report as a suitable alternative to addressing land claims.

Figure 4.3: Interior BC Chiefs in Ottawa, accompanied by James Teit, 1916. Left to right: Chief John Tetlenitsa (Nlaka'pamux), James Teit, Chief Paul David (Ktunaxa) and Chief Thomas Adolph (St'at'imc) (Lyonde 1916)



The Intensification of Province-Wide Indigenous Political Organizing: The Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia

Over the course of the Commission, Indigenous organizing in the province became increasingly unified. In 1915, the Interior Tribes membership expanded to include the northern Shuswap and the Kootenay. Some Coast Salish chiefs also attended the Interior Tribes 1915 assembly at Spences Bridge, where the assembly endorsed the Nisga'a petition and authored their own petition to be brought to Ottawa by a delegation (Interior Indians of British Columbia 1915; Tennant 2011, 93). In 1916, two Indigenous leaders, Andrew Paull and Peter Kelly, organized an Indigenous peoples conference on a Squamish Nation reserve in North Vancouver. Representatives from at least 16 tribal groups attended the meeting, representing nearly all tribal groups in the province. The primary groups not represented were the Nuu'chah'nulth and Kwagiulth (Kwakiutl).

The conference resulted in the founding of the first province-wide Indigenous political organization, called the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia (AITBC). The purpose of establishing the Allied Tribes was explicitly to collaboratively work to preserve all Indigenous rights and claims, and their first message to Ottawa stated that they unanimously refused any settlement offered by the McKenna Agreement. They also indicated that they would continue to press for their claims to be heard by the JCPC. The Allied Tribes also

approved a resolution to collectively reject Scott's order-in-council regarding the conditions for a federal land title hearing (Tennant 2011, 94-95). Peter Kelly and the conference secretary, James Teit, issued a clear statement synthesizing the conference and their resolutions (Kelly and Teit 1916). The formation of the Allied Tribes resulted in the disbanding of the Indian Rights Association, however the Interior Tribes persisted as a regional organization and continued to meet and pass additional resolutions (Allied Tribes of British Columbia 1919). In 1919, the Allied Tribes continued to hold their stance that claims must be brought to the JCPC, refusing to engage in implementation of the Commission report or other reserve adjustments until the Nisga'a petition was considered by the JCPC (Allied Tribes of British Columbia 1919). Across the province, then, Indigenous peoples aligned themselves with both the demands and potential outcomes of the Nisga'a Petition, which itself followed closely on the shoulders of the Cowichan petition.

Three key contextualizing events in federal and provincial politics took place in the 1920s that drastically influenced Indigenous political organizing in the province, including the direction of the new political coalition of the AITBC. First, in 1920, after much disagreement between the federal and provincial governments about the implementation of the Royal Commission's report, the federal government passed legislation that reneged an essential promise of the Royal Commission to Indigenous peoples. The British Columbia Indian Land Settlement Act, or Bill 13, enabled the federal government to implement the recommendations of the Commission regarding reductions or cutoffs to reserves without the consent of the relevant Indigenous peoples. The Allied Tribes issued a petition demanding that the bill be withdrawn, which garnered some support in the House of Commons. In response, the Superintendent General, Arthur Meighen, denied that the Allied Tribes represented the opinions of Indigenous peoples in the province, while Scott asserted that consent regarding cut-offs was unnecessary because the "Indians" did not really need those lands (Titley 1986, 148). Despite some opposition, then, Bill 13 was passed.

Second, also in 1920, a wave of arrests of Indigenous peoples swept across the province. In 1914 and 1918, Scott had expanded anti-potlatch provisions of the Indian Act to effectively prohibiting all gatherings of Indigenous peoples, with a minimum penalty of at least two months in jail. It was not until 1920 that the provisions began to be enforced, with many chiefs and other Indigenous leaders arrested and convicted. These rapid and disastrous shifts in provincial and federal policy had an immediate impact on the Allied Tribes and local Indigenous governance. While some previously unaffiliated chiefs opted to join the Allied Tribe, the organizations third assembly in 1922, now an illegal gathering, was not as well attended as their previous assemblies. Nonetheless, the Allied Tribes redoubled their efforts to have the case of Aboriginal land title decided by British courts, reiterating their support for their earlier 1919 statement (Tennant 2011, 103). From 1920 until 1923, the Allied Tribes

⁹The conference resolutions could be a valuable political statement to study further.

¹⁰Following quickly on the heels of Bill 13, the federal government also passed Bill 14 to expedite assimilation and solve the so-called "Indian problem." The Bill allowed the settler government to enfranchise Indigenous individuals without their consent, and made it easier for government officials to force Indigenous children into residential schools. (Tennant 2011, 100)

sent letters to the King, met with both Scott and the Minister of Indian Affairs, proposed renewed negotiations, and set out conditions under which they would ceded their Aboriginal title to the province (Titley 1986, 151-152). The third key event then occurred in 1924, when, despite continued Indigenous resistance, the Mckenna-McBride recommendations were implemented without consulting with or gaining consent of BC First Nations, removing "cutoff lands" from reserves across the province (Tennant 2011, 103-104).

The Allied Tribes, now severely restricted by the anti-potlatch laws, continued to place pressure on Ottawa to reverse their decision, which eventually resulted in an overwhelmingly biased federal inquiry into the Allied Tribe's claims. In both 1925 and 1926, the Allied Tribes sent delegations to Ottawa. The 1925 delegation reiterated their willingness to negotiate, and insisted that negotiations have an option to appeal to the Privy Council. With little response, Kelly and O'Meara returned to Ottawa in 1926 with a petition from the Allied Tribes. Like earlier petitions, this petition stated that Indian Tribes of British Columbia claim "actual beneficial ownership of their territories," which need not exclude or undermine the Crown's underlying title to the land (Kelly 1926). They also demanded that their claims be heard by the Privy Council, and that a special committee be established by the federal government to consider the matter.

In 1927, the federal government approved a special joint Senate-House committee to inquire into the claims outlined in the Allied Tribe's petition. The committee heard from witnesses and feigned impartiality as they conducted an investigation, but the ultimate goal of the committee was to quiet First Nations' land claims emerging from the province and prevent the case from successfully reaching the Privy Council (Titley 1986, 157). Witnesses included interior chiefs Chillihitza and Basil David, who stated that the Allied Tribes did not speak for the interior tribes. but made their own case, and Allied Tribe representatives, including Kelly, Paull, and O'Meara. Later that year, the committee members made their report, deciding unanimously that the petitioners had "not established any claim to the lands of British Columbia based on aboriginal or other title" (House of Commons 1927). They further decided that because BC First Nations rejected the opportunity to have a case heard under restrictive conditions in 1914, that there should not be another opportunity for the claims to be made and "that the matter should now be regarded as finally closed" (House of Commons 1927).

While the Indigenous political organizing and resistance in British Columbia was unlikely to be deterred by the findings of the biased special committee, the federal government quickly struck a final blow to BC First Nations land claims. In 1927, legislation to amend the Indian Act was passed, Section 141, which outlawed all fund-raising activities, exchange or promise of payments, and "contributions" for the prosecution of any Indigenous person's or group's claim, as well as any efforts to recover money for the benefit for a tribe or band (Government of Canada 1927). The only exception was if the Superintendent General gave

¹¹Transcripts from the joint-committee hearing could offer another opportunity for the study of Indigenous political thought in the region, which are available in the Special Joint Committee on Claims of Allied Indian Tribes of B.C., vol. 1.

their written consent. Anyone caught engaging in such unsanctioned behavior would either be sentenced to up two months in prison or charged a penalty of up to two hundred dollars. In essence, this amendment restricted Indigenous peoples across the country from engaging in any legal action, including land claims. With this restriction on funding for political claims, delegates would no longer be able to travel to Ottawa, London, or even Victoria, an activity which was typically supported by fund-raising, and all income sources going to organizations such as the Allied Tribes and the Nisga'a Land Committee were prohibited, making it near impossible for the organizations to pay for meeting venues, or even printing and postage. Coupled with the potlatch prohibitions, Section 141 effectively meant that all political organizing regarding land claims was now illegal. The Allied Tribes disbanded and Indigenous political organizing largely dissolved or moved underground, stymieing over 60 years of public Indigenous political petitioning and legal actions.

4.5 Conclusion

Indigenous peoples from the territories that are now British Columbia have actively and persistently resisted and rejected the dispossession of their lands by European colonizers since the intensification of European invasion in the 1860s. As historical political statements made by First Nations peoples demonstrate, these acts to resist and reject land dispossession go beyond simple property claims. Instead, they are concerned with protecting and maintaining entire ways of life on First Nations' land, which include, for example, place-based practices of politics, social organization, food and resource collection, religion, culture, and knowledge. As Nisga'a Chief Charles Barton succinctly put it in his visit to meet with provincial government officials in 1887, "we want to be free on top of this land" (British Columbia Legislative Assembly 1887, 259). Despite regional variance, Indigenous politics throughout the region, until at least 1927, shared a central commitment to maintaining Indigenous self-determination, self-governance, and jurisdiction on their own lands.

After the violent end to the Tsilhqot'in War, Indigenous peoples' concerted actions to defend against colonial usurpation took overwhelmingly non-violent forms, including petitioning, protest, coalition building amongst Indigenous groups across the province, and meetings with colonial officials. The earliest post-Tsilhqot'in war actions were written petitions presented to colonial representatives. Less than ten years after European settlements intensified in 1857, thousands of Indigenous peoples gathered at the colonial capital in New Westminster and sent chiefs as representatives to petition the colonial governor, Governor Seymour. Across three key petitions addressed to Seymour in 1864, 1865, and 1866, respectively, the core messages of the Indigenous representatives remained the same. Most centrally, the petitioners asserted that land occupied by white settlers were Indigenous lands, and they appealed to Seymour to protect their lands. In these petitions, chiefs also asserted that compensation was due for lands occupied by settlers, and that Indigenous peoples should be able continue to access and use their lands occupied by settlers. These statements convey the chiefs' expectations and underlying assumptions that even when Indigenous peoples al-

lowed white settlement in exchange for compensation, settlement did not negate Indigenous access and use of those settled land. They also conveyed a conviction that Seymour was responsible for upholding agreements and promises made by his predecessors, even when such agreements lacked formal treaty making.

The next key historical event looked at closely in this chapter was the 1887 meeting between Nisga'a and Tsimshian chiefs with Premier Smithe and other officials of the colonialprovincial government in Victoria. In this meeting, the chiefs established a clear position that their communities demanded treaties, stating: "we have come for nothing but to see about the land which we know is ours" (British Columbia Legislative Assembly 1887, 257). Their statements throughout the meeting demonstrate that the chiefs and their communities, like the petitioners a decade earlier, were centrally concerned with dispossession of their lands and land rights. Further, they clearly articulated that their goal was to restore their freedom on these lands. Their political project then, was not to just restore and protect land rights, but self-government and self-determination. The central goals of treaty-making and self-determination were also clear elsewhere in the province. For example, in 1898, Beaver First Nations peoples in northern British Columbia took non-violent direct actions to demand treaties, and became the first Indigenous group in the province to secure a treaty with settler governments in over fifty years. By the end of the 19th century, Indigenous political leaders across the province clearly laid out their political thinking before authorities of the settler state. In addition to articulating their beliefs regarding Indigenous land ownership, Indigenous use and access rights, and the types of relationships and agreements that ought to be upheld between settlers and Indigenous peoples, some leaders also offered clear articulations of the ancestral relationships to their land which grounded Indigenous land rights, including rights of occupancy and rights to freely hunt and fish on their own lands. Other leaders also shared clear accounts of how Indigenous peoples could remain free on their land, while also accepting British rule of law and ideals of justice, maintaining a relationship with the British Empire and white settlers.

Into the 20th century, the written historical record reveals Indigenous leaders' increasingly persistent and detailed arguments against continuing colonial dispossession of Indigenous lands, rights, and freedoms. New approaches emerged, where Indigenous leaders increasingly sought to bypass the biased colonial governments of British Columbia and Canada, appealing directly to the King through petitions with clear legal arguments that Aboriginal land title in the province was not extinguished. This period of political action largely focused on demonstrating that dispossession of Indigenous lands violated Britain's own laws. The shifting focus to land title and its protection under British law was not a clear departure from earlier claims that the land belonged to Indigenous peoples, that Indigenous peoples maintained rights to self-determination and self-government on their lands, and that the Crown was responsible for upholding earlier agreements with Indigenous peoples. Despite shifting tactics, most Indigenous leaders in both the 19th and 20th centuries conveyed that they were primarily focused on restoring and protecting Indigenous rights to occupy and freely use their territories. The early 20th century also brought new regional and provincial alliances amongst Indigenous groups, developing concerted efforts to bring about a resolution

with the Crown.

With a deeper sense of the historical, political, and theoretical context offered in this chapter, we can continue to better understand contemporary Indigenous politics and political thought in the region. In particular, the chapter provides clear evidence that contemporary Indigenous challenges to assumptions of settler-state legitimacy, along with other hinge assumptions common across modern and contemporary political theorizing, are contextualized by longstanding traditions of Indigenous political thought that also pose challenges to settlerstate legitimacy in British Columbia. The historical and longstanding challenges posed to dominant assumptions of political thought include not only assumptions about settler-state authority and processes of legitimating authority, but about broad issues of land, ownership, right-relationship, proper forms of representation, and responsibilities to uphold agreements. Efforts to engage Indigenous political thought thus are challenged to respond to not only a broad range of cross-disciplinary contemporary Indigenous political thought, but a rich history of Indigenous challenges to dominant assumptions about the political. The longevity of these Indigenous political challenges also might tell us something about the exclusions and misrepresentations of traditions of academic political theory. Despite the persistence of Indigenous scholars and political leaders to make their political thought known, academic political theorists have largely eschewed Indigenous challenges to the authority of the settlerstate not only in recent decades, but, in the case of the British Columbian and Canadian contexts, for over 150 years.

The history offered in this chapter does not claim to detail all Indigenous peoples' acts of refusal, continuity, and survivance, nor the political thought and ontologies that informed such acts, during the period of the 1850s to 1920s. In part, the limitations of the narrative offered here is a result of efforts by missionaries and colonial government officials to suppress and prohibit Indigenous political activities, which pushed much of Indigenous political life into secrecy. Further, my reliance on written historical documentation throughout the chapter limits the scope of Indigenous histories narrated here, and my engagement of each case of Indigenous political utterances was brief and offered only a cursory analysis. Future historical analyses could be improved by relying on a broader set of historical documentation, including oral histories and documentation kept in the private archives of B.C. First Nations groups. Yet, even with a partial archive, it is clear that Indigenous peoples across the province actively combated colonial dispossession and oppression since the earliest years of settlement until at least the 1920s. And while this chapter concludes with the changes of 1927, the history of Indigenous political action and organizing continued throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, and continues today.

Chapter 5

A shíshálh Political Theory: Responsibility and Territorial Jurisdiction

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces, interprets, and engages with the political theorizing of one Indigenous elder from the shíshálh¹ Nation, in British Columbia, Canada. The chapter approaches oral history as a possible political theory "text," analyzing the political teachings, values, and reasoning communicated through oral histories. While there are many documented Indigenous oral histories available across archives, the approach I take to engaging oral history in this chapter is collaborative, requiring original empirical work to build relationships, document oral histories, and collaboratively reflect on the political thought and meaning embedded within oral accounts.

There are three main contributions I set out to offer in this chapter. First, the chapter demonstrates one possible approach to engaging contemporary Indigenous political thought, informed by the perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars discussed in the previous sections. Second, the chapter offers a collaborative, interpretive account of the political thought of one shishalh elder who is a hereditary chief, former Chief of the Band Council, and oral historian. The purpose of this is to both understand this shishalh political thought on its own terms, and to provide political theorists insight into one Indigenous perspective, which might help to facilitate, in some small way, efforts to work towards a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought within political theory discourses. Third, the chapter offers my own reflections on what I take to be some of the key insights and

¹The name shíshálh is also anglicized as Sechelt. Although many external references to the Nation use the name Sechelt Nation, I will use the name shíshálh Nation, as this is the name now commonly used by shíshálh people. In sháshíshálem, the language of the shíshálh people, there are no capital letters, so I follow that writing convention in my use of shíshálh proper nouns.

challenges that this shíshálh political thought might pose for current discussions of territorial rights, land, jurisdiction, and responsibility.

As discussed in the previous chapters, few political theorists have engaged with the political thought of First Nations political leaders from British Columbia. The shíshálh Nation is one of 198 First Nations bands recognized by the provincial settler government of the land now called British Columbia. One of the reasons that shíshálh Nation is politically unique is that the Nation was the first Indigenous group in Canada to exit the jurisdiction of the *Indian Act*, gaining a federally and provincially sanctioned form of self-government. While there have been multiple opinion pieces and articles written on shíshálh self-government and the colonial history of the region, there have been no comprehensive engagements with shíshálh political thought nor the theories that inform the Nation's political practices (Jeffries 1991; Roy and Taylor 2012; Etkin 1988). Thus, this chapter contributes a contemporary account of shíshálh political thought that might be interesting to political theorists and political scholars working across disciplines, as well as to Nation members.

This chapter focuses specifically on the political theories of one shishalh elder, $hiwus^2$, engaging with their political thought as communicated through their original oral histories, open-ended interviews or conversations, and collaborative documentation and interpretation. Many opportunities for engaging Indigenous political thought center on reading and interpreting texts and archival documents, which can include oral histories or interviews with Indigenous thought leaders. The collaborative element of the research presented in this chapter goes further, offering a uniquely engaged reading of Indigenous political thought that explicitly involves the theorist in the interpretive process. The purpose and value of this collaborative method will be expanded on in the methodology section.

The "shíshálh political theory" engaged in this chapter is ascribed to this one individual, rather than being taken as representative of the entire shíshálh culture or community. While my engagement will offer one shíshálh political theory, engagement with the oral histories or writing of other shíshálh community members would likely result in a distinct body of theoretical assertions and reasoning. Consequently, the account offered here does not seek to genealogically assess whether this shíshálh political thought is a so-called "authentic" representation of pre-colonial values, nor whether the theory is "traditional" or representative of a generalizable shíshálh ethos or worldview. Rather, the political theory is approached as a contemporary theory worth our attention and consideration, particularly for those theorizing on territory or environment. Still, engaging with this contemporary theory might begin to provide insight into general traditions of shíshálh political thought and practices.

The theories of the particular individual focused on in this chapter may interest us for a number of reasons. First, hiwus is generally well respected and well known in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of the village of Sechelt and the shishall Nation, and in the broader Coast Salish community. Second, hiwus was closely involved in the self-government

²híwus' colonial name is Calvin Craigan. híwus is a sháshíshálem word that means "boss, chief, employer, important person, king, leader manager, person in authority" (Beaumont 2011, 590). The name is also used by some individuals and by the band council to refer to elected chiefs of the shíshálh Nation. Calvin's personal relationship to this name will be discussed in a later section.

efforts of shíshálh Nation. The shíshálh self-government process and model has now been studied by other First Nations, and it is therefore possible that the elder's political thought has had considerable political impact not only on shíshálh Nation, but Indigenous political elsewhere. While the purpose of this chapter is not to assess the reach and impact of their political theory, this historical context may give us reason to believe that this shíshálh political thought could offer valuable contributions to current political theory dialogs and debate. Third, and most importantly, the elder was interested in engaging with this research as a mutually beneficial endeavor; their view was that the present research may positively inform the political future of the shíshálh Nation. This is important because, as I argued in Chapter 2, engagements with Indigenous political thought ought to be attentive to the political aspirations of the relevant Indigenous community.

This chapter proceeds by first expanding on the empirical and collaborative methodology used for oral history interviews. It also speaks briefly to the theoretical approach taken in the reading of oral history as political theory. The second section offers a brief contextualizing political and cultural history of shíshálh Nation and the shíshálh people. Although the focus of this chapter is not centrally historicist, some historical context of shíshálh Nation can be interpretively valuable. Some of the broader provincial contextualizing history was provided in the previous chapter, although this is limited as the current chapter focuses on contemporary political thought. The third section recounts a key oral history shared by híwus, which tells a creation myth of the shíshálh people. Next, the section offers an interpretive and collaborative analysis of and elaborates on the key political reasoning, judgments, and values embedded in the myth. This analysis is informed by oral history interviews, and offers an interpretations of key elements of híwus' political theory beyond what is explicitly discussed in the creation myth.

With an interpretation of hiwus' political theory established, the final sections of this chapter shift from collaborative work to my own engagement with some of hiwus' political thought. I explain my own interpretation of some key concepts in hiwus' political thought, and suggest that these provide a novel and compelling account of territory and territorial duties that disrupt many key assumptions of today's dominant theories of territory. In particular, I find that hiwus' account of land and interdependence seems to me to center questions of who has responsibilities to care for land, and what this responsibility might entail, rather than centering questions of who has what rights to territory.

5.2 Methods

Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that decolonial methodologies are less about the actual selection and techniques of a methodological tool, and more about "the context in which research problems are conceptualized" and "the implications of research for its participants and their communities" (Smith 2021, 286). The design and presentation of the research presented in this chapter adopts a decolonial approach in three key respects, which will be returned to after laying out the central empirical techniques of the chapter.

The shíshálh political thought engaged with in this chapter is informed by original research conducted with shíshálh Nation members to collect, document, and reflect on shíshálh political thought. This qualitative research assumes that political theories are not only found in formal texts but can be communicated through and interpreted from oral histories and verbal political discourse. The oral history story telling form most closely engaged in the analysis offered here are creation or teaching stories, which hold mythical elements that convey an epistemology and important teachings and practices (Kovach 2021, 180-181). The research developed in this chapter focuses primarily on the shíshálh political thought communicated in the oral histories and reflections of one elder, who is both a hereditary chief, former Chief of the Band Council, and an oral historian.

This research was approved with exempt status by the University of California, Berkeley committee for the protection of human subjects in October 2019. I lived in shishalh territories in my youth, so participants were identified through my personal networks and pre-existing relationships. The elder whom this chapter focuses on is someone I met and spoke to in community events and settings multiple times prior to the commencement of research. They know some of my immediate family, and I know some of theirs. Thus, the research offered here was pursued and conducted on a pre-existing relationship of trust, which is encouraged in Indigenous research methodologies (Kovach 2021, 183). This explicitly incorporated an attention to relationality, and particularly the relationship between the people involved and place, a key concept for Indigenous methodologies scholars (Kovach 2021, 149).

The research proposal and goals were also collaboratively developed in consultation with hiwus. We discussed the possibility of a project focused on shishalh political thought before I proposed the project to my academic advisors. hiwus was initially interested in the project because it could potentially help to inform ongoing efforts to amend the shishalh constitution. He thought it would be beneficial for future constitutional amendments to reflect shishalh political traditions, and that research on shishalh teachings and political thought could support such an end. As the project evolved, new goals and expectations about its possible benefits emerged. hiwus now plans to use this chapter as part of their own efforts to educate others. For example, he expects to work from the chapter in a course he teaches with the Sunshine Coast Eldercollege, called "Welcome to our swiya."

Interviews and documentation of oral histories analyzed in this chapter took place from December 2019 through March 2020, while meetings to work on collaborative synthesis and writing continued into July 2022. After obtaining participants' informed consent, interviews and oral histories were recorded and transcribed. Oral histories shared by hiwus were documented over 8.5 hours of open ended oral-history interviews, spanning 6 interview sittings. All interviews with hiwus were conducted in hiwus' home, at their request, and at times that were selected by them. I also observed hiwus in public meetings, and spoke to hiwus outside of their home during the research period. All interviews were transcribed.

Interviews conducted with hiws included elements of oral history interviews, semistructured interviews on contemporary and forward-looking topics, and conversational methods. I prepared an interview protocol with open-ended questions and topics for conversation for each meeting with hiws. The interviews initially focused primarily on two key topics. First, they focused on the political teachings and values hiwus was taught by family and other shishall Nation members throughout their life. This included discussion of what hiwus perceived as political teachings and values that are representative of shishall culture. Second, they included discussion of stories and teachings that hiwus saw as valuable for conveying key culturally-situated political values and practices. Throughout our conversations, other topics were brought up by hiwus. For example, they shared their past and current political aspirations, and their understanding of other shishall Nation political leaders' political aspirations and practices. Some interviews, then, focused on the interconnections of political values and political aspirations.

Beyond the designing of the research plan, conducting of interviews and the synthesis of interview materials into written word also included collaborative elements. Consequently, hiwus is referred to as a collaborator, rather than a research informant or participant. The interview structure and conversational approach explicitly allowed and encouraged hiwus to take direction of what they wanted to share. Outside of formal interviews, we collaboratively analyzed and synthesized the interviews. This took the form of hiwus reviewing draft versions of this chapter and providing their oral feedback and suggestions on how to improve aspects of the written analysis, and particularly section 5.4. Other sections of this chapter were not as extensively co-created, but hiwus nonetheless reviewed the sections and provided feedback. We discussed the chapter and edits at hiwus' home and using remote communication technologies. After their feedback was incorporated, hiwus also reviewed the second draft of these sections, and consented to the publication and public dissemination of the current version of the chapter.

The research process was not without challenges, set backs, oversights, and errors. I did not successfully obtain explicit approval to conduct the present research from the shíshálh Nation elected Chief and Council. Before purusing the project, I made contact with shíshálh Nation officials in 2019 and discussed the idea in detail with one official. My general idea at that point was to engage any interested shíshálh Nation elders in the project, not only through oral histories conversations and interviews, but also through group conversations. The person I spoke with was generally supportive of the proposal and did not share any concerns, nor did they direct me to a formal research proposal process. In late 2019, once I had obtained ethics approval through the University of California, Berkeley, I began fieldwork in shíshálh territories, and as I inquired about accessing shíshálh archives, I was directed to talk to a second official within the shishall Nation. I met with them in early 2020, and they directed me to submit a formal written research proposal for the Band and Council to review. I provided the proposal as requested and followed up with this official in person and via remote communication technologies, but I did not receive a response regarding the status of the proposal. It was clear in our limited interactions that shishall Nation officials and staff were very busy.

Shortly after this period, the COVID-19 pandemic began, which, at least in its early months, had a disproportionate effect on Indigenous communities in British Columbia. Inperson research quickly came to a halt, and I had to reformulate the current research. A revised research proposal using only remote communication technologies was reviewed and

accepted by the University of California, Berkeley Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. In April 2020, I contacted the Nation and communicated that I was interested in offering a revised proposal that would prioritize the health and safety of all included, which would focus on accessing relevant digitally archived materials and potentially conducting phone interviews with interested elders. I did not receive a response, and I assumed that the Nation had more important matters to attend to, keeping their community members safe and healthy. My dissertation research shifted towards archival and historical inquiries beyond the shíshálh Nation, which resulted in the previous chapter and parts of the current chapter.

Throughout this process, I also consulted with hiwus, whom I continued to work with as he did not feel that formal approval, or lack thereof, from the Chief and Council had bearing on his own right to share his oral histories and collaborate with me on research related to the shishalh Nation. Although I would have preferred to have explicit support of the elected Chief and Council, I felt that it was ethical to continue working on research with hiwus and engaging publicly available materials on the shishalh Nation. I discuss some of these challenges and lessons learned in undertaking this research in more detail in the concluding chapter.

Returning to Smith's concept of decolonial methods, the overall methodological approach of this chapter is decolonial in three key respects. First, the research aims and questions were designed in collaboration with the key shishálh research collaborator. This means that the research was not conducted with an expectation that it would result in theoretical insights relevant to particular contemporary debates. The broader theoretical relevance of studying this shishálh political thought, which is engaged in the final section of the chapter, emerged only after empirical research was conducted. It also means that oral history interviews and empirical work was only conducted when and on the terms that were deemed valuable by hiwus. Second, this research project is conceptualized and framed within a history of Indigenous resistance and agency, which was explored in some detail in the previous chapter. This centers shishálh political insights as both of historical value and importance to the region, and of intellectual value to broader theoretical debates. Third, the analysis of the key themes in shishálh political thought offered in section 5.4 were written collaboratively with the key participant. This ensured that the research outputs would be, to the best of our ability, in the interest of the shishálh community.

The transformation of oral histories to written form in this chapter does not assume that written communications are superior to oral communications; rather, written expression of oral histories are often stripped of important relational and affective experience and context. Working with written oral history and Indigenous political thought thus requires explicit attention to the relational context of both the collaborators and readers.

The contextualizing account of pre- and post-contact shishall political history offered in the following section is also informed by interviews with hiwus, and other primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include original interviews, archival documents and records, and previously recorded interviews and oral histories. Secondary sources include reports published by the shishall Nation, journal articles, and books. The primary historical

text written on the shíshálh Nation by a non-Indigenous lay historian and author, Lester Peterson, is cited with caution, and only when Peterson explicitly relays information from one of his shíshálh collaborators (1990). As is true for most colonized lands and peoples, telling a historical narrative of pre- and post-colonial life of the shíshálh Nation relies largely on fraught and partial archival records. Much the same as the methodologies adopted in the previous chapter, this section aims to read against the grain of the archive, recovering and centering marginalized voices wherever possible. One scholarly article written by a shíshálh woman, Theresa Jeffries, and a book chapter written by two scholars who are not from the shíshálh Nation, Susan Roy and Ruth Taylor, are particularly valuable for re-centering the history of shíshálh women (Jeffries 1991; Roy and Taylor 2012). As Roy and Taylor argue, women's voices have been erased across the written record of the history of the shíshálh people, particularly in regards to labor and resource management (2012, 112).

5.3 Historical Context of the shishall Nation

The shíshálh Nation is a Coast Salish tribe who, prior to European colonial settlement in the region, occupied and governed a substantial portion of territory on the southern coast of what is now main-land British Columbia, north of Vancouver and east of Vancouver Island. I refer to this area as shíshálh territories, rather than "traditional" territories in recognition of shíshálh Nation's ongoing claim to this land. The location of shíshálh territories is depicted in Figure 5.1 below, and has overlapping territory with the Nanoose, Squamish, and Tla'amin Nations (BC Treaty Commission 2022). At present, shíshálh Nation has jurisdiction and occupancy rights to only a small portion of their territories, with most shíshálh Nation members living within the Sechelt Indian Government District, a 10.8 square kilometer territory bordering the predominantly non-Indigenous Village of Sechelt. The traditional language of the Nation is sháshíshálem, which belongs to the Northern Coast Salish, a subgroup of the Central Coast Salish division of Salishan languages. Like all First Nations languages in British Columbia, sháshíshálem is a critically endangered language (Dunlop et al. 2018). This section provides a brief political history of the Nation, providing important context for the discussion of contemporary shíshálh political thought that follows.

Before European Invasion

The shíshálh Nation were the sole occupants of their territories from time immemorial, until European invasion began to affect the territory in 1846. Prior to this invasion, the Nation was made up of at least four distinct groups or clans, with the clans spread over at least twelve major areas of settlement. There is substantial archeological evidence for shíshálh Nation's longstanding occupation of these territories. In 2001, shíshálh Nation archaeologists discovered the remains of a shíshálh Nation chief and four other individuals, who are suspected to be the Chief's family members, in skwúpa (Salmon Inlet). Later analysis indicated that the Chief and family were buried approximately 4,000 years ago. The Chief

was buried with 360,000 hand ground stone and shell beads, indicating the cultural and spiritual significance of both this Chief and the burial location. No other individual burial identified on the Pacific Northwest includes an individual adorned with more beads (Clark et al. 2019, 56). shíshálh Nation occupation of these lands continued uninterrupted for thousands of years before Europeans first visited the region. While it is difficult to estimate the pre-contact population, the shíshálh Nation currently estimates that the population prior to contact with Europeans was at least 20,000 (shíshálh Nation 2007).

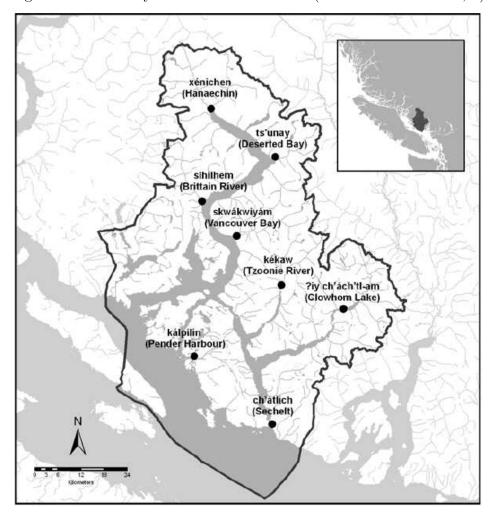


Figure 5.1: Territory of the shíshálh Nation (shíshálh Nation 2007, 2)

Some of the major villages in the territory, such as kálpilín (Pender Harbour) and ch'átlich (Sechelt), were occupied year-round, while other villages were occupied primarily during the winter months from late December until early March. In each settlement, families lived in large multi-family long houses. The long houses measured up to two hundred feet in length and were built with permanent structures of posts and beams (shíshálh Nation 2007, 8). In the larger settlements, there were six or seven large long houses, and smaller houses on

the outskirts of these big houses (Barnett 1955, 30; híwus 2020b). A key political, social, and economic hub in the territory was séxw?ámin (Garden Bay), a bay which housed not only kálpilín, but the nearby villages of p'úkwp'akwem (Bargain Harbour), sálálus (Madeira Park), smishalin (Kleindale) and kway-ahkuhl-ohss (Myer's Creek). séxw?ámin provided rich resources and access to key transportation corridors to access territories up and down the coast through sínkwu (Georgia Strait and Malaspina Strait) and to villages and territories inland on lékw'émin (Jervis Inlet) and ?álhtulich (Sechelt Inlet), accessed through lílkw'émin (Agamemnon Channel). Rising above séxw?ámin is shélkém (Mount Daniel), a mountain where a lookout was stationed who would alert the villages about approaching visitors and invaders (shíshálh Nation 2007, 9-10).

Some of the villages were not occupied year-round because families would travel during the hunting, fishing, and gathering seasons to the most productive regions, to areas where they had cultivated clam gardens, and to other locations of cultural and personal significance. Travel often included travel by s-néxwnexwílh (canoes) and spanned the entirety of the the territory. Salmon, other fish, and berries would be smoked or preserved for the winter months, which would supplement freshly hunted food, including deer and bear (shíshálh Nation 2007, 8; Joe 1965, 2). Hand logging was a key activity that many participated in, collecting wood and other tree products for building construction, canoes, weaving, and other purposes (Roy and Taylor 2012, 111). Over the winter, the families returned to the larger permanent settlements and spent most of the winter indoors. Activities during the winter months included dancing, theatrical entertainment, creating art, potlatching, and ceremonies. Across the Nation, many individuals had specialized roles and responsibilities in the community, which were often taught and passed down through generations of a family or families. For example, some individuals and families were master carvers, variously specialized in creating canoes, art, or paddles, while others were medicine people who harvested, created, and administered medicines. Others yet were political or spiritual leaders, entertainers, or care-givers (Jeffries 1991, 82).

The shíshálh Nation was self-governed through a system of laws (Jeffries 1991, 82). The political administration of the Nation was organized into clans or families, with each clan maintaining a "speaker" or chief. Prior to contact, being a chief came with clear privileges, a responsibility to ensure that all clan members had their basic needs fulfilled, and a responsibility to uphold shíshálh law. The chief of each clan often delegated responsibilities to sub-chiefs and others in the community, maintaining collaboration amongst community members. The chief role was passed on in a loose hereditary system. The current chief, other elders of the clan, and elders across clans would consult with one another and decide who would succeed the current chief, choosing a successor based on both their hereditation and their perceived capacities (híwus 2020a; híwus 2020b). While chiefs where male, it was primarily the women's responsibility to raise and prepare future chiefs, acting as the key keepers and teachers of shíshálh political culture (Jeffries 1991, 82).

This shíshálh governance system was territorial. An elder, tel-es-cl-wet, explained in an 1937 interview that a mark or totem signified each family, which were displayed in each family's "well defined district, which were regarded as preserves for the family" (Roy and

Taylor 2012, 110). She went on to say that "these preserves were regarded as sources of food supplies to the families, who were known to have hunting and fishing right[s] therein, and anyone caught trespassing was dealt with according to the chief's wishes" (Roy and Taylor 2012, 110). Each family or clan's chief was granted territorial jurisdiction over the clan's common land, resources, and waterways. This jurisdiction held a reciprocal responsibility of maintaining and care-taking the clan's land (híwus 2020b). While the goods and benefits of these common lands were often shared across the Nation, the clan had a previous property right to what was reaped on their territory (Roy and Taylor 2012, 110).

Potlatches held with the entire Nation were a key cultural and political event. At these potlatches the clans would feast together, and the chiefs would make political decisions for the Nation collectively and communicate the social and political status of each region. Annual potlatches in shíshálh territories were also attended by other Coast Salish tribes with whom the shíshálh Nation maintained long-standing relationships of collaboration, and the potlatches would last weeks and even months (híwus 2020b; Joe 1965). Close relationships were maintained on the mainland with the Tla'amin Nation, to the north in Powell River, the Squamish Nation, to the south and east. There were also close relationships with Nations across the Georgia Straight on the southern half of Vancouver Island, including the Stz'uminus First Nation and the K'ómoks First Nation. These relationships were fostered through deliberative intermarrying, particularly amongst the families of hereditary chiefs. Often, a daughter of one chief would be sent to marry into the family of a chief in another Nation, building goodwill and kinship connections across Nations. The Nations in these relationships would also rely on each other in times of hardship, sharing food and resources, and collaborating to ward off raids. While raids amongst Coast Salish tribes were typically non-violent, raids from other Nations, and particularly the Haida Nation, were often violent, making these alliances amongst neighboring tribes particularly valuable (híwus 2020b).

Spiritual practices and ceremonies were, and remain, a significant part of shíshálh culture and public life. Spiritual practices were intertwined with many daily activities and were often place-based, with particular ceremonies, legends, and practices tied to specific sites within the shíshálh territories. However, details of such spiritual practices have not often been disclosed. Some of híwus' views on shíshálh spirtuality are discussed below.

European Contact and Invasion

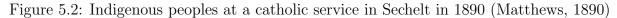
The first known interactions between Europeans and the shíshálh Nation occurred in 1792, when a British fleet and Spanish fleet ventured into Georgia Straight looking to trade for furs, and particularly sea otter furs. The interactions between the parties were brief and friendly, and resulted in only minor trading and exchanges because there were few sea otters in the area. Although direct contact between the parties remained minimal for nearly a century, diseases brought by Europeans reached the Nation in the early 1800s. The population was decimated by epidemics of smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, and influenza, reducing the population to a low of approximately two hundred people, an estimated 1% of the estimated pre-contact population. Just after the Smallpox Epidemic of 1862 swept through

the native population of British Columbia, Roman Catholic missionaries began to settle in ch'átlich (Sechelt). These missionaries encouraged and facilitated the amalgamation of most of the shíshálh population who previously lived across the territory in ch'átlich in 1868. The church imposed a new social structure and forced shíshálh people to renounce all religious ceremonies, including potlatching, and certain social practices, such as polygamy.

Over just a few decades, the lives of shíshálh Nation members shifted drastically. With mass casualties from the epidemics and the arrival of missionaries, all normal practices of the Nation were disrupted. The few remaining shíshálh Nation members were no longer allowed to practice their culture or ceremonies, their practices of migration and sustenance were disrupted by amalgamation, and the complex political systems of the region were further eroded by depopulation. By the end of the 1860s, most, if not all, of the remaining adult pandemic survivors from the shíshálh Nation were hand-logging timber to sell to settlers or accepted positions as wage laborers for the newly arrived Europeans. Many men had jobs in hand logging, long shoring, and commercial fishing, while women and children worked at the fish canneries and on farms. Also in the 1860s, a sawmill was opened in the Burrard Inlet, just south of shíshálh territories. This mill led to extensive logging of the shíshálh territory by non-Indigenous loggers (Roy and Taylor 2012, 111).

With these drastic changes in place, settlers began to usurp the now depopulated shíshálh territories for resource extraction and economic ventures without compensation or negotiations with the Nation. In 1869, the first non-Indigenous person was allocated land in the shíshálh territory by Joseph Trutch, the Chief Commissioner of Land and Works for the colony. The parcel allocated was 150 acres in ch'átlich and included most of the present-day village of Sechelt. In 1875, the colonial government hired British Captain William Sugden Jemmett to conduct an official survey of shíshálh territories. The survey informed the establishment of a shíshálh Indian reserve the following year, which allocated a very small percentage of the Nation's territory as reserve lands, further entrenching the colonial dispossession of most shíshálh territories.

Just as was seen across British Columbia, shíshálh Nation members quickly organized to protect their territories from usurpation. Investigating the history of forestry in shíshálh Nation, Roy and Taylor argue that "when the shíshálh found that non-Aboriginal interest in forestry resources challenged their sovereignty, they took more dramatic measures to ensure control of the territory" (2012, 111). Roy and Taylor detail a number of incidents that demonstrate shíshálh efforts to defend their territorial sovereignty. First, a number of shíshálh men organized in 1874, driving non-Indigenous hand loggers out of lékw'émin. Registrar General of the colonial government investigated the incident and noted that shíshálh were alarmed that whites were monopolizing the timber and land on their territory and that they opposed the granting of timber leases in lékw'émin. A shíshálh chief told the Registrar General that it was shíshálh territory and that the lumber was shíshálh property. Second, in 1876 and 1877, the shíshálh people repeatedly petitioned the Indian reserve commission to secure "timber reserves" for the shíshálh Nation. The commission recommended that shíshálh be granted these reserves where they would have the exclusive right to logging, but this effort was ultimately unsuccessful (Roy and Taylor 2012, 111).





Over the late 19th century and early 20th century, the church deepened its efforts to 'civilize' the shíshálh peoples and convert them to catholicism. A second church was built in 1872, and in 1890 a large church, named Our Lady of the Rosary, was constructed on the shíshálh Trail Bay reserve lands in ch'átlich. Beginning in the late 1800s, shíshálh boys were sent to residential schools in other regions of British Columbia, including to St. Mary's Indian Residential School in Mission, British Columbia (híwus 2020d). By 1905, the Church finished the construction of a Roman Catholic residential school for Indigenous children on the reserve lands, which was funded primarily by the shishall peoples themselves (Roy and Taylor 2012, 111). The school strictly forbid the use of sháshíshálem and all traditional shíshálh practices. As Theresa Jeffries writes, "Everything we respected was ridiculed. We were made to feel strangers in our own land. When we went home, often after eight years in that system, some of us couldn't talk to our parents" (1991, 83). Indigenous children were taken from their homes across British Columbia to attend the Sechelt school, and many individuals have disclosed that they experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse, and malnutrition at the school. The recently built Our Lady of the Rosary church was destroyed in a fire in in 1906, and then rebuilt with funds from the shíshálh people in about 1907-1909 (Roy and Taylor 2012, 111).

Also over the 19th and 20th centuries, most political administration and cultural practices of the Nation were erased or pushed underground. This was in part due to the mission's policies, but was also forced by the *Indian Act*. Beginning in 1844, the Province of Canada

was designated authority over the Department of Indian Affairs. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Parliament of Canada passed An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians in 1876, which is commonly referred to as the Indian Act. The Indian Act granted the Minister of the Interior a role as Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, who would be responsible for "the control and management of the reserves, lands, moneys and properties of the Indians in Canada" (Government of Canada 1876). This had, and continues to have, many detrimental impacts on Indigenous peoples in Canada. For example, from 1876 until 1982, the *Indian Act* had mechanisms to force enfranchisement on Indigenous peoples, which would strip them of their status as an "Indian." This forced enfranchisement was one of many strategies to eliminate Indigenous peoples; by losing status as "Indian," Indigenous peoples also lost their right to live on reserve lands, participate in band elections, and access band services and resources. In 1885, an amendment to the Indian Act banned potlatch ceremonies of the Pacific Northwest Indigenous peoples, a key part of many Indigenous communities' governance practices, which was not lifted until 1951. Amendments in 1894 gave Indian Affairs the power to direct residential schools and force Indigenous students to attend these schools. As discussed in the previous chapter, all land claims efforts were banned in 1927.

Through the Indian Act, the federal government also claimed the right to determine who was and was not considered an Indian, and established the structure of local Indigenous politics and decision making. Indigenous communities, including shíshálh Nation, were forced to adopt a "band" governance structure, assimilating Indigenous political practices into a municipality-like council structure (shíshálh Nation 2007, 13). Band councils had to operate under the strict supervision and within rules laid out by Indian Affairs. The Sechelt Indian Band Chief and Council was likely established around 1951, with the Nation electing híwus' father Charles Craigan as their first elected Chief in 1951 (Coast News 1963). Although the band and council were established in shíshálh, some banned political and cultural shíshálh practices continued in secrecy. Many shíshálh families tried to maintain the hereditary chiefdom system, and continued to appoint new chiefs. Some potlatches, dancing, and ceremonies also continued underground on occasion.

Jeffries argues that the Indian Act was particularly damaging to shishall women. First, the matrilineal organization of shishall Nation was replaced by a patriarchal elected chief system, which deprived shishall women of political power. Second, the membership rules of Indian Affairs stripped many women of their status as an Indian. shishall women who married an Indigenous person not registered as an Indian and shishall women who married non-Indigenous men lost Indian status, and were consequently not allowed to live on reserve or participate in local Indian governance (Jeffries 1991, 83).

In 1923, all shíshálh Nation members still disbursed across the shíshálh territories were forcibly amalgamated on the Trail Bay reserve to better enforce religious conversion and school attendance (shíshálh Nation 2007). Around the same time, most, if not all, shíshálh people had been pushed out of the logging industry operating on their territories. Beginning in 1910, the government increasingly turned to favoring large-scale logging operations in the granting of logging licenses, with Indigenous hand-logging operations approved for fewer

licenses. By 1915, shíshálh people were no longer able to buy logging permits, and shíshálh people were advised by government officials to accept wage-labor positions at a mill or to log their limited reserve land. Logging of reserve land, however, was only allowed if shíshálh people established plans to transform logged reserve lands into cultivated farmland (Roy and Taylor 2012, 112).

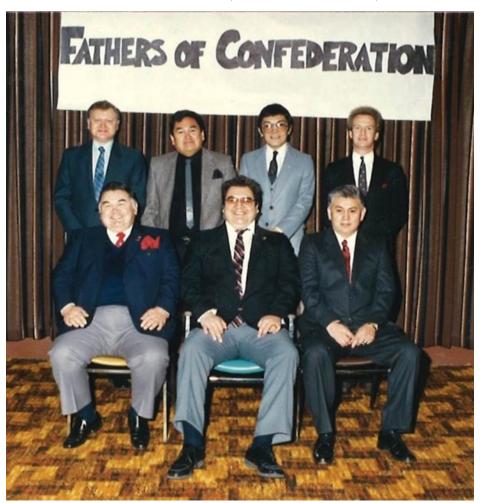
One key outcome of forced amalgamation and pressures to adopt wage-labor and farming practice, along with the changes brought by residential schooling, religious conversion, and Indian Act policies, was the shishall people's increasing reliance on the support of Indian Affairs and government programs. As Jeffries recounts, "With the erosion of the language, culture, traditions, and self-esteem, we became dependent upon another government and systems which were meaningless to us" (Jeffries 1991, 83). Until at least the 1950s, the previous monetary success of the community based on logging was replaced by a cycle of poverty (Lazaruk 1993). From the mid-1950s until the 1980s, the "60s scoop" further eroded the shishall Nation, as young children were removed from their homes, often by force, to be adopted or fostered by predominantly white families (Hoshi Archie; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Across this time, the federally supported residential school maintained its influence in the community, not closing until 1975. The paternalistic legislation of provincial and federal government thus persisted in its assimilatory aims across the mid-20th century.

Yet, throughout the 20th century, the shíshálh people also maintained a persistent political goal of restoring shíshálh territorial jurisdiction on their lands. Many of the remaining elders raised in the pre-missionary days gave younger generations a clear mandate to achieve independence from the *Indian Act* and restore shíshálh governance of their land and people. This included a goal of de-amalgamating the shíshálh people and returning the shíshálh people to their previous home sites across the territory (híwus 2020c). In the 1960s and 1970s, shíshálh leaders approached the Indian Affairs minister, requesting that shíshálh people be allowed to restore their self-governance (Lazaruk 1993). Through this avenue, the band council was granted additional powers, and by 1977, shíshálh had secured all powers that Indian Affairs could delegate to band councils under the *Indian Act*. The band soon found that these additional powers did not grant them a capacity to make decisions about land management on shíshálh territory, with reserve lands still formally managed by Indian Affairs (Allen 2002, 47).

Hiring non-Indigenous lawyers, the band began to write proposed legislation that would grant shishall Nation self-governance powers and title to their reserve lands. The 200-page draft of the Sechelt Indian Band Act was completed in 1982, and was distributed to members of parliament, who showed no interest in the proposal. The situation shifted dramatically in 1983, when the House of Commons established the Penner Committee, a Standing Committee on Indian Self Government. The report of the Committee recommended that the federal government constitutionally entrench self-government of First Nations, and the report was unanimously approved by the federal government the same year. shishall Nation responded to this development by crafting a new proposal that aligned with the report's findings, which would introduce shishall self-government as an opting out of the

Indian Act, proposing their own constitution and institutions (Allen 2002, 47). By 1986, the federal government passed the *Sechelt Indian Band Self-Government Act*, followed by a provincial act in 1987. By 1988, shíshálh Nation was transferred title of their reserve lands, and the new shíshálh institutions and constitution were enacted.

Figure 5.3: shíshálh band council and lawyers after successfully achieving shíshálh self-governance in 1986. From left, front row: Coun. Clarence Joe Jr., Chief Stan Dixon, Coun. Benedict Pierre Sr. Back row: financial adviser Gordon Anderson, Coun. Lloyd Jeffries, Coun. Warren Paull, lawyer Graham Allen (shíshálh Nation 2016).



The resulting self-government outcome for the shíshálh Nation granted significant new authority to the Chief and Council, while also reinforcing a municipal style governance structure that had been previously mandated by the *Indian Act*. A key new power afforded to the Nation was the ability to establish their own membership code. Throughout the country's history, membership laws were continually used to assimilate Indigenous peoples and strip many of their Aboriginal rights, so the transfer of this jurisdiction was also symbolically

significant. Importantly, the self-government act transferred reserve land title from the federal government to the band, which would go on to enable the Nation to use their land and resources and develop their economy as they see fit. Describing the shift to self-governance and considering whether the new self-government shares similarities with traditional shishall governance, Jeffries states: "The likenesses are few, since what we have today is in essence an interpretation negotiated with the federal and provincial governments which takes into account today's realities" (1991, 85).

While the shift to this form of self-government was almost unanimously supported by the shishall people, the Assembly of First Nations, Canada's largest Indigenous organization at the national level, and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs were critical of the outcome. Representatives from the Assembly of First Nations argued that the new structure should not be referred to as self-government, as the provincial and federal government maintained some rights to override the Chief and Council's decisions (Etkin 1988, 85). Nonetheless, the shishall Nation Chief and Council continue to refer to their governance structure as self-government (shishall Nation 2022).

Today, shíshálh Nation remains one of few federally and provincially recognized self-governing First Nations in the country. shíshálh Nation also remains formally engaged in the British Columbia Treaty Commission, but has remained in Stage Four of the process since 1999 (BC Treaty Commission 2022). Negotiations with the federal and provincial government on title to shíshálh lands outside reserve lands and on the territorial rights of shíshálh people are ongoing. As of 2007, there Nation held title to 33 separate "Sechelt Indian Band Lands", ranging from 0.1ha to 293.2ha in size (shíshálh Nation 2007, 11). In 2018, the Nation signed an agreement with the province of British Columbia, which transferred title three parcels of crownland in shíshálh territories to the Nation (shíshálh Nation and Columbia 2018). According to statistics from the federal Canadian government, the population of shíshálh Nation members was 1,424 in 2019, with just over half of the population living off of Sechelt Indian Band Lands (Government of Canada; Indigenous Services 2020).

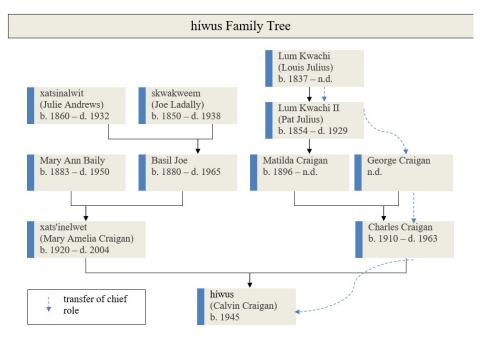
5.4 A shíshálh Creation Story

Turning to shíshálh political theory, this section begins by reproducing a transcript of an oral history narrative shared by híwus. First, it is important to provide some contextualizing details of híwus' personal history. He was born on shíshálh territories in 1945 to Charles Craigan and xats'inelwet (Mary Amelia Craigan). híwus' father Charles Craigan was a hereditary chief from the orca clan and was also elected to be the first elected chief of the Nation in 1951, when Indian Affairs mandated that the band adopt an elected chief and council structure. híwus was raised primarily by his maternal grandmother, Mary Ann Bailey, and grandfather, Basil Joe, for the first seven and a half years of his life, and it was Basil who gave him his shíshálh name. Basil spoke both sháshíshálem and English, was a storyteller and fisherman, and passed on many teachings and stories to híwus that continue to inform his understanding of traditions of shíshálh thought, practices, and spirituality.

híwus' grandmother Mary also taught him about shíshálh medicines and spirituality. A hereditary chief from the frog clan, Reggie Paull, also tutored híwus. Despite efforts to keep híwus out of residential schools, he was forced to attend residential school when he was about seven years old.

After híwus finished school around the age of 17, he soon married his wife Jennifer Maxine Joe. híwus' father Charles Craigan passed away in 1963, and as híwus was the oldest of Charles' sons, the elders asked xats'inelwe, híwus' mother, for permission to appoint híwus as hereditary chief or speaker. She said no, but after they continued to ask, she told the elders that híwus' could decide, and híwus accepted the position. Retrospectively, híwus recognizes that his family and chiefs were training him for this role from a young age through cultural teachings and by asking him to speak at local and regional events. The political mandate passed on to híwus by elders, as well as the teachings and principles that guide his work as a hereditary chief are discussed in more detail below. Figure 5.4 depicts híwus' family tree, which traces the recent ancestral origins of his role as hereditary chief of the orca clan. The role of chief or spokesperson was potlatched from lum kwachi II, also known as Chief Pat Julius, to his daughter's husband, George Craigan, rather than to one of his own sons. George Craigan is the paternal grandfather of híwus.

Figure 5.4: Genealogy of híwus' family and role as hereditary chief or spokesperson. Dates are approximate.



In addition to this hereditary role, hiwus was also elected to the band chief position in 1974, when he was 29 years old. He remained in that position until 1983, and one of his central efforts as elected chief was to get the shishall Nation out of the jurisdiction of the Indian Act. The Sechelt Indian Band Act was created in 1982, and by the time these efforts

culminated with the federal passage of the 1986 Sechelt Indian Band Self-Government Act, hiwus was no longer in the elected chief role. Hiwus also served as a band councilor from 1993 until 1996, and was re-elected as band chief from 2014 until the term ended in 2017.

Another key part of híwus' identity is his work as a $s-\underline{x}\underline{w}\underline{e}\underline{y}\underline{x}way$. The word $s-\underline{x}\underline{w}\underline{e}\underline{y}\underline{x}way$ is both the name of the mask worn for spirit dancing and the name of the masked dancer or spirit dance (Beaumont 2011, 112, 278). His mother, xats'inelwet, witnessed the last major shíshálh masked dancing event as a young child in the village of ts'unai, before the missionaries' bans on such events were strictly enforced. However, later in life, xats'inelwet worked to revive spirit dancing practices in the Nation by traveling throughout the west coast to other Nations and learning from those who had managed to maintain knowledge about the practice. She was initiated as a spirit dancer and went on to facilitate the initiation of híwus' younger brother, wife, and son as masked spirit dancers, and eventually híwus himself. Híwus views spirit dancing as physical and spiritual medicine, and an important part of shíshálh culture (híwus 2020a).

The narrative recounted in the remainder of this section is a creation myth or origin story, which is a narrative of central importance to hiwus' shishall political theory. Throughout our conversation, hiwus retold the story twice and referenced the story regularly, and it is thus presented here to reflect its centrality in hiwus' political theory. It is also chosen as a starting point because narrative and storytelling are widely recognized by Indigenous scholars as generally important to Indigenous knowledge forms and Indigenous methodologies (see, for example, the review offered by Drawson et al. 2017, 15). Indigenous thinkers from the Coast Salish region also emphasize the importance of oral narratives and stories as an important source of and tool for teaching Coast Salish knowledge in particular (Archibald 2008). Some Indigenous scholars emphasize the importance of creation stories in particular. For example, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson suggests that Anishinaabe creation stories provide an "ontological context from which we can interpret other stories, teachings and experiences" (Simpson 2011, 32). Umeek similarly suggests that amongst Nuu-chah-nulth people, origin stories reflect "important truths about the nature of the universe," and then goes on to recount and analyze four Nuu-chah-nulth origin stories (Atleo 2007, 5-6). Beginning with a shíshálh origin story, then, recognizes both the generalized importance of creation stories for Indigenous peoples in Canada, and their specific importance to hiwus' political thought.

The narrative is also reproduced to serve as an entry point for unpacking and interpreting this shíshálh political thought. It is worth noting again that the phrase "shíshálh political thought" is used throughout this chapter to refer to híwus' political theory, properly understood as one contemporary shíshálh political theory, rather than an authoritative or comprehensive representation of political values and reasoning held by the community at large. Consequently, the focus on the following creation myth does not suggest that the myth is particularly universal or enduring across the history and community of the shíshálh Nation. In fact, there is at least one other creation myth shared by shíshálh story tellers that shares few resemblances with híwus' creation myth (reference published video). This approach to the creation myth acknowledges and centers the story-teller as a relationally sit-

uated and active agent, where attention to its teller and its context is necessary for gaining interpretive insight into the story (Kovach 2021, 181).

After the oral history is shared, the following section interprets the narrative primarily as an allegory, expanding on its central themes. The identification and elaborative discussion of these themes was informed by the information conveyed in the interview process and was reviewed and edited by hiwus to ensure that the interpretive section accurately represents hiwus' beliefs and reasoning. The section also expands on other key political values and beliefs in the shishalh political theory, going beyond what can be inferred from the creation myth alone. Finally, the section also elaborates on the political aspirations of hiwus, and the connection of these aspirations to the values and beliefs articulated throughout his shishalh political theory. The remainder of the present section and the following interpretive section were co-created with hiwus.

Unedited Transcription of an Oral History of spelemulh

I'm hereditary Chief, and I'm going to share with you a legend, or a myth if you want, that I've heard from my ancestors growing up and I'll begin with the story of *spelemulh*.

The story about spelemulh is when the creator decided to drop our people into the shishalh territory, the shishalh land, and we became the shishalh people.³ Where the story begins is where the creator first dropped thousands and thousands of our people in the land we call Hunechin. And in that land it is very mountainous, very challenging.

The mountains rise 8,000 feet from the ocean and you're perpendicular to the ocean. So the chiefs and the shaman realized that there wasn't enough flatland to house all of our people. And those leaders decided to send the young braves out into the land, to search and find more flat land that would accommodate more and more of our people.

So the young braves went out into the land, and they went as far as they could. And when they returned, they reported back to the leaders, the shamans and the chiefs, the grand chiefs, that they couldn't go any further. The land was too steep. So the shamans had said to them, you must return back out and keep searching. So the young braves, once again, took off out into the land and they went as far as they could. But this time they soon realized that some of the young braves were returning as wolves and eventually they all turned into wolves, they transformed. So the wolves were able to traverse the land further and further.

But even the wolves got to a point where they couldn't go any further. So they returned back to the shamans and said, we can't go any further. We've just come to an end. The shaman said, no, you must return back and keep going, keep searching. So the young braves once again headed back out to the land, and once again, they transformed into wolves. Then the wolves traversed the land, as far as they could until they got the edge of the mountain, and one or two of the wolves dipped their paw into the ocean. These two wolves instantly

³According to the 2007 shíshálh Nation land use plan, spelemulh is considered one of the original shíshálh ancestors, who was dropped in the old village site at *saugh-wáh-ten* (Blind Bay, Nelson Island).

transformed into orcas. So the other braves transformed also. And as you know, the orcas are called the wolves of the sea.

So these orcas traversed the inlets, down until they found more and more land. Places called Britain River, and Pender Harbour, until they got to a land that in your language is called Garden Bay, Pender Harbour and in our language is called kálp-ílín, which means the garden of Eden, and the land was so flat and so rich that the orcas returned back to the chiefs and to the shamans, to report that they have found more land, very rich, fertile land, and they called it the garden of Eden. So the families that left *xénichen*⁴, that moved down into the Garden Bay area were called the La-hosse (phonetic) people, and those La-hosse people are my family. So those La-hosse people became the fishermen, the whalers, they hunted whale. They fished the salmon and the seal and thousands of the La-hosse people occupied the Garden Bay area, called kálp-ílín in our language.

But the families that stayed in xénichen and Deserted Bay, ts'únay⁵, all became great, great hunters. They were the grizzly bear clan and they were the wolf clan. So they, the people that stayed there, those clans became great hunters, very versatile in the way they were built. So they were able to climb and traverse the glaciers that led into other areas like Pemberton and toward Powell River, so each of those families inherited a responsibility of each region, and each family were codependent on one another where they could trade, fish, for deer or elk.

All the families carried that responsibility to help one another. Every year they powwowed and potlatched and maintained communication with one another to report what was going on in the land so that they could be dependent on each other to help one another.

And that's what this whole story depicts about the four or five major families that inhabited our land. They all had a responsibility, and this myth or legend tells that story about the clans and who the clans were and where they located themselves and then the responsibility that they carried. And every year after that, there were huge potlatches held on Thormanby Island to report about the growth of the people and how they were doing and how they were maintaining themselves. And that's what this story is about.

5.5 Key Themes in híwus' Political Thought

This shíshálh creation story is one of exploration and transformation. As an allegory, it narrates some of the key themes, values, and reasoning in shíshálh political thought. It reveals the interconnectedness of spirit, humans, animals, and land, a shíshálh political decision-making process, and the centrality of land to shíshálh politics and identity. This section interprets and expands on these aspects of shíshálh political thought, contained both in the oral history and in the broader interview data and information shared in the cocreative process. The remainder of this section thus elaborates on shíshálh political thought in expository, rather than critically engaged, terms.

⁴Also anglicized as Hanaechin or Hunechin.

⁵Also anglicized as Tsonai

Spirit and Interdependence

Spirit exists within and unites the shíshálh people, the land in shíshálh territories, and the shíshálh language. The word shashíshálhem captures this interconnectedness, referring to the spirit of shíshálh land, people, and language in its oneness. Both the spirit of the land and the spirit of the people is alive and communicative, and the creator watches over both. The concept of land invoked here does not refer solely to a bounded area of inanimate geographical space. Rather, its meaning encompasses all aspects of the physical environment, including animals, plants, water, soil, and minerals.

Spirit of the land imbues every part of the land, but it is particularly accessible in the high alpine of shíshálh territories. Spirit travels down the mountains in the wind, especially in the winter, and often reaches the shíshálh people as songs. These songs often hold a message or a teaching, which can then be shared with others through performance. shíshálh people can also access their connection to spirit through spirit dancing, which after careful training, enables the masked dancer to embody the spirit of the land. Spirit of the land can also be accessed through dreams or visions, and other varied interactions with the land. In this origin story, however, creation begins in the central location of spirit; the people of shíshálh originate from the mountains.

It is only through transformation or shapeshifting into animal forms that the shíshálh people gained access to the land, what the land provides, and the spirit of the land. The shíshálh leaders, chiefs, and medicine people, encouraged those searching for land, even when it seemed that they could go no further. The process of shape shifting occurred as the searchers pushed to the boundaries of the accessible physical territory. The transformation of shíshálh people to wolves, to orcas, and back to their human forms portrays a necessary interconnection and interdependence of living beings and land. The shíshálh people were entrusted with access to and stewardship of kálp-ílín and realized their connection to that land only by embodying interconnection.

Responsibility and Stewardship

The significance of interdependence is further acknowledged in the clan names discussed at the end of the oral narrative. Each of the clans occupied a distinct region or regions of shíshálh territories. The clan names signify both a relationship to this particular land, and a relationship to the other living things that occupy that land. Importantly, the names of clans also invoke a number of collective and individual responsibilities for its members. First, by making the relationship and interdependence to land explicit, the clan names signify each clan's collective responsibility to respect, take care of, nourish, and co-exist with the land. These responsibilities to the land give shíshálh Nation members the right only to take from the land what is necessary to sustain their own life.

Second, the clan names designate a set of responsibilities of shíshálh Nation members to each other. Each clan name signifies what labor, services, expertise, and goods clan members have a responsibility to provide to the Nation, sharing what the land provides. For example,

the Wolf and Bear clans have a responsibility to hunt game for the Nation. In this way, the narrative portrays how distinct functions contribute to a whole. While each living being, the land, and the land's constitutive parts are interdependent, parts of the whole have their own necessary functions that contribute to the reciprocity of interdependence in varying ways. Responsibilities to care for the land and for Nation members are intertwined. hiwus explains that if hereditary chiefs "abused the resources that the land provided, then there would be nothing left to feed our people" (hiwus 2020b).

Third, the responsibility of caretaking and stewardship also extends across generations. Creator provided this land for not only the original inhabitants of the land, but for future generations of the shíshálh Nation. Thus, the shíshálh people's responsibility to care for the land is further reinforced by the additional responsibility to ensure that future generations can enjoy and occupy the land. This will also enable future generations to fulfill their own responsibility to steward the land.

Each individual shíshálh Nation member has these responsibilities to the land, to each other, and to future generations. However, the head chief or spokesperson of each clan holds additional responsibilities. Chiefs must ensure that, as a collective, the responsibility to steward the land is fulfilled by the clan. In other words, the Chief is the spokesperson for the land and its well-being and interests. By protecting and upholding this responsibility, a chief is also granted some rights of territorial jurisdiction. Within the clan's territory, a chief has limited rights to exclude others' access to the territory and limited jurisdiction over resource use. A chief can grant use rights and rights of exclusion to others. For example, a chief can transfer specialized use rights and limited rights of exclusion to another shíshálh Nation member for a certain plot of land so that the individual can develop a garden. The individual with these use-rights still have a responsibility to steward and nurture the land, which means that they still may only take from the land what is need. Consequently, within shíshálh Nation territories, it is customary to obtain permission from the relevant land steward for before entering their land.

Beyond ensuring that the community upholds its responsibility to the land, a chief also has the responsibility to ensure first, that the clan members are upholding responsibilities to each other and second, that the clan is fulfilling responsibilities to other clans of the Nation. The shíshálh creation story explains one aspect of how the responsibilities of and relationship between clans were historically maintained and upheld through potlatches on Thormanby Island. On Thormanby Island, the shíshálh Nation clans would meet annually for feasting, celebration, and inter-clan governance. The feasting served as a symbolic testament to the chiefs' success in upholding the responsibilities of sharing and providing necessities amongst clans; if there was enough food for thousands of shíshálh Nation members over the extended celebration, the chiefs were successful in governing their clans in fulfillment with their responsibilities. These practices and events also upheld relationships of responsibility and interdependence amongst neighboring Nations. shíshálh Nation would provide food for visitors from neighboring nations who attended potlatches and feasts, and chiefs across the region would discuss matters that had impacts across their territories. This responsibility was also reciprocal; other Nations would also invite shíshálh people to attend events in their

territories.

The shishall concept of territorial justification and use-rights does not assume that such rights equate to private property ownership. The following interview excerpt elaborates on this point:

híwus:I don't think the word ownership comes into our culture. It's being care-takers and stewards of the land, and I think that thought has to be carried through. So when I said with the regional board, that's how we put it. How are you going to manage? How are we going to co-manage all of this together? And I'm not specifically saying that this is our land. No. It's all about how are we gonna share this land and everything the land provides—how are you going to protect it together?

Sophie: And you think that's how most people from your culture approached this land?

híwus: Yeah. Leadership, young people, educated people, young students, they all know that. There are some who would say we want it all back and we want all these white people off. Well, the reality of that is unrealistic; we can't change what has happened. We can only try to accommodate it in a controlled fashion (híwus 2020a).

In shíshálh political thought, territory is not something that can be individually owned, but rather is collectively held as a bundle of shared territorial rights and responsibilities. Territorial rights are both constrained by responsibilities and are dependent on the fulfillment of responsibilities.

shíshálh Virtues

A key virtue imbued in each of these responsibilities is respect. Respect requires thoughtfulness, care, and admiration for the knowledge, capacities, qualities, interests, or achievements of others. In other words, the development of respect often entails a process of contemplative meaning making, where one reflects on the value, significance, and feelings of others. Here, others include not only other clan members or nation members, but all aspects of the land. Feelings and actions of mutual respect are a key virtue in shíshálh political thought because they enable effective and stable relationships of interdependence and cooperation amongst Nation members. Similarity, feelings of respect and appreciation for the land encourage effective stewardship of the land, which allows both the land and the people to thrive. In the creation myth, the young people searching for new land respect the wishes of their chiefs and medicine people, and at their behest, continue searching for land even when it seems impossible. This behavior demonstrates a respect for the decisions of the chiefs, a respect that Chiefs earn from the people by successfully fulfilling their responsibilities to land and the shíshálh people.

Respect is taught not only in this creation myth, but across many practices and teachings in shíshálh culture. Shíshálh teachings for children often include narratives or themes that emphasize the importance and mutually beneficial outcomes of respectful behavior, and the destruction wrought by disrespectful behavior. Place-based histories and narratives are also particularly important because they build a sense of respectful remembrance of historical events and figures, imbuing a space with additional meaning and value. In this way, stewardship of the land is an act of respect for those who came before, an act of respect for the land and the people living on the land today, and an act of respect towards future generations. Respectful behavior is particularly emphasized in practices that appropriate or consume parts of the land, including practices of hunting, fishing, mining, or gathering. For example, hiw was taught by elders how to hunt respectfully and thoughtfully by having hiwus observe their hunting practices for years before he was allowed to hunt a deer himself. Before hunting, hiwus' grandfather and other elders would cleanse themselves with a spirit bath, which was an act of recognition of the significance of taking the life of the animal they had not yet encountered. The hunt itself was also deliberative and ceremonial, only taking down an animal that would be fully used. When the hides were being cured or the fur made into clothing, those handling these parts of the animal would often express gratitude to the animal or discuss how it came from a special animal. For hiwus, each step in the hunt was focused on expressing respect for the animal hunted, and for the land that provided that animal.

híwus also emphasizes the importance of self-respect. This includes maintaining one's own reputation and integrity, in relation to others, and also maintaining respect in relation to oneself. The respect of others is most importantly earned when one upholds their responsibilities, regardless of whether this is providing necessities for others, caretaking the land, or otherwise. In accordance with the shíshálh view of interdependence, self-respect is no different than respect for others and for the land. Thus, even in practices of respect to the land, such as those followed while hunting, it is important to also maintain self-respect and integrity.

Alongside the virtue of respect, shíshálh teachings also highlight the importance of virtues of commitment, integrity, and love, and the folly of the vices of greed and envy. Each of these virtues support social well-being and collaborative co-existence, while the vices undermine such outcomes. In one story that teaches some of these important shíshálh values, two brothers go out hunting in the xeníchen (Hunechin) area. A storm rolls in and the two men take shelter in a cave. The storm is long and bitter, and the brothers must live in the cave for the whole winter. Meanwhile, the brothers' wives do not know what has happened to their husbands. The wife of the older brother decides that the brothers must have died and gets together with another man. The wife of the younger brother, however, waits and holds out hope that her husband will return. After the winter, the brothers do return, and the Chiefs threw a massive potlatch to honor the wife who waited. After telling this story híwus concludes, "So that whole lesson is about all those things I talked about. That it's a relationship, it's partnership. It's not just love, but dedication to one another to coexist, to survive. It speaks about all those things. And I just love that story" (híwus 2020b).

The shíshálh creation story analyzed here refers to some historical political practices and norms that are no longer practiced today, largely as a result of forced assimilation and amalgamation. Yet, the narrative does not stand as a relic that provides no relevance or insights to present-day shíshálh political thought and politics. This telling of the shíshálh creation story is contextualized by and responds to contemporary politics and serves a political purpose of illuminating the enduring importance of land, spirit, responsibility, interdependence, stewardship, and respect. For híwus, these are both the guiding political principles of shíshálh political thought that have been passed onto them, and in their own interpretation, the culturally relevant political values common to many shíshálh people today. Although some of the particular events described in the story are historical, the teachings the narrative communicates and emphasizes are theorized in the context of contemporary political concerns and challenges.

Besides communicating híwus' contemporary political theory, the creation myth also reflects híwus' understanding of a political mandate that was passed onto them by past hereditary chiefs and shíshálh leaders. The political goals of past chiefs included a goal of restoring shíshálh jurisdiction of traditional shíshálh territories, returning to self-government unconstrained by imposed governance structures, and creating opportunities for shíshálh people to deamalgamate, if they so choose. Each of these goals is alluded to in the creation myth. First, the story depicts a deamalgamated shíshálh people living across their territories and maintaining their rights and responsibilities throughout the land. Second, the story narrates shíshálh governance being conducted at potlatches and pow-wows, representing a return to self-governance informed by historical shíshálh political structures. One of the political mandates of híwus' teachers was that híwus ought to continue the work that will bring about these changes, and much of híwus' theorizing on contemporary shíshálh governance and visions for the future of shíshálh nation are informed by this mandate.

Visions for the Present and Future

The shíshálh political theory elaborated on thus far informs a number of híwus' interpretations of current shíshálh politics, as well as normative judgments and practical visions for the future of shíshálh politics. Following the political mandate of their elders, híwus often emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities for deamalgamation when discussing political goals. Deamalgamation would entail shíshálh people moving away from the Village of Sechelt and back to the shíshálh villages that their families were forcibly removed from. Deamalgamation is important for a number of reasons. By living in a less urban environment on shíshálh territories, individuals could enrich their experiences of spirit and living in relationship to the land. It would also allow shíshálh people to better uphold their responsibilities of stewardship of the land. For example, if shíshálh people lived across their territories, híwus believes that they would be able to better monitor and intervene in illegal poaching of fish and game on their territories.

Regarding contemporary governance structures, his was discussed the important roles played by both the executive, or elected, chief, and hereditary chiefs. The executive chief and council's purpose is to oversee and bring about the economic development and success of the Nation. It is vitally important the shíshálh people have opportunities to take care of their economic needs. The executive chief and council have made, and will continue to make, decisions about how to support and develop industry and employment on shíshálh territories that benefit the shíshálh people. On the other hand, the hereditary chiefs and elders ought to continue having and fulfilling the responsibilities of stewarding the land previously discussed. Hereditary chiefs and elders must think about how the Nation as a whole is impacting the land, and lead the people in upholding their relationships with and responsibilities to one another, the land, and future generations. In doing this, the hereditary chiefs and elders uphold and nourish a shíshálh culture based in these relationships. Both the executive and hereditary leadership work in collaboration to balance their separate responsibilities, and their opportunities for collaboration can continue to be improved as shíshálh Nation increasingly gains self-governance powers.

Intertwined with the vision of deamalgamation is a vision for a renewal of family or regional spokespersons. hiwus hopes that as each family grows, that they will nominate a spokesperson that will represent the family at gatherings and ensure that the family is upholding their responsibilities. As people return to their territories, each region could also be represented by a spokesperson or leader.

For híwus, the future of shíshálh governance should include both collaborating with non-Indigenous governments and increasing shíshálh jurisdiction in shíshálh territory. híwus specifically rejects the idea that the shíshálh Nation is merely a cultural or ethnic minority that ought to receive special privileges from the federal government. Instead, the shíshálh people are a nation that pre-dates colonization, and remain the rightful collective owners and stewards of the shíshálh territory. híwus explains the importance of both collaboration and shíshálh jurisdiction in this conversation excerpt:

So the meeting I was at at Pender Harbour, the people next to me were saying, well, you know, we're not against the government paying you special treatment, but what about the Chinese? What about the Japanese?

So I looked at them and I said, well, you have to remember, we were here way before the Chinese, we were here way before the Japanese. We were here before any European people came. And what you're not aware of is what our land looked like before these people came into our territory.

I mean, the old growth, all the trees were like 6 to 8 feet around, giant trees. Our inlets were full of salmon and fish and clams and oysters, and the land was full of game. But when they came, they stripped all of that. When they were finished stripping it, our people were starving because you denied us, you've taken away, and we've survived all of that.

But now, everything's reversed. The land is regenerating. Our people are repopulating. We're having more authority and more jurisdiction because now we're getting the acknowledgment that we need, that this was ours. And now we're

going to use it the way we think fit, we're going to harvest, we're going to do those things in the right manner, in a better manner, and in a good faith, working with the land.

So we are going to thrive, and we are thriving. And we're bringing this [non-Indigenous] community with us. We're not denying that, we're going to bring the community with us. And we think with the community collaborating, we can do things better. We can build a better governance, a municipality, a one government kind of thing, we can demonstrate to the federal senior governments that this community can do it better, together. (híwus 2020c)

For híwus, the future of shíshálh Nation is one of increasing self-governance, where the shíshálh Nation increasingly holds powers and jurisdiction previously claimed by the Canadian federal government. The shíshálh government will be increasingly part of the fabric of the Canadian constitution, maintaining relationships of collaboration with local, provincial, and federal government. At the provincial and federal level, the relationship will include shíshálh continuing to contribute tax revenue and receiving revenue and access to service. This relationship also depends on the Canadian government continuing to repay the shíshálh people for historical damages to shíshálh land. Relationships with local government will include increasing collaboration and co-dependence, working together to care for the land and residents.

A key theme that runs through hiwus political theory and visions for the future is a rejection of a dichotomy between modern and traditional society and governance. hiwus argues that shishall people have always practiced innovation, incorporating new technologies and knowledge into pre-existing economic and political practices. Part of hiwus' vision for the future includes a continuation of this practice. For example, in the deamalgamation process, where shishall people who move back to the shishall villages their families were forcibly removed from, people would return to the land with practices that incorporate new scientific methods and new technologies, of which shishall ancestors did not have access. shishall people who have been educated in universities, in ecological conservation or otherwise, and who return to the land will have opportunities to incorporate various forms of knowledge into their interactions with the land. This approach to deamalgamation would allow the shishall people to improve their capacities to uphold their responsibility to protect what the creator has provided, the land. The village of Sechelt will continue to develop and provide economic opportunities, while deamalgamation will create opportunities for shishall people to have an alternative to urban living.

5.6 Engaging shíshálh Political Theory

In this section, I shift away from the collaboratively interpreted account of hiwus' political thought to briefly consider some of the insights and provocations that this shishalh political thought poses, in my view, for theorizing territory and territorial rights. To do this, I stage a

conversation amongst some theories of territory, and briefly engage some existing theories of environmental stewardship and responsibility, which are themes that I interpret as relevant to híwus' political theories of land and territory. The engagement offered here is provisional and does not offer a detailed analysis of the nuances of híwus' political thought, nor does it offer a thorough analysis of theories of territory or environmental responsibility. Rather, it offers some initial reflections on what insights might be gained from engaging shíshálh political theories of territory and land.

Staging these conversations or encounters with primarily non-Indigenous theorists requires an attention to the political contexts within which such an encounter takes place. As I suggested in earlier chapters, engaging Indigenous political thought as political theory ought to consider and center the political goals of relevant Indigenous peoples' and communities. In this case, I interpret hiws' political thought with an attention to hiws' own political goals discussed in the previous section, and the broader publicly communicated political goals of the shishalh Nation. The Nation's general goals include expanding and strengthening shishalh jurisdiction over their territories and resources. My own goal with the engagement offered here is to be attentive to and in service of these shishalh political goals and to be careful that my own representations and interpretations of shishalh political thought do not undermine such goals.

It is also worth reiterating that hiwus' political thought on topics of territory, environment, and responsibility does not stand in for, nor represent, Indigenous political thought on these topics at large. Instead, I engage hiwus' political thought as one theory amongst many Indigenous and non-Indigenous theories. Similarly, my intention in engaging their thought is not to work towards a general or universal theory of territory or environmental ethics, but to instead offer some of my own initial thoughts on these topics and on various ongoing theoretical conversations.

Political Theories of Territory

Political theorists have often busied themselves with questions of the state, the duties of the state, and the rights of citizens, leaving the territorial dimensions of the state largely uninterrogated. Some theorists, however, have questioned and interrogated questions of territory, territorial jurisdiction, and/or the authority of the state. Across works of modern political theory, for example, Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant, for example, each offer at least a partial theory of territory.

Over the last two decades there has been some renewed attention to theories of territory, land, jurisdiction, and territorial rights. Many of these recent theories build directly on the earlier arguments of modern theorists, or introduce new accounts connecting territorial rights to concepts of nationalism and self-determination. Some of the key questions raised in contemporary theories of territory include considerations of who has a right to occupy land, what rights a rightful occupant should be granted, and the relationship between territory and property. The rights in question include rights of territorial jurisdiction, nonintervention, exclusion or control of borders, natural resources, and appropriation. As discussed in earlier

chapters, many Indigenous theorists pose challenges to settler-state territorial authority and legitimacy. In contemporary political theory and cross-disciplinary discourses on political thought and political ideas, there are also some examples of political theory scholarship that have taken up the challenges posed by Indigenous political leaders and thinkers to settlerstate legitimacy and territoriality (see, for example, Day 2000; Nadasdy 2017; Pasternak 2017; Shaw 2008; Tully 1995). For example, some critical geographers, such as John Agnew, also challenge assumptions about the legitimacy of states' territoriality, pointing out three myths in discourses of territorial sovereignty. According to Agnew, these myths are first, that all states have equal sovereignty over their territories, second, that states have exclusive jurisdiction over territories, and third, that in geopolitics, there is little agency outside of reified, independent states (2017, 70). Yet, despite these renewed conversations and the challenges posed by Indigenous theorists, the territorial claim of the state and the state's legitimate jurisdictional rights are often taken as settled in contemporary political theory discourses. For example, even while contemporary theorists debate whether liberal principles should apply to the international community or solely to and within nation-states, the territoriality of nation-states typically remains uninterrogated (Lomasky 2007).

This section of the chapter puts shishalh political thought into dialogue with some prominent contemporary perspectives on occupancy rights and jurisdictional rights, two key areas of debate in territorial theorizing. In particular, I look at Anna Stilz' territorial theorizing and the recent work of Margaret Moore and Veldon Coburn on Anishinaabeg land and occupancy rights. Through this encounter, I also engage with shishalh insights on topics of land, responsibility, and relationality. I find that shishalh political thought not only provides insights relevant to current debates on jurisdictional and occupancy rights, but I also suggest that an engagement with shishalh political thought might challenge theorists to re-evaluate some common assumptions about land-human relationships. These insights are also relevant to key debates in environmental political theory, revealing the importance of increased dialogue between territorial and environmental theories.

Occupancy Rights

Occupancy rights are a key concept for many theories of territory. For some theorists, occupancy rights are the foundational right that legitimizes territorial jurisdiction and authority. This section focuses on occupancy rights primarily because I interpret shishalh political thought as offering valuable insights and challenges to some current discourses on the topic. Further, I focus on the topic of occupancy rights because I believe it is a useful entry point for considering if and why territorially situated political authority is valuable or defensible. Finally, the question of occupancy rights is relevant to theorizing on if and why a state should have authority to legitimately govern individuals settled in a particular geographical location, as well as authority to govern land use. Given the challenges posed by many Indigenous political thinkers to assumptions of the state's legitimate territorial authority, it is thus relevant to consider existing disciplinary conversations on occupancy rights. Anna Stilz offers one recent and thorough work of political theory on concepts of territorial jurisdiction

and sovereignty (2019). In this section, I stage a conversation between Stilz' theories and what I interpret to be shishalh political insights on the topic, and briefly draw another disciplinary work on territory into the conversation (Coburn and Moore 2021). First, I want to clarify in some detail what I take to be some of Stilz' key arguments and suggestions.

In their recent book, Territorial Sovereignty: A Philosophical Exploration, Stilz offers an exploration and qualified justification of the territoriality of states and a statist international political system (2019). Stilz argues that there are three core values that are served by such an international system, where political units are spatially defined and self-governing (Stilz 2019, 249). The first of these values is the right to occupancy, which allows individuals to reside permanently in a specific geographic location and make use of that space. For Stilz, such a right is justified by the importance that geographical space plays in individuals' life plans. The second core value that is served by this system is basic justice, which is understood as the protection of individual rights of both the state's subjects and outsiders. Stilz argues that basic justice is achieved through functioning legal systems and other institutions required to specify, interpret, and enforce individual rights. The third core value is collective self-determination, which requires that the state represents its subjects' shared political wills. Because the current focus is on theories of territory, this section of the chapter will begin by looking more closely at the concept of occupancy rights.

Stilz argues that occupancy rights are an individual, pre-institutional, and moral right to make use of land that is justly occupied. An occupancy right has two key elements. First it is a liberty to "reside permanently in a particular space and make use of that area for social, cultural, and economic practices" (Stilz 2019, 35). This liberty grants individuals access to public spaces, but does not grant access to private property. Second, this right includes "a claim-right against others not to move one from that area, to allow one to return to it, and not to interfere with one's use of the space in ways that undermine the located practices in which one is engaged" (Stilz 2019). However, occupancy rights are use-rights that fall short of private-property rights and permanent titles, as they do not allow one to alienate the land or its resources for profit, nor transfer the right to someone else. Occupancy rights in Stilz view, then, allow one to reside in a particular place without forced removal, return to that place if they leave temporarily, and participate in social, cultural, and economic practices located in that space.

An occupancy right does not, in Stilz account, include a right to exclude others' access to the territory, unless access by outsiders would significantly harm current inhabitants and these outsiders have an adequate territorial base elsewhere (2019, 73). Migrants can also be excluded from a territory they seek to occupy if they intend to control the original inhabitants against their will. Finally, migration is limited by a fair-use proviso, where use of territory must leave enough and as good of territory for others (Stilz 2019, 47,74).

In Stilz view, occupancy rights are primitive natural and moral rights that precede both political and social institutions. Following a "hybrid institutionalist" account, Stilz argues that even without a shared institution that confers a moral duty to not forcibly remove a foreign population from their land, it would be wrong to do so. In other words, rights to a place are not only granted within the context of a shared set of social practices or

laws. Rather, occupancy rights are a natural right that all individuals hold (Stilz 2019, 39). These rights are often underspecified and leave many questions of ownership and stronger property-rights undetermined, and thus require institutions to be further specified (Stilz 2019, 37). Yet, these pre-existing occupancy rights should be respected by political and social institutions, and can thus rightly constrain institutions.

Stilz further explains why this natural right is best understood as a moral right. A key assumption grounding this claim is that an individual's well-being requires that they have some success in pursuing the life projects and relationships that have meaning or value to them and to which they are committed (Stilz 2019, 40). Well-being is, in most cases, dependent on secure and reliable occupancy of a specific place and access to social practices that occur within a particular space. Individuals' life plans very often include relationships with others who occupy the same territory, practicing culture or religion in a specific location, or maintain economic practices, such as going to work at a particular business. Thus, there is a moral right to occupancy, as it is necessary to the well-being of most individuals. However, Stilz also notes that for located life plans to maintain this moral value, they must operate, like migration, within the bounds of a fair-use proviso (2019, 47).

Stilz views occupancy rights as moral rights because secure territorial occupancy enables individuals to act with autonomy or the ability to shape and revise their life plans according to their values. If an individual's territorial occupancy was not secured, others could interfere with many aspects of their life plans, such as their ability to earn income, engage in spiritual practices, and maintain relationships, leaving them with a hindered ability to shape their lives according to their own plans. Overall, it is the foundational importance of occupancy rights for living to one's own life plans that morally mandates that occupancy rights be respected.

Stilz also makes a case for why occupancy rights are at core, an individual right, rather than a group right. Stilz points out that by ascribing occupancy rights to groups, and particularly homeland groups, there is a risk of marginalizing some groups who are viewed as not belonging. Instead, if we view occupancy rights as individual rights, we account for the participation of individuals who are members of various groups without privileging certain groups over others. We might conceptualize group rights to territory as derivative rights, where individuals can have an interest in their groups having access to public spaces (Stilz 2019, 54-55).

Similarly, a state holds occupancy rights only indirectly, as an agent of its members who are the holders of pre-existing occupancy rights. A legitimate state, which adequately represents the will of its subjects, can come to interpret and enforce occupancy rights. A state can expand the preinstitutional occupancy rights of its subjects by claiming jurisdiction over additional and even unoccupied territories that are necessary to carrying out the state's morally mandatory functions.

A key piece of Stilz' theory of occupancy rights is that occupancy rights are a moral right held by individuals who justly occupy a territory. Unjust occupation can occur if one removes or expels prior occupants of a territory who had an occupancy right to be there. This stands in contrast to permissible migration, which cannot displace existing occupants.

If unjust occupation occurs, the wrongdoers are morally required to restore territory to those that were forcibly removed or expelled. Similarly, dispossessors do not have occupancy rights to unjustly occupied territories, even if they have developed life plans that are situated in this territory. By harming others, dispossessors forfeit their right to occupancy, and may be expelled if their victims reclaim the territory (Stilz 2019, 75). Thus, first-generation victims of unjust occupation have a right to return to their territories, even if the possibility of reconstructing situated life plans in that territory has been significantly hindered (Stilz 2019, 76). Even if settlers' unjust occupation of land occurred under duress, or if settlers were ignorant of the injustices being perpetrated, they have a duty to correct the injustices faced by expelled victims. First-generation settlers have a moral duty to repatriate to territories that they previously occupied justly, or if there is nowhere for them to go, they must respect the victims' rights to return (Stilz 2019, 77).

In their discussion of just occupancy, Stilz argues that occupancy rights are not historically transmissible, which is particularly relevant for considerations of Indigenous politics in settler states. Stilz argues that just occupancy cannot rely on a "clean" historical title to lands, where current occupants' rights depend on them being descended from individuals who were also just occupants (2019, 60). In other words, whether an individual is a just occupant of a territory cannot, in most circumstances, be determined by decisions made by their ancestors, decisions over which they had no say. Consequently, second-generation settlers of land unjustly occupied have occupancy rights to the settled territory and these rights can be infringed on by mandating that second-generations settlers be repatriated in only limited circumstances. In most cases, the rights of individuals whose ancestors were wrongly expelled from a territory no longer have occupancy rights to the territory, with a few exceptions. Rights of return might persist if the descendants do not have secure occupancy rights to a new territory, are second class-citizens, or did not establish new located life plans in their new territory. There may also be rights of return for descendants who have religious or cultural projects that are fundamentally tied to the land from which their ancestors were dispossessed (Stilz 2019, 81).

In arguing that occupancy rights should be respected and protected, Stilz claims that these rights are best maintained by territorially sovereign states. What Stilz means by sovereignty is qualified. Yet, it is this value of occupancy rights that undergirds their broader argument that political authority be wielded spatially, within a fixed geography. Stilz further asserts that out of the structures of political organization that have been historically practiced, nation-states are historically unique in fulfilling this spatiality. I will return to a discussion of Stilz' theory after briefly turning to another account of occupancy rights.

Theories of occupancy rights have also been taken up in some recent discussion of Indigenous land rights. For example, Margaret Moore and Veldon Coburn recently took up the concept of occupancy rights to argue for Algonquin Anishinaabeg's rights to traditional territories in Canada (2021). Moore and Coburn acknowledge that there may be other moral arguments to respect Indigenous title, but they believe that it can be valuable to assess Indigenous rights through the same framework that theorists are currently using to assess the territorial legitimacy of settler states.

Working from many of the same positions taken by Stilz, Coburn and Moore characterize occupancy rights as a moral right to a basic liberty to live in a place that is justly occupied, which is a foundational right that allows individuals to pursue their life plans and projects (2021, 7). What sets their characterization apart from Stilz', however, is first, they conceive of occupancy rights as both individual and group rights, and second, they do not seem to ascribe to Stilz' claim that occupancy rights are not permanent titles that can be bequest. Coburn and Moore argue that occupancy rights should be thought about as group rights, since it is only in the context of social relation that we can conceive of individual having a right to land (2021, 7). While Stilz also acknowledges the importance of participation in collective social practices, they make clear that this reality is one justification for individual occupancy rights, and that it is nonetheless possible for an individual to have occupancy rights based on life plans that do not rely on their membership in a particular group (2019, 53). Stilz also worries that ascribing group rights in this way can risk marginalizing those on the "outside" if a group. Nonetheless, Stilz does concede that we might understand group occupancy rights as a derivative right, that emerge from the more fundamental individual right to occupancy (2019, 54-55). Coburn and Moore, on the other hand, argue that individual rights cannot be specified without also specifying a collective dimension of the right to occupancy (2021, 9)

Although they do not make their reasoning explicit, Coburn and Moore seem to suggest that historical collective occupancy rights are conferred to descendants in the group who no longer occupy those territories. In some ways, Coburn and Moore's argument is consistent with Stilz' theory of occupancy rights. For instance, Coburn and Moore explain that particular geographical locations were historically of spiritual significance to the Algonquin Anishinaabeg, and continue to maintain this location-specific significance to group members today. Following the theories outlined by Colburn, Moore, and Stilz, this centrality of location to Algonquin Anishinaabeg religious life plans could confer some current occupancy rights. However, Colburn and Moore also refer to the located epistemologies and practices of ancestral group members to defend both the historical and contemporary occupancy rights of the group, revealing that they ascribe to an account of occupancy rights that differs somewhat from Stilz' theory.

shíshálh Political Theory and Territory

Across these current discourses of territory, occupancy rights are framed as a fundamental and natural right, which confers not only the right to occupy land, but can also confer some forms of use rights and territorial jurisdiction. I now turn to hiwus' shishalh political theory and offer my own interpretation of shishalh theories of territoriality. I then explore what this shishalh theory contributes to my own understanding of the questions opened by the territorial theories discussed thus far.

My interpretation of shíshálh political thought is informed by what I take to be two key elements of híwus' political thought. First, it is important to clarify the meaning of "land" in shíshálh political thought, and what sets it apart from competing theories of territory.

In my interpretation of híwus' shíshálh political thought, all questions of territory would be understood as questions of land. In most existing political theory, including the territorial theory of Stilz, land is a spatial and geographical construct, usually referring to the terrestrial surface area of the Earth. Natural resources that serve a use to humans might be located on or within the land, and theories of occupancy rights do not, by default, usually grant rights to extract natural resources. In contrast, the shíshálh political theory of territory assumes a significantly different concept of land. Land, in shíshálh political theory, refers to all surfaces of the Earth, both terrestrial and hydrological. Land also includes all living things whose sustenance and well-being depends on the Earth, or a certain geographical region of the Earth. This includes everything from the cedar trees, to the salmon, and the deer. Finally, land also includes the non-living components of ecological systems, such as minerals and rocks, hydrological systems, and soil. Thus, a shíshálh concept of territory, in my reading, assumes a concept of land different from those implied in most other non-Indigenous theories of territory.

It is also relevant that when hiwus discusses land they typically refer to shishalh lands, the land the shishalh people have occupied and have been in relationship with for thousands of years. Most, if not all, of shishalh oral histories are place-based and specific to locations within shishalh territories. This corresponds with Kovach's insights regarding the importance of relational context discussed in Chapter 3, where meaning must be understood not only within its relevant context of beliefs, but also within its relevant context of relationships with all parts of the land.

Second, this concept of land is important for understanding an assumption of interdependence that I identify in híwus' shíshálh political theory. híwus' shíshálh political thought asserts, in my reading, that the well-being of occupants of a territory is interdependent with the land, and the well-being of the land, where component parts of the land depend on each other to live and flourish. When some systems of the land are disrupted or experience dishealth, other aspects of the land are also harmed. shíshálh political thought also makes explicit that humans are part of these systems. This interpretation of a shíshálh theory of interdependence need not assume an overly generalized and homogenizing theory of total interdependence of every aspect of land, nor causal homogeneity. Instead, we can interpret this interdependence as a generalizable theory describing complex socio-ecological systems. In híwus' political thought, I further interpret interdependence as specifically describing the relationships between shíshálh people living on shíshálh land.

At a generalized level, this concept interdependence is not entirely unfamiliar to most; the concept of ecosystems introduced by ecologists in the 1930s similarly describes the interdependence and interconnections between organisms, and between organisms and their abiotic environments. The shíshálh theory of interdependence, in my view, shares resonances with assumptions of relationality between individual humans, between different component parts of the land, and between humans and the land they interact with and depend on, found in other Indigenous political theories.

While we might interpret interdependence as an empirical claim, I interpret shishalh political theory as emphasizing the normative and moral significance of the ecological or

spiritual reality of interdependence, which bears on questions of territory. shíshálh political thought asserts that there is a moral responsibility, coexisting both individually and collectively, to steward the land and maintain the relationships that allow the interdependent parts of land to live and flourish. Much like Stilz' claim to a moral right, this moral duty rests, in part, on the importance of responsible stewardship as an enabling condition for human well-being. We can perhaps most fundamentally understand this in material terms. The physical health and sustenance of individuals depends on the material inputs of adequate and safe food, water, and shelter, all of which must come from the land. Since the health of disparate component parts of the land also depend on the health of other component parts, maintaining the health of the land in general is a necessary precondition for well-being of humans. Thus, I interpret from this shíshálh political theory that occupants of land have a moral responsibility to maintain or steward the land, as their own well-being and the well-being of other living beings depends on the land.

In my reading, hiwus' shishalh political theory of territory, from the outset, offers an alternative to the rights-focused inquiry that is common to much of current theorizing on territory, from Stilz and beyond. Rather than taking Who has rights to territory? or Who has jurisdiction over this territory? as fundamental questions, my interpretation of shishalh political thought suggests that we might instead ask Who has a responsibility to care for the land? and What does this responsibility entail?. I do not believe that posing these questions is fundamentally at odds with inquiry into, or a theory of, occupancy rights and jurisdiction. Rather, it takes responsibilities conferred to territorial occupants as either necessarily reciprocal or even prior to rights or entitlements conferred.

Putting shíshálh political thought into conversation with theories of territorial rights and occupancy rights, I want to suggest that we can understand this shishall concept of stewardship responsibilities as an occupancy responsibility. By occupying a particular land, one has the responsibility to steward the land, which allows for their own continued well-being and the well-being of others. I also want to suggest an interpretation of shishalh political thought where these occupancy responsibilities constrain occupancy rights, property rights, and jurisdiction. Occupancy responsibilities may not be temporally prior to occupancy rights, but they are an active and ongoing precondition for territorial rights. The occupancy responsibility of land stewardship must be continually maintained, or the land will no longer be able to sustain its occupants. In this way, shishall political thought presents occupancy responsibilities as not only a moral law, but a natural law. In other words, any rights that individuals or groups have to a territory are naturally, along with morally, constrained by the responsibility to steward land, as territorial occupancy and rights cannot be sustained without the land being cared for. Equally, occupying the land and having some jurisdictional rights are likely necessary for effective stewardship. The rights and responsibilities to land are thus mutually constructing and inseparable.

In the shíshálh political thought explored here, I understand the ecological reality of interdependence as placing a responsibility on inhabitants of a place to steward the land. Beyond land offering material sustenance, and therefore human well-being, we might also adopt Stilz' concept of life-plans to further elaborate the moral responsibility of land stew-

ardship that I interpret as being central to híwus' shíshálh political theory. As Stilz argued, life-plans that can be shaped, revised, and pursued are important to individual well-being. Stilz showed how important occupancy rights are to these life plans; to have secure occupancy enables one to make plans, which are most-often place specific and assume an ongoing ability to access and inhabit a given space. I interpret shíshálh political thought as offering a similar argument. The importance of the health of the land to individuals' life-plans places a moral responsibility on occupants to care for the land. It is not only secure land occupancy that is a foundational precondition to individuals pursuing their own life plans, but also the health of the land that one occupies.

Additionally, I interpret shishalh political thought as suggesting that individuals' life plans gain their significance and meaning relationally, including in relationship to diverse non-human parties. Stilz acknowledges that an individual's life plans in a particular territory might be significant because it allows them to maintain particular relationships with other individuals. However, plans can also have significance or meaning because they allow an individual to maintain relationships to the land more broadly. For example, one's life plans might include growing old on the land of their parents and ancestors, living in relationship with a nearby forest, or garden, or ocean with which their ancestors also had a relationship. One might also construct their life plans to support meaningful relationships with non-human aspects of the land unrelated to their significance in relation to other humans. Just as one can develop attachments to particular individuals, they can develop attachments to other biotic and abiotic components of the land. Informed by shishalh political thought, I take these meaningful relationships as an important part of the moral responsibility to steward land.

Stilz, too, acknowledges this in religious or spiritual terms; there may be particular sacred sites that are of importance to one's life-plans. However, relationships with land need not be religious to be central to one's life-plans. In my view, as meaning making animals, individuals are able to make meaning that emerges from their relationships not only with other individual humans, but with anything in their environment that they choose. Humans often develop significant meaning out of our relational experiences with family, friends, or co-workers, and so too do they often develop meaning out of relational experiences with particular aspects of the land, whether or not one depends on these parts of the land for material sustenance. Thus, even in non-religious terms, I think that there is compelling reason to believe that the land, broadly conceived, is likely to be of importance to many individuals' life plans and therefore can hold moral importance beyond mere sustenance.

In my view, the jump from recognizing the self as self-in-relationship, to the responsibility to steward the land can imply a recognition of human agency and a related accountability for one's own actions. It is because humans have the capacity to witness, reflect on, and change their behavior, that they have both individual and collective responsibilities to do so when their behavior undermines the well-being of others. This is perhaps most easily understood in reference to humans' dependence on the health of other aspects of the land. If one notices that their wasteful use of a food source or contaminating of a water source physically impacts the well-being of others, they have a moral responsibility to shift their

behavior and develop a new practice of ecosystem management and resource use that does not impact others' well-being.⁶

Within cross-disciplinary environmental political thought there are many theories of ecological stewardship and environmental responsibilities (see for example Plumwood 1991), and some works of environmental political theory that increasingly draw attention to the importance of responsibilities (see for example Vanderheiden 2020). Further, some scholars have specifically elaborated that relationships with land confer responsibilities (Whyte 2016). Nonetheless, the shíshálh political thought discussed in this chapter offers another entry point into such conversations. Importantly, in my view, híwus' shíshálh political thought offers insights for theorizing on both territory and responsibility to land, connecting existing debates about ecological responsibility, interdependence, and stewardship to political theory discourses on territory and territorial jurisdiction that have often neglected such topics.⁷ Taking up shíshálh perspectives can inform a shift from a central focus on considerations of territorial jurisdiction and rights, to questions of responsibilities to land. I find such a shift compelling, as the focus on land, as I understand it in híwus' political thought, incorporates assumptions of relationality and interdependence that questions of territory may otherwise miss.

In my reading of shíshálh political thought, territorial or land responsibilities are prior to and constrain any occupancy rights or jurisdiction. This is a key intervention of shíshálh political thought, challenging the common assumption across many political theory traditions that asks first, what rights individuals are entitled to claim. By instead first considering what responsibilities individuals have, we center the human capacity of situated agency, and the moral responsibility entailed in such a capacity.

Overall, I find the shíshálh account of a moral responsibility to land compelling. First, I find that there is sufficient ecological and empirical evidence to support a broad claim to the interdependence of biotic and abiotic parts of the land, and to humans' fundamental dependence on many parts of the land for their health and physical well-being. Knowing this and observing this relationship, humans have a responsibility to care for the land that they live in relationship to, as the health of land enables human health. Second, I support the characterization of responsibility to land as a moral responsibility by consequence of the importance of land not only for material well-being, but also for many humans' meaningful life plans. Third, I find the shíshálh account compelling because it centers all humans as relationally situated agents, a priority that I further elaborated and supported in reference to Indigenous methodologies scholarship in Chapter 3. The content of a responsibility of

⁶This discussion of responsibility to stewardship necessarily opens many important questions of what stewardship or fulfilment of responsibility would look like. These questions go well beyond the discussion of shíshálh political thought offered here, but what the responsibility of stewardship entails must also be particular to a given place and relational context, as the land is dynamic, complex, and geographically varied.

⁷It is also worth noting that other political theorists have offered a more generalized challenge to the ubiquity of rights discourses in political theory, and also advocate for more attention to responsibilities (Glendon 2008; Waldron 2011). However, these suggestions have rarely been directly addressed to or taken up in conversations of land or territory.

stewardship of or care for land could benefit from further theorization and debate, as well as engagement with relevant existing works of environmental political thought, but even without going further I suggest that the shíshálh political theory opens up new considerations for and challenges to theories of territorial rights and jurisdiction.

Importantly, the reasons I find the shíshálh account of land, interdependence, and responsibility compelling likely diverges from híwus' own understanding of these topics. Given híwus' emphasis of spirit in their elaboration of interdependency and relationships with land, I suspect that a key justification of shíshálh individual and collective responsibilities to land is grounded in spiritual beliefs and experiences. As discussed previously, híwus explains that creator provided the land to shíshálh peoples, which might suggest that caring for land is not only a moral responsibility, but also a spiritual responsibility.

There are, for me, a number of questions that remain outstanding after considering the shishalh political theory discussed in this chapter and its implications for further theorizing territory and land. Many of these relate to the intergenerational and interpersonal transmission of land and occupancy responsibilities and rights. Some of these questions were gestured at earlier in the engagement with Stilz' position that the primitive right to occupancy cannot be bequeathed or transmitted. Other open questions include how we might account for these responsibilities and responsibilities without redeploying statist assumptions that rights and responsibilities are specified and delegated by nation-states, and how we might account for responsibilities in reference to intergenerational disruptions to land, such as climate change.

5.7 Conclusion

Through a collaborative engagement with hiwus' political thought, the chapter puts forward one account of shishalh political thought that was previously undocumented. In our work together, a few central themes and claims of hiwus' political thought became apparent. hiwus' shishalh political theory asserts that spirit existing within and unites all parts of the shishalh people and land, and that various parts of land are interdependent. Each part of the land has certain responsibilities to the rest of the land, and shishalh Nation members thus have responsibilities to each other, as well as to past and future generations. Because there is a responsibility not only to other humans, but to all parts of land, shishalh peoples have a responsibilities, clans and head chiefs or spokespersons have specific responsibilities. In hiwus' view, head chiefs of each clan have a responsibility to ensure that the clan's responsibilities to one another and to the land are upheld. With these additional responsibilities, a head chief also has some limited rights of jurisdiction, including jurisdiction to exclude others from a territory or grant use-rights.

There are also certain virtues that are important to upholding responsibilities, and perhaps most importantly the virtue of respect. A feeling of respect should be held not only for other humans, but for all parts of land, including for oneself. Respect both supports effective relationships of responsibility amongst interdependent parts of the land and is also conferred

to those who uphold their responsibilities. Although híwus' political thought often refers to historical practices of the shíshálh Nation, it speaks to political considerations of today and of the future. híwus' political thought is informed, in their view, by a mandate passed down from their ancestors to work towards the restoration of shíshálh jurisdiction over their land and freedom from imposed governance practices. híwus' vision for the future of shíshálh Nation also includes opportunities for deamalgamation, where shíshálh people could return to living across the shíshálh territories, and of increasingly innovative collaboration amongst shíshálh and non-shíshálh people living across shíshálh territories.

Shifting to my own analysis of híwus' shíshálh political thought, the chapter also offers an engagement with híwus' theories of territory, land, interdependence, and responsibility, drawing out what I take to be some of the key provocations of híwus' theory. In conversation with contemporary theorizing on territory, and particularly with one recent work written by Anna Stilz, I suggest that híwus' account of land and interdependence can add new considerations into theorizing territory. Where much of contemporary work on political theory considers who might have rights to occupy territory, amongst other territorial rights, a view of interdependence with land, as suggested in shíshálh political theory, encourages us to consider foremost questions of territorial responsibility.

I suggest that hiwus' account of interdependence and responsibility to land is convincing given our current understanding of ecosystems and the importance of the health of land for human well-being. Informed by Stilz' theory of the moral importance of secure occupancy for individuals' life-plans, I suggest that we might understand territorial responsibilities of stewardship as moral responsibilities, not only because interdependence means that the health of land is interconnected with the health of humans, but also because relationships with land can be centrally important to one's life plans. I also find an account of territorial or land responsibilities compelling, as they seem to me to incorporate important insights about relationality and humans' capacities for situated agency. While discussions of ecological responsibility are common across environmental studies debates, I suggest that engagement with shishalh political thought can encourage those theorizing territory to take up considerations of interdependence, relationality, and responsibility that might otherwise be missed by assuming territory as a tract of land, where land is seen primarily as the terrestrial surface area of Earth.

The collaborative account of híwus' shíshálh political thought offered in parts of this chapter also offer one possible approach to academic engagement with Indigenous political thought. This approach is specific to engaging Indigenous political thought that is communicated through oral histories, acknowledging that there is much Indigenous political thought worth engaging that is offered in other formats, including many works of Indigenous political thought offered in academic discourses. I have attempted to offer an example of engaging Indigenous political thought that is respectful and attentive to relational responsibilities and contexts. Taking up some of the principles discussed and suggestions I made in Chapter 2, my primary goal was to center the political goals of my collaborator, híwus. To do this, I made space for híwus to direct the focus and terms of our conversations and asked them to be involved with the interpretive writing process. What this meant in practical terms was

negotiated between us as collaborators and was specific to our own contexts. Consequently, by offering one example of engagement with Indigenous political thought I do not mean to be prescriptive.

My intention in closing this chapter is to recount some reflections that hiwus offered after reading the chapter. hiwus wanted to focus on the teachings offered in this chapter that speak to possible futures for the shishall Nation:

I think we do need to really emphasize that, because of what's happening in our land right now, our people have to keep in mind that we are being held responsible for stewarding and caring for the land and making sure it's gonna be there for future generations and try to keep the integrity of the land intact as much as possible. I know it will never be the way it was 200 years ago, but you know, we have to look back into history and use history to remind us the way the land was and how giving the land was. And one day we're gonna have to depend on that again, you know, as the world is changing. The world may not provide the living that we're used to today...So we have to take our lessons and go back into the history of how we survived. And I have a vision for that, and a lot of other medicine men have visions for that too. The way the world is changing and how are we gonna survive that? (híwus 2022)

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The case of UNDRIP offers one example to illustrate what I take to be the central challenges and issues this project hopes to intervene within. UNDRIP affirms a broad range of rights for Indigenous peoples, including the right to self-determination and the rights to traditionally occupied lands and traditionally used resources. The declaration also upholds Indigenous peoples' rights to maintain, control, protect, and develop Indigenous forms of traditional knowledge and to maintain, promote, and strengthen their distinct political and juridical institutions. Affirming Indigenous practices and knowledge, the declaration further recognizes the Indigenous knowledge and practices contribute to proper management of the environment.

The declaration also establishes responsibilities for nation states. Centering and affirming Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, including the rights to autonomy and self-government, it mandates that states must obtain free, prior, and informed consent from Indigenous peoples before they adopt or implement legislation or administrative measures that may affect those Indigenous peoples. Further, it puts a responsibility on states to provide mechanisms of redress to Indigenous peoples for land and resources dispossession. Overall, the affirmation and protection of Indigenous knowledge, political practices, and self-determination is part of what makes UNDRIP a promising international advancement for Indigenous peoples and their political aspirations.

When the declaration was adopted in 2007, four settler colonial states, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, initially opposed the declaration. Despite a long history of denying many Indigenous rights, the governments of Canada and the province of British Columbia shifted their approach in recent years. In 2019, the provincial government of British Columbia passed legislation affirming the application of UNDRIP. This committed the government of British Columbia to a process that would bring the province's laws into alignment with the entire declaration, aiming to achieve the declaration's objectives at the provincial level. In 2021, the federal government of Canada followed suit and adopted similar legislation committing the government to taking all possible measures to ensure Canadian laws are consistent with the declaration. The overall landscape of legal recognition of In-

digenous rights has shifted in Canada over the last decades, and the adoption of UNDRIP might be taken as one sign of an increasing willingness of the part settler governments of Canada and British Columbia to address the country and province's colonial history and inheritance.

Complicating matters is the declaration's possible internal consistencies. Importantly, at the same time it upholds Indigenous peoples' rights to free, prior, and informed consent on issues affecting their lands, Article 46 asserts that nothing in the declaration may be "construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally, or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States" (United Nations General Assembly 2007). The Article stands in tension with the central challenges posed by many Indigenous thinkers discussed throughout this thesis who, through a variety of theoretical perspectives and approaches, often challenge the legitimate territorial authority of settler-states.

While the adoption of UNDRIP in Canada and elsewhere can be interpreted as a general advancement of Indigenous peoples' rights and political interests, the implementation of UNDRIP raises many of the same challenges taken up in this dissertation. First, the implementation of UNDRIP challenges those living in settler states to consider how to move forward with the declaration's mandates in ways that center Indigenous political thought and practice¹. Within political practice and academic political scholarship there is limited understanding of many of British Columbia's 198 First Nations' diverse laws, politics, and cultures. What would it mean to meaningfully center Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous political practices in the process of implementing UNDRIP? What would need to happen to enable this? This dissertation confronts similar, albeit narrower, questions, considering what it might mean to have a meaningful presence of Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous political thought within academic political theory discourses.

Second, the prospect of implementing UNDRIP in settler states also poses some more fundamental challenges to settler-state institutions and political practices in general. If we are to move forward in a way that respects Indigenous peoples' rights to free, prior, and informed consent, the non-consensual founding of settler-states and the ongoing resistance of Indigenous peoples to dispossession of self-determination and land must be reckoned with. In British Columbia in particular, where most of the land-base was never ceded by Indigenous peoples, the commitment to consensual relationships embedded in the adoption of UNDRIP poses particular challenges. This also brings up the tensions found in UNDRIP's articles. How could it be possible to center Indigenous knowledge, ways of knowing, and political practice, while also respecting Indigenous peoples' rights to free, prior, and informed consent, without putting into question the territorial integrity of the Canadian settler-state? In the context of academic political theory addressed in this dissertation, an analogous question might be posed. What about the practices, assumptions, and traditions of academic political

 $^{^{1}}$ In March 2022, the provincial government developed a *Declaration Act Action Plan*, which outlines many of their planned steps for implementing UNDRIP (BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation 2022

theorizing must be challenged to create opportunities for a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought in academic political theory? What tangible changes would be needed? And what would it require to take seriously Indigenous theorists' challenges to the legitimacy and authority of the settler-state?

While there are reasons to challenge UNDRIP itself, its implementation poses one example of the immediacy of questions regarding engagement with Indigenous political thought, and the complexities of responding to our colonial inheritances and settler-colonial present both politically and epistemically. Within both academic political studies and political theory scholarship, there have been some efforts to respond to the marginalization of Indigenous epistemologies and seriously take-up the political challenges posed by many Indigenous political thinkers. By engaging the political thought of Indigenous scholars and thinkers, many of whom have not yet been studied by political theorists, this dissertation analyzes some of the limitations of existing political theory scholarship on these topics, and offers some considerations for possible approaches to serious engagement with Indigenous political thought.

Each of the chapters takes up a distinct set of questions and considerations regarding what it might mean to have a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought and Indigenous ways of knowing within disciplinary institutions, discourses, and communities of political theory. First, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 set up the cross-disciplinary context of academic engagements with Indigenous political thought, offering an analysis of what I take to be the major gaps in existing works of political theory, and the insights and contributions offered by cross-disciplinary works on related questions of political theory, epistemic marginalization, Indigenous politics, and academic knowledge production.

In Chapter 2, I discussed the treatment of topics of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous politics within political theory discourses. Indigenous peoples played centrally into the political theorizing of many modern political thinkers. An orientalizing trope of Indigenous peoples was common across many modern theories, where Indigenous peoples marked the outside of political society, demonstrating the progress and development of European society. Oftentimes, tropes of this type were used as explicit justification of imperialism and domination of Indigenous peoples of the Americas. In contemporary political discourses, most discussion of Indigenous peoples is found within theories of multiculturalism and diversity within the state, including the work of Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor. While such works engage on topics of Indigenous peoples, they have a number of key limitations. Works of this approach tend to assume a goal of unity within existing nation-states, and interpret all Indigenous political aspirations as claims to the state. In articulating such supposed claims, most theorists of multiculturalism do not engage with the perspectives of Indigenous peoples, but instead rely on generalized assumptions about Indigenous peoples' political goals.

Once we turn to the works of Indigenous political thinkers, the issues with these assumptions becomes more evident. Many Indigenous peoples within the United State and Canada have long struggled for political freedoms of self-government according to their own practices and values. Key assumptions of many contemporary Indigenous thinkers are that settler-colonialism continues within settler-states, that Indigenous people continue to face colonial

oppression, and that settler-state institutions do not lave legitimate authority. For example, Taiaiake Alfred argues that settler-colonial states claim their authority and sovereignty are based on myths of European superiority and conquest. Rather than acknowledging these challenges to state legitimacy, settler-states have sought to quiet them by pulling Indigenous peoples closer through the granting of privileges, accommodations, or rights (Alfred 2005a). Alfred also argues that one of the ways colonial oppression persists is through the imposition of non-Indigenous political practices and values on Indigenous communities. This is often reinforced by the adoption of non-Indigenous values and ways of thinking by Indigenous leaders (Alfred 1999). Although Alfred is just one voice amongst Indigenous political thinkers, many other contemporary Indigenous thinkers continue to argue that settler-state institutions do not have legitimate authority and continue to oppress Indigenous peoples of settler-state territories.

Thus, the shortcomings of political theory engagements on Indigenous topics that fail to acknowledge the central and foundational critiques of assumptions of political authority and legitimacy are clear. By centering state unity and the authority of the state as the conveyor of rights and recognition, Indigenous challenges to the legitimacy of the state and struggles for freedom and political self-determination according to Indigenous values and practices are left unengaged and often misrepresented. Some contemporary theorists have, however, acknowledged and engaged the challenges posed by Indigenous theorists. For example, in Strange Multiplicity, James Tully argues, in agreement with many Indigenous thinkers, that modern states are unjust in that they limit Indigenous peoples' freedoms to live according to their own cultures. Tully suggests a number of principles for a new approach to political constitutions that takes these challenges of diverse political cultures seriously, informed by mutually-agreeable conventions of treaty constitutionalism that characterized early relationships between the British Crown and Indigenous peoples. These conventions include coming to an agreement about a form of mutual recognition, and practicing principles of consent and continuity. This, and other works of contemporary political thought that acknowledge the political challenges posed by Indigenous peoples, can inform considerations of what it might mean for Indigeneity or Indigenous ways of knowing to gain a meaningful presence within academic political theory.

After establishing this context of political theory scholarship, and some of the political challenges posed by Indigenous thinkers, Chapter 2 considers what can be learned from existing scholarship about the risks and possible approaches to supporting or working towards a meaningful presence of Indigenous perspective and ways of knowing in political theory. Building off of the insights of Indigenous political thinkers, including Indigenous methodologies scholars, political theorists reckoning with the Eurocentrism and omissions of the political theory discipline, and political theorists who substantially engage with Indigenous perspectives, I offer a number of suggestions. I consider, in particular, what role engaging Indigenous perspectives might have in Indigeneity gaining this meaningful presence, and what general principles might guide such engagements.

First, I suggest that political theorists adopt an approach to the discipline of political theory where the object of study is understood as political thought broadly. This can in-

clude political thought communicated through various mediums. While other theorists have offered similar suggestions, I reiterate this suggestion specific to considerations of Indigenous political thought, as Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching often incorporate practices and mediums that go beyond the textual forms of communication often engaged by political theorists. Second, I suggest that it is important for political theorists to increasingly acknowledge and reckon with the relational and political embeddedness of academic political theorizing. One way this can be undertaken is through reflexive work to unpack and investigate the omissions, implicit assumptions, and political embeddedness of both ourselves and of the disciplinary traditions we inherit. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith suggests, it is important to ask who benefits from a certain research project and from the research questions being asked (2021). So too should political theorists reflexively investigate who benefits from their work, and from the broader academic practices of political theorizing.

Third, I suggest that practices of reflexivity alone do not go far enough to respond to the settler-colonial political contexts within which many political theorists find themselves. In my view political theorists, and particularly those that seek to engage Indigenous political thought, should aim at minimum to ensure their work does not cause harm to relevant Indigenous peoples and communities, and the political goals of such Indigenous peoples. Further, I suggest that political theorists work to privilege the goals of the Indigenous peoples and communities relevant to the work they engage, working to understand these goals and develop projects that work in service of these goals.

Fourth, particularly informed by Indigenous methodologies scholars who emphasize the importance of relationality and respect in many Indigenous ontologies, I suggest that political theorists prioritize building respectful relationships in their engagements with Indigenous political thought. A similar suggestion was made in the recent work of Daniel Sherwin, who suggests that such an approach could be guided by a principled distance, which is grounded in a commitment to relationships of non-dominance allow for traditions to remain independent, rather than incorporated into each other (2022). This seems to me to share resonances with Emilie Cameron's ethic of active not knowing, where they unravel their own need to know and reconcile other ontologies, and Sarah Hunt's emphasis on the importance of taking a role as listener and acknowledging that knowledge is always partial, incomplete, and contingent (Cameron 2015; Hunt 2014). There is much important work already done to consider what respectful relationships might look like in the context of academic research that can inform my suggestion to approach engagements with Indigenous political thought according to these principles. Finally, I also suggest that political theorists who wish to contribute to a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought in political theory consider moving past reflexive work towards meaningful engagement. There is not a clear path suggesting how substantive engagement with Indigenous political thought be undertaken respectfully and with sufficient attentiveness to our own contexts, but I think that it is primarily through navigating relevant challenges and questions through the messiness of practice that theorists might find ways to navigate their already existing relationships with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous ways of knowing, and Indigenous lands.

My intention is that Chapter 2 offers an initial lay of the land for others who question

the marginality of Indigenous perspectives in political theory scholarship, or who are already exploring questions of what it might mean to decolonize their practices of political theory. It clarifies some of the key challenges posed by Indigenous thinkers to hinge assumptions often assumed in political theory discourses, and brings together cross-disciplinary insights on the difficulties and possible approaches to responding to these challenges.

There are also key limitations of this chapter. Bringing together contributions that have been made across disciplines, I am sure that there are many relevant Indigenous and non-Indigenous thinkers with much to contribute to the conversation that I have failed to acknowledge. My intention is to call people into the conversation, and the invite is extended to all that I have overlooked. Another limitation of the chapter is my relatively ungrounded discussion of the suggestions I make for engaging Indigenous political thought. My suggestions would be more meaningful if they were discussed through illustrative examples of what others have done well, or not, in their existing engagements with Indigenous political thought. My hope is that the fourth and fifth chapters help to give a more holistic illustration of some of the suggestions made in the second chapter.

In Chapter 3 I consider how political theorists might go about understanding the role of practices and beliefs of political theory in enabling, reinforcing, or legitimating the marginalization or oppression of Indigenous peoples, and particularly the marginalization or misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous political perspectives in institutions and discourses of academic political theory specifically. In other words, the chapter asks how we might understand the role of traditions of political theory in undermining a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought in the discipline. This question is particularly important to the reflexive work that political theorists should do to critically examine the disciplinary traditions they have inherited.

To approach this question, I consider what approaches to developing explanatory narratives of political outcomes might be appropriate to this context. I consider what can be learned about explanatory narratives from three areas of scholarship. First, I consider what some selected Indigenous methods scholars contribute to understanding ontologies of social and political change. Second, I consider the approaches that have been taken by some settlers to explain processes of oppression and marginalization of Indigenous peoples in settler states. Third, I look at the approaches and accounts offered by scholars that investigate the role of political theory in enabling, reinforcing, or legitimating the marginalization of oppression of Indigenous peoples in political discourses and in settler-state political practice.

Based on the insights offered across this scholarship, I suggest an approach that has three key components. First, informed by the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Margaret Kovach, I suggest that political theorists commit to an ontological assumption that Indigenous peoples can act as creative agents to reimagine, change, and remake their social worlds. This assumes that our social worlds, including social constraints, are not fixed, but rather contingent. I further suggest that to not center the role of Indigenous people's capacities for creative agency can have significant political and ethical repercussions, where possibilities for social struggles and transformation are foreclosed. Second, informed by the centrality of relationality in the work of Indigenous scholars, and primarily informed by the work of Ko-

vach, I suggest an approach to explanatory narratives attentive to relational context, where knowledge, beliefs, and agency must be understood within their relevant relationships, not only of belief and meaning, but also of relationships with land and other beings. This, both in my view and in Kovach's view, suggests an interpretive approach that narrates individuals within their relevant context of traditions of belief, traditions of practice, and relationships. Third, I recommend an approach that avoids structuralist themes of synchronic explanation, differential theories of meaning, and a neglect or suspicion of human agency. In my view, a commitment to explanatory narratives that center relationally-situated and creative agency and that are attentive to the relational context of meaning-making is largely incompatible with these structuralist themes.

Taking these suggestions into consideration, I then offer a brief narrative of the common traditions of academic political theory that help to explain the historical, and most importantly, the recent disciplinary treatment of Indigenous political thought. The general eschewal and misrepresentation of Indigenous epistemologies can be traced to the very founding of the discipline, which established political science as the study of "civilized political societies," signified by the most advanced political form, the nation-state. Although the discipline has largely dispensed with explicit developmental historicist assumptions of the linear and progressive development of societies that dominated the discipline from its founding in the 1880s until the mid-1900s, there remain vestiges of this tradition of thought in contemporary theories. First, there remains a general assumption in some contemporary traditions of political thought that the sovereign nation-state is either the preferred, unavoidable, or natural unit of political organization. Second, there also remains an assumption that Indigenous peoples in settler-states are generally applitical. This typically appears as the assumption that all political goals and aspirations of Indigenous peoples can unproblematically be resolved within existing settler-state political process and practices and/or the assumption that Indigenous peoples are a cultural groups (where culture is seen as a relatively apolitical feature of social groups) whose political aspirations can be fundamentally understood as claims to minority or cultural rights.

Particularly when combined, these two assumptions undermine a serious attention to Indigenous political thought, and particularly help to explain dominant conversations on Indigenous topics in the discipline that focus on rights, recognition, and state accommodations. Contemporary political theorists' assumptions associated with the tradition of developmental historicism, then, also help to explain the reproduction of the marginalization of Indigenous political thought in the discipline.

This account has many resonances with the historical account offered by Karena Shaw (2008) and with the discussion of beliefs of European supremacy and civilizational progress offered by other scholars. The contributions of this chapter are to offer an account that focuses primarily on outcomes of exclusion and misrepresentation within practices of political theory, and to provide an account of the prominence of beliefs associated with the developmental historicist tradition in institutionalized traditions of political theory specifically. This historical account can inform not only reflexive work done by political theorists considering what changes might be necessary for a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought

in the discipline, but also for political theorists interrogating the colonial, imperial, or Eurocentric entanglements of the discipline more broadly. Further, the suggestions offered on approaches to explanatory narratives of oppression might also be relevant to project aimed at explaining other political and social outcomes and conditions.

This chapter could be enriched by a more detailed engagement with other existing accounts of Indigenous marginalization, and in particular, more attention to the important contributions and insights of existing works. This is true also for the theories that are engaged in the chapter; more could be done to highlight the unique contributions of each existing work. Another key limitation of the chapter is that it only a cursory engagement with considerations of how one might best account for unequal material conditions within which situated agents are relationally contextualized. While narrating traditions of practice and belief can account for much of individuals' inherited conditions, it seems to me that narrating creative agents and the traditions within which they are situated may sometimes leave the impacts of material conditions and coericive power somewhat undertheorized. Thus, more could be done to consider if and when inherited traditions sufficiently account for these forms of social inheritance. Finally, the historical narrative of political theory discussed in the chapter is cursory, and would be enriched by more detailed analysis and evidence of the reproduction of the developmental historicist beliefs discussed. The account of the ongoing prevalence of such beliefs in contemporary traditions of belief and practice was particularly generalized and ungrounded.

In Chapter 4, I switched gears to a largely separate and applied question of engaging Indigenous political thought, looking specifically at the history of Indigenous political thought in British Columbia. The chapter considers what can be learned from the historical record about traditions of Indigenous political thought in the province. I look both at Indigenous peoples' historical political utterances, as well as political actions taken by Indigenous peoples to interpret the political ontologies and beliefs of some historical Indigenous peoples and communities in the region. I also consider the historical political contexts within which this political thought is situated. In doing so, the chapter illustrates one possible approach to engaging histories of Indigenous political thought.

Across the existing historical literature, there are some accounts of the general history of British Columbia after the arrival of European settlers. However, much of this existing work does not focus on the political actions taken by Indigenous peoples. Even fewer works provide insight into the political thought that informed and was informed by political actions and outcomes in the region. The chapter focuses on a period of history that is particularly understudied, stretching from the time of European invasion in the mid-1800s until 1927. Understanding the historical context and the Indigenous political thought of this period is important to efforts aimed at engaging contemporary Indigenous political thought in the region, as the early colonial relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers continue to inform Indigenous politics in the region today. Similarly, contemporary Indigenous political thought is situated within long traditions of political thought, and it is thus can be valuable to understand these ontological and intellectual historical contexts.

Post-European invasion, the earliest documented political actions taken by Indigenous

people that I found in my research took place after 1857, when European settlement intensified in the region for the first time. Offering analyses of numerous historical cases, the chapter demonstrates that until 1927, most Indigenous political organizing focused on resisting dispossession of Indigenous lands, obtaining promised compensation for settlement on Indigenous lands, and asserting ongoing Indigenous ownership and jurisdiction over the land. Throughout this history, Indigenous peoples in the province have repeatedly communicated their political traditions of thought and practice. While there are variations in the particulars of Indigenous political thought across the region, a common belief that Indigenous peoples owned the land and maintained political jurisdiction on the land, including the land occupied by European settlers, was made explicitly clear by numerous Indigenous leaders and communities from at least the 1860s onwards. This is not to suggest that Indigenous political thought or actions of the period were homogenous or entirely unified. Instead, political practice involved various forms of resistance and collaboration, and the theoretical explanations of Indigenous territorial rights and jurisdiction have varied across regions and contexts. Nonetheless, the centrality of asserting land ownerships, rights, or jurisdiction was central to nearly every historical account of Indigenous political thought available in the archives I engaged.

The chapter also demonstrates that the legitimacy and territorial basis of the settler government in British Columbia remained contested over this time period. The ongoing efforts of Indigenous peoples to resist settler-colonialism also suggest that many traditions of Indigenous political thought in the region brought theories of ownerships, territory, and processes of inter-nation governance that diverged with the political beliefs and practices of European newcomers. Each of these findings provides important context for engagements with contemporary Indigenous political thought in the region, as contemporary Indigenous thinkers developed their political theories within longstanding intellectual and political traditions. These findings also give some insight into the extent to which many historical practices of academic political theory in settler-states have eschewed the central challenges posed by Indigenous political thinkers, and largely failed to seriously engage with longstanding, complex, and publicly communicated traditions of political thought found within their own borders.

The argument and historical account laid out in Chapter 4 would greatly benefit from a continued account of Indigenous political thought and action in the region from 1927 until today. Although the more recent history of Indigenous political action has been more closely studied, there is much work to be done to identify and engage with the political thought of Indigenous leaders and communities across this period. Understanding the period of 1927 onwards would also shed light on the development of international Indigenous identity, solidarity, and political ontologies, as Indigenous leaders from British Columbia played a key role in these international developments. Separately, the chapter would better demonstrate the suggestions I laid out in Chapter Two if I engaged more thoroughly with each of the examples of Indigenous political thought identified in the chapter. My treatment of each historical account missed important contextualizing details, and my analysis of the political ontologies communicated in each moment was limited. Indeed, nearly ever example of Indigenous po-

litical thought I highlighted in the chapter could be engaged and contextualized in enough detail to each warrant their own chapter. At the very least, it would have been beneficial to reproduce in full every account of Indigenous political thought I discussed, centering the words or voices of the historical Indigenous peoples with whom I engaged. Perhaps, with these limitations, the chapter also demonstrates some of the difficulties of maintaining a relational and contextualized approach to engagements with histories of Indigenous political thought, particularly at the scale that I have offered here.

In Chapter 5, I also illustrate one possible approach to engaging Indigenous political thought. Rather than focusing on the a history of political thought, Chapter 5 engages contemporary oral history as political thought, demonstrating a collaborative approach to textually documenting and interpreting contemporary Indigenous traditions of thought. The chapter focuses on the political thought of one elder and hereditary chief, hiwus, from the shishalh Nation in British Columbia, Canada. The chapter makes three central contributions. First, it contributes understanding of a contemporary Indigenous political theory that was not previously textually documented. Starting from a creation myth told by hiwus, the chapter unpacks key themes, valuess and assumptions of hiwus' shishalh political thought. Centrally, hiwus' shishalh political theory assumes that the shishalh people, the land, and spirit are interconnected, where land encompasses all aspects of the physical environment. It also centrally focuses on responsibilities, and particularly responsibilities to care for or steward the land and Nation members across generations. Respect for oneself, for the land, and for shishalh people is a particularly important virtue in hiwus' political thought, where respect is closely related to upholding responsibilities.

Second, the chapter contributes one illustrative example of engaging Indigenous oral histories in a manner that is collaborative and that centers the political goals of Indigenous collaborators and their communities. It is also attentive to the relational and historical contexts of the political theory being shared and the work being collaboratively undertaken. The example also demonstrates that even with significant pre-existing relationships, the relationship building and trust required for meaningful collaboration with peoples and communities that one is not closely associated to or a direct member of can be challenging and move at a pace that may not be conducive to conventional timelines of academic scholarship. One of the limitations in the approach I took was that I did not build meaningful relationships with more shishálh people. While this was in part circumstantial, disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, I nonetheless underestimated the time that would be required to develop relationships with community members that might facilitate a collaborative project that would prioritize local political goals.

The chapter also offers a brief interpretive engagement with hiwus' political thought, considering what shishalh political thought might challenge about or contribute to existing theoretical conversations on territory and jurisdiction. Based on my interpretation of this shishalh political thought, I suggest that the shishalh understanding of territory, land, and responsibility might challenge some contemporary discourses on these topics. In particular, I suggest that hiwus' theories of land and interdependence might encourage us to think about questions of territory as necessarily involving questions of relationality, interdependence,

and responsibilities. In my interpretation, shishalh political thought might frame the central political questions of territory as questions of who has responsibilities, and what these responsibilities include, as opposed to questions of territorial rights often taken as central in political theory discourses of territory. The contribution of this portion of the chapter is primarily to open up a conversation concerning what engaging Indigenous political theories, and shishalh political theories in particular, might challenge or contribute to existing dominant discourses of and assumptions regarding territory, land, and territorial jurisdiction. Overall, however, what this part of the chapter offered was an account of some of my own reflections and interpretations in light of my understanding of shishalh political thought.

A key limitation of this chapter is that it might seem to imply that Indigenous political thought should be understood by non-Indigenous scholars so that it might be imported into existing discourses of academic political theory. While my intention was to engage his his shishall political thought in a way that avoids decontextualizing and instrumentalizing their insights and ways of knowing, my attempts to consider the contributions and challenges of their work to existing debates of political theory did, to a certain extent, do just that. My goal was not to attempt to demonstrate compatibility or somehow reconcile the shishall political theory I engaged with other traditions of thought, but I nonetheless could have offered an account that looked at his hishall political thought more holistically. Further, my engagement with contemporary theories of territory was brief and looked only at a subsection of current discourses, and thus gave only a cursory and limited analysis of what his his political theory might challenge about or contribute to existing debates.

Taken together, the chapters of this dissertation offer initial considerations of what it might mean and what changes might be needed for academic political theorist to work towards a meaningful presence of Indigenous political thought and Indigenous ways of knowing in the discipline. The project reveals that both historical and contemporary Indigenous political thinkers have offered theories and ontologies that challenge many core assumptions of political theory, including assumptions of what counts as political, assumptions about legitimizing political authority and jurisdiction, and assumptions about what it means to pursue proper relationships with each other and with the land. It is not only contemporary political theorists who have often eschewed these and other foundational challenges posed by Indigenous political thinkers. At least in the context of British Columbia, Indigenous peoples have made their theoretical challenges to dominant traditions of political thought known since the intensification of European settlement, yet it is only in the last decades that a small number of theorists have begun to take these challenges seriously.

Alongside work done by a few other scholars, this dissertation also provides some initial reflections and suggestions that offer guidance for those, and in particular non-Indigenous scholars, who might seek to engage Indigenous political thought and take up the challenges that Indigenous thinkers have posed (Shaw 2008; Sherwin 2022; Tully 2000). There are, I think, many ways that theorists might respectfully engage with Indigenous political thought. In particular, this dissertation offers closer considerations of two possible approaches, one focusing on engaging histories of Indigenous political thought in settler states, and the other

focusing on engaging the political thought embedded in and communicated through oral histories. In the illustration of both approaches, the dissertation also brings to light some of the challenges of engaging Indigenous political thought in a way that is attentive to our political contexts and relational contexts, and in a way that respectfully makes space for Indigenous peoples to be heard in their own words and on their own terms. One of the challenges illustrated here was the tensions between centering the voices of Indigenous political thinkers one aims to engage, and offering one's own reflections and interpretations of such theories.

The dissertation also makes clear that questions of territoriality and authority have never been settled in Canada, and in British Columbia in particular. I think that this may offer a very different starting point, or hinge assumption, from which political theory and political scholarship in general might be undertaken in settler-states. I am not the first to introduce such a hinge assumption, but by elevating many Indigenous voices who have posed challenges to assumptions about the legitimacy of settler-state institutions, my intention is that it might be seriously taken up across existing conversations, not only of decolonizing political theory or comparative political theory, but in political scholarship more broadly. Finally, this work offers an initial road map of the cross-disciplinary work that is likely to be relevant to political scholars who also aim to reckon with the colonial entanglements of their inheritance, and in particular, who are troubled by the misrepresentations and omissions of Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing in certain academic spaces and political discourses. This work serves primarily, in my view, as an invitation and starting point for some of the difficult questions confronting the challenges posed by Indigenous political thinkers and posed by our colonial histories and contemporary political contexts entail.

A key limitation I see with the approach taken in this project is my centering of disciplinary political theory. As has been shown throughout the previous chapters, political theory scholarship lives not only within the subfield of political theory in political science departments and institutions, but also occupies many spaces across diverse disciplines. I have throughout this project fixated, at least to a certain degree, on disciplinary spaces of political theory scholarship, advocating approaches to disciplinary political theory that recognize the multiplicity of ways and places political thought is communicated and shared. While I do not think that supporting such a shift is wrong, my focus on the discipline does seem to me to imply that diverse forms and traditions of political thought should be somehow unified or accounted for within the discipline. Retrospectively, it seems more important to me to highlight the diverse works of cross-disciplinary political theorizing being undertaken by contemporary scholars, than to focus on what might be done to remake the supposed boundaries of the academic subfield of political theory.

More could have also been done to put into practice my own suggestion to take up the political thought of others with an attention to relationality. Relatedly, and as I have noted elsewhere, there is also more that could have been done throughout most of this project to acknowledge and engage relevant cross-disciplinary work that can contribute much to the questions taken up here. In the future, important work could be done to investigate what

can be learned from other related areas of scholarship. For example, given the central focus on land found in many contemporary Indigenous political ontologies, one might expect that environmental scholars and practitioners are likely to have taken up similar considerations of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous peoples. Indeed, environmental scholarship reveals a rich body of work on questions of respectfully engaging Indigenous knowledge and building collaborative practices with Indigenous peoples (see for example Ban et al. 2018; Joseph et al. 2022; McAlvay et al. 2021; Reid et al. 2021).

Finally, another key constraint of the work that I have offered here stems from my focus on investigating and theorizing possibilities for political theorists to engage Indigenous political thought. Although I have noted that engaging Indigenous political thought cannot be seen as the sole or even primarily response theorists might take to support or work towards a meaningful presence of Indigenous ways of knowing within political theory, I have not offered any significant contributions to or reflections on what else might need to be done to support such a presence. Just as important as questions of the possibilities, risks, and approaches to engaging Indigenous political thought are questions of what might be done to support Indigenous political thought and scholarship going on outside of the discipline, what might be done to better support Indigenous scholars, students, and communities, and what might be done to create communities of political theorizing in which people who practice diverse ways of knowing and teaching might feel that they can belong.

With little work done to understand what a meaningful presence of Indigenous political theory in academic political theory might look like, and even fewer theorists attempting to do the work that supports such a meaningful presence, there remains, in my view, vast possibilities for future work on these topics. For example, in the context of British Columbia, many First Nations political thinkers have offered theories and insights that warrant closer engagement, including for example, Sarah Hunt, George Manuel, Umeek (Richard Atleo), Joann Archibald, and Candis Callison. There are also remain many questions and challenges related to the prospect of engaging Indigenous political thought that would benefit from closer attention. For example, engaging Indigenous political thought is likely to raise questions of if, when, and how it might be appropriate to apply insights grounded in one particular Indigenous epistemology or ontology to generalized principles or approaches of engaging Indigenous political thought.

There are also many possible questions of land and territorial authority that deserve closer attention and conversation. Taking seriously Indigenous challenges to settler-states' territorial jurisdiction and authority opens, in my view, broad and foundational questions related to consent, continuity, responsibility, just occupancy, and practices of constituting authority. As one example, it seems to me that there is much can still be done to theorize what might be considered just occupancy in various settler-state contexts, and to attempt to work towards greater mutual agreement on such topics amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous political thinkers and leaders. This, along with the other topics of conversation posed here, are very broad topics on which many have long theorized. The political challenges facing those living in settler-states today, however, require renewed reflection and theorizing that is specific to our current political, historical, and relational contexts.

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