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'A lot of catching up', knowledge gaps and emotions in the development of a tactical collective identity among students participating in solidarity with the Winnemem Wintu

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ABSTRACT

Settler-colonialism generates significant knowledge gaps and emotional barriers to cross-cultural mobilization, but does not prohibit meaningful solidarity. Through participant observation and semi-structured interviews with non-indigenous university students in solidarity with the Winnemem Wintu between 2011 and 2013, I observe that during acts of solidarity students recognize colonization as an ongoing phenomenon in which they are implicated. This knowledge acquisition often elicits shame and guilt, feelings that students must manage in order to be effective allies while simultaneously navigating the pervasive concept that guilt has no place in solidarity work. Drawing from sociology of emotions, social movement theories, and social-psychological analyses of collective guilt and shame, I explore how emotions influence methods of settler-solidarity.

KEYWORDS

Emotions; solidarity; settler-colonialism; indigenous-settler relations; activism

As kayaks, pontoons and paddleboards left the shore spreading across the width of the McCloud River, a crew of people on the banks enthusiastically hoisted a 'River Closed' banner. Chief Caleen Sisk watched the boaters practice blockade maneuvers.¹ At her request university students, environmentalists, educators, lawyers and activists had assembled on the Winnemem's sacred land for a four-day H'up Chonas ceremony to establish a blockade that would prohibit boaters from entering the last 400 yards of the McCloud River. This blockade would protect participants in the upcoming Balas Chonas ceremony, which for the last few years had been regularly disrupted by recreationists. The Winnemem Wintu case is one where the recruitment of allies seems especially challenging, yet vital.

Winnemem Wintu people have occupied their territory along what is now called the McCloud River since time immemorial. The gold rush of 1848–1849 brought genocidal violence to their territory. Around this time, US treaty commissioners entered into 18 treaties with California tribes which the US Congress refused to ratify. Among these, the federal government failed to acknowledge the 1851 Cottonwood Treaty signed by leaders of the Winnemem Wintu. Despite the lack of ratification, the Winnemem continue to live in the area of the McCloud River. Yet despite maintaining a presence on their traditional lands, the Winnemem remain federally unrecognized. This political condition limits the

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tribe's capacity to carry out ceremonies without interference and disrupts their ability to influence decision-making in their watershed. As a result, solidarity plays an important role in their work and has been facilitated by media and face-to-face outreach.

In 2006, the Winnemem Wintu renewed their Balas Chonas (Coming of Age Ceremony). The ritual grounds, which have been home to the Balas Chonas for centuries if not millennia, are now designated US Forest Service (USFS) land on the McCloud Arm of Shasta Lake. USFS employees refused to close the area for ceremony despite Winnemem requests. As a result, tribal members were harassed throughout the ritual. Invited observers recorded these incidents, but despite well-documented hostility and disruption of ceremony, the USFS again refused to close the river for the 2012 Balas Chonas, prompting the H'up Chonas along the banks of the McCloud. This ceremony drew a large number of activists and legal observers, including many of the people I interviewed.

This paper explores the experiences of non-indigenous university students in solidarity with the Winnemem Wintu.² I draw on studies of emotions and social movements to illustrate the unique emotional terrain navigated by non-indigenous solidarity workers. For most of my respondents, this work brought them face-to-face for the first time with colonization as something ongoing and in which they are implicated. This knowledge acquisition initiated intense emotional responses, which often took place during their solidarity work.³

Students' social location as non-indigenous supporters of indigenous-led struggle creates distinctive movement conditions whose emotional characteristics differ from those most cogently theorized in US sociology.⁴ In particular, I examine how the emotional experiences of settler-solidarity differ from commonly held conceptions of blame and collective identity in social movements. Whereas existing studies point to the mobilizing power of 'demonization' and 'blame' my respondents suggest that moral shocks, blame, and shame are conflated in settler-solidarity necessitating on-the-spot emotion management, self-reflection and identity work.⁵ Furthermore, the shame described in solidarity workers' narratives contravenes popular activist discourses about the 'pointlessness' and 'unacceptability' of guilt/shame in alliance work, pointing to the need for a more nuanced consideration of emotions within settler-solidarity movements.

Emotions and social movements

'Moral shocks' refers to relationships between knowledge acquisition, outrage and propensity for action.⁶ These 'shocks depend on preexisting patterns of affect, which channel ... interpretation',⁷ offering a partial explanation for why information has individualized impacts and mobilizing potentials. 'Blame' is a closely related concept, likewise shaped by pre-existing affect and by social interpretation of situations.⁸

Many scholars suggest that blame and even demonization are powerful mobilizers.⁹ Beamish and Luebbers contend that, '[t]o successfully ally, cross-movement coalitions must often reconcile distinctive, sometimes competing explanations'.¹⁰ This resolution of explanations often equates with blame assignment. Being able to share an understanding of who or what deserves blame for a particular problem allows groups to effectively coordinate efforts.

In settler-solidarity, blame rests on colonization, which implicates settler-solidarity workers, often resulting in shame or guilt. This implication does not prevent mobilization,

but limits the effectiveness of demonization as a mobilizing force. While scholars suggest that collective identity develops from shared moral shocks and blame-focus,¹¹ the position of 'settler' limits collective identification with indigenous peoples.

Social-psychological analyses of collective guilt/shame driven by colonial/ethnic violence, suggest guilt is a negative self-concept based on behaviors, while shame is associated with concepts of the self as flawed.¹² Following this logic, micro-level studies often predict that shame generates withdrawal or antagonism.¹³ Recent studies, however, propose group-based shame can prompt pro-social behavior, including positive attitudes toward atoning for colonial violence.¹⁴ Also contravening earlier results, Allpress et al. illustrate both guilt and shame may motivate pro-social attitudes.¹⁵ Using data from Britain and Australia, psychologists hypothesized two forms of shame that influence support for apology and reparations. They conclude that *image shame*, 'perception that the in-group's standing, image, and reputation' are threatened, correlated with positive attitudes toward apology, while *essence shame*, resulting from belief that the in-group's behavior has 'violated an important moral standard' fosters a desire for and participation in less public forms of material compensation in an effort to restore intergroup relationships.¹⁶

Indigenous-Settler solidarity in environmental struggle

Sociology of indigenous environmental struggle in the United States constitutes a small but growing body of literature. Research in the areas of food sovereignty¹⁷ and toxic exposure¹⁸ contribute to the discipline as well as to legal and policy considerations. Organizational aspects of indigenous environmental struggle in North America remain under-analyzed within US sociology.¹⁹ These works inform my research along with the insights of geographers like Barker and Grossman who illustrate the potential for diverse environmentalisms, which attend not only to ecological threats, but also threats to indigenous cultures and sovereignty.²⁰

While optimistic about the potential of indigenous-settler solidarity, I do not suggest that settler-solidarity is without problems. Scholars note that indigenous-settler solidarity raises significant concerns around cultural appropriation and settler claims of innocence.²¹ Gaztambide-Fernández contends that projects of decolonization call for 'a conception of solidarity that hinges on radical differences and that insists on relationships of incommensurable interdependence'.²²

Attention to relationships of interdependence figure prominently in discourses of reconciliation, but such discourses are rare in the US context. Judge and legal scholar William C. Bradford's concept of 'justice as indigenism' calls for tribal reclamation of 'inherent rights of sovereignty and self-governance' and 'the restoration of harmony and peace between peoples'.²³ For Bradford, this requires 'full cognizance of the history of U.S.-Indian relations'.²⁴ Bradford's claims resonate with Paulette Regan's assertion that reconciliation may be a 'decolonizing place of encounter between settlers and Indigenous people' if settlers 'understand history both intellectually and emotionally as an embodied place of connectivity that is essential to reconciliation'.²⁵ In addition to understanding history, reconciliation 'requires a commitment to support Indigenous life, lands, and ways of being'.²⁶ This commitment must include massive returns of land and other forms of compensation.²⁷ This call to acknowledge history intellectually and emotionally,

as a first step in political action is a recurring theme and should come as no surprise given that the project of settler-colonialism is a project of erasure.

This study is contextually specific and requiring careful attention to a small group of individuals. That said, I believe that the findings in this case may have saliency in other cases of settler-solidarity.²⁸ To conduct this research, I recruited my initial six interviewees from contacts made during my own participation in solidarity with the Winnemem Wintu.²⁹ Each respondent provided me with the names of other student solidarity participants. I continued in this way until no new names were generated ultimately conducting 13 semi-structured interviews with students from three public universities. This represents about 80% of the non-indigenous university students known to have participated in solidarity with the Winnemem Wintu at the time of this study.

Initial interviews ranged from 48 to 140 minutes. I also conducted five follow-up interviews. Each of these was transcribed and coded employing a grounded-theory approach producing 148 unique codes.³⁰ During coding a pattern of participant description focused on emotions and knowledge emerged. Every interview contained at least one instance of co-occurring codes 'didn't know' and 'negative feelings'. My analysis centers on these co-occurrences.

Knowledge, shock, shame and the limits of collective identity

While scholars have primarily theorized moral shocks as emotional and cognitive events leading to mobilization, in my research moral shocks rarely occurred in recruitment, while most shocks described by respondents occurred during solidarity work. Regardless of timing, the dominant moral shock described by interviewees pertained to realizing their own knowledge gaps and the emotional toll accompanying knowledge acquisition.

The 2012 H'up Chonas was the first act of indigenous solidarity for just over half of my respondents. Attended by numerous supporters including members of Occupy, Earth First! (EF!) and the American Indian Movement (AIM), the H'up Chonas was interrupted by a heavy police presence via both land and water during the second day of the ceremony. Tensions were high among many participants and inexperience with solidarity likely contributed to numerous instances of unintended offense and unchecked privilege. Many reflections on the H'up Chonas 2012 contain elements of both guilt and shame, particularly around knowledge gaps. I draw the distinction here taking cues from the work of Allpress et al. (2010). Guilt, being a negative emotional self-appraisal based on bad actions, and shame being thought of in two types: image shame, a condition created by 'perception that the in-group's standing, image, and reputation' are threatened, and essence shame, shame that results from a belief that the in-group's behavior has 'violated an important moral standard'.

For example, during the H'up Chonas several groups facilitated skill-sharing workshops. One workshop included a series of reprimands regarding supporter behavior. These reprimands constituted a shock for several solidarity workers who felt confused, guilty and ashamed about potential transgressions. One respondent indicated that the AIM facilitator had 'referenced people not having elders eat first, or sitting down when elders are standing' but indicated that she herself felt uncertain about how to properly behave with regard to elders. She said 'I guess that was the hard part of not knowing if I had done some huge fuck up'.³¹

Jay, a university senior who joined in the H'up Chonas blockade as part of a direct action environmental group made it clear through his inflections and laughter that in retrospect he found his own behavior embarrassingly uninformed but not atypical:

We got a message from someone that was like 'come down here and work on this blockade' and we were like 'Oh Yeah! This is gonna be great!' But I ... had *no idea* what it was for ... the extent of my knowledge was 'ooo river blockade! I love this type of thing'. I think like a lot of people who went down that year I had no idea what was going on. I didn't understand. Before I went I watched [the online videos] ... I learned the ceremony is being disrupted by locals and the Forest Service, and I think at the time I was thinking 'oh yeah! I don't like the Forest Service either'.

Daniel, a senior who participated in two high-risk solidarity events, indicated that his initial interest in solidarity emerged from coursework that illustrated the relationship between social justice and environmental health. An already active environmentalist, this new understanding of environmental justice (EJ) fostered a desire to stand in solidarity with front-line communities. While coursework mobilized Daniel, his participation in solidarity elicited both shocking realizations that colonialism is an ongoing process, and shame that his own life is implicated in the suffering of others:

Before going ... I think for me and maybe for most people who went through public school ... all I knew was 'there's a reservation over there and we're over here'. I didn't think indigenous people were still struggling ... to have religious freedoms or practice cultural traditions on their native lands ... It's just so heartbreaking to imagine ... I don't want anyone to feel like that ... And I'm always trying to justify my life.

The concepts of blame and collective identity take on particular shape for settlers participating in indigenous-led struggles. Theorists suggest that in social mobilization there must be someone to blame.³² Jasper writes '[d]emonization fuels powerful emotions for social movements, such as hatred, fear, anger, suspicion, and indignation'.³³ Yet one of my key findings suggests the limited capacity for this kind of affective propagation when settlers join movements to disrupt settler-colonialism. In the case of settler-solidarity, participants are implicated in the system they resist, and this fact does not go unnoticed by those with whom they are in solidarity nor by the participants themselves. This position circumscribes the limits of collective identity, and expressing this boundary between themselves and the Winnemem becomes a common component of participant narratives.

The identity of 'settler' or 'colonizer' constitutes a significant part of most participants' self-description. When asked about his identity, Samuel considered the most salient feature to be his 'colonizer identity'. With a self-effacing laugh he said 'I'm part of this pretty shitty history of genocide.' This identification was nearly ubiquitous, but did not always arise without difficulty. Participants who did not directly identify as a 'settler' or 'colonizer', still made clear that the history of how they came to be on this continent at the expense of others was part of their consciousness and shaped their solidarity. Some revealed this through expressions of pride or honor, which contained obvious elements of essence shame. For example, regarding solidarity events one respondent said 'I'm always really honored to be invited to do these things.' Later, relating an experience at a presentation and salmon feed the same respondent stated:

The fact that people want to share this experience with me, really I was like Whoa! ... like wow, you want to share your salmon with me, even though my ancestors came here and

probably fucked up a lot of shit and that's fucking real. Even though I don't really know those people and I probably don't think as they do, that's still where I come from, like I'm white and ginger and like that's ... that's real. So it's hard when looking at identity and culture and stuff it's definitely hard ... so I think that, yeah I don't know, it feels like a very special thing to be able to share.

The expression of honor here is framed in terms of surprise due to a deep awareness of racialized relations within the United States that render attributes like 'white and ginger' as markers of groups who perpetrate unthinkable and possibly unforgivable violence.

This relationship between violence and whiteness not only stems from an internal awareness, but is also pointed out to activists. For example, Iris and Jay, both white student solidarity workers were told by a native activist, 'I don't mean to offend you but I hate the US government and I hate white people.' Because they already understand themselves as implicated in a history of deplorable violence, their response is to affirm the man's claim. Iris tells me, 'He said "I don't mean to offend you", and I'm not offended, people are mean, particularly white people.'³⁴ This exchange provides an excellent example of why blame does not generate collective identity in a settler-solidarity context but rather limits the level of shared identification.

The acknowledgment of colonial violence as a demarcation between groups recurs in numerous interviews. For example, Beck describes a workshop led by an elder member of the AIM:

There was a time where we all closed our eyes and then this woman just described a house getting raided, and people being sexually assaulted, and then murdered. And it was just like I don't have that experience in my family's history that I know of and that's just a really heavy thing to carry.

Similarly, Samuel indicates the importance of prioritizing Winnemem identity and authority within the struggle because of the incommensurable experiences of violence and the knowledge that comes from such experiences:

It's not in an antagonistic way at all, it's just the tribe saying 'hey, we have survived genocide so you don't need to give us any advice on that thanks' ... more specifically it's like 'We know our ways and we have gotten here' and um and you know they spell that out in their paperwork and I remember there was a workshop too that they did, it was such a long time ago now but it was at the War Dance and there it was pretty explicitly voiced how ... race and gender will play out in those spaces and the importance of listening.

Descriptions of colonial violence, whether explicitly named, or generalized illustrate the way blame does not generate collective identity but rather establishes clear boundaries. Solidarity workers in my sample, while their unique social locations differentially shape their relationships to colonization, all partially understand themselves through their relationships to colonial violence. Expressions of essence shame indicated in these understandings vary, but most participants exhibit the fundamental traits: a belief that a terrible wrong has been perpetrated by their group, and knowledge of indigenous suffering as a result of their group's actions. Understanding coloniality as the perpetration of violence which they benefit from, these solidarity workers' cannot rely upon blaming as a way to mobilize and generate collective identity with indigenous peoples.

Respondents are not only clear about the absolute delineation between solidarity workers and Winnemem, they shape that difference around knowledge of colonial

violence. While acquiring this knowledge of violence may invoke group essence shame, it also motivates participation in solidarity work and a desire to perform the tasks of solidarity in a way that does not further contribute to harm.

As Samuel notes,

I definitely have benefited from stealing land so I feel a need to have a better relationship with the land and with the people and that's available ... the Winnemem have been really open to inviting people to ceremony and asking for help in particular ways.

This response suggests a deep awareness of the space between himself and the people he supports.³⁵ But not only does knowledge of his colonizer status inform Samuel's desire to participate in solidarity, an example of essence shame as a pro-social motivator, it also shapes what that participation looks like. According to Samuel, '[t]here's definitely that step-back ethic especially for a person like myself that's a white middle-class guy ... (laughter) What's asked of me in those spaces is to like, 'hey shut up right now'. This perception of his position as a colonizer is coupled with an intersectional analysis of social location that includes race, class and gender, but similar sentiments were echoed across these categories.

Zo, a white genderqueer participant, foregrounded their settler status at the outset of our interview.³⁶ Before even agreeing to participate Zo made sure to tell me they were a settler because:

in situations where it's a settler/not-settler dynamic, I think that it's not my voice that should be the voice that's heard, so stepping back a lot is really important to me. That's why I even asked like whether you wanted to interview me because, I thought that it would be important for you to know that you may or may not want my voice to be something that's heard and I think that that is really understandable.

Similarly, Urvi, an international student of color described herself as a 'temporary settler' based on her presence in the US and her experience coming to the country. She observed that while the process of getting to the US involved 'so many months and so much money' she was never required to 'ask the people whose land this really was if I could come here'. With regard to solidarity Urvi states 'I try to work through ... the fact that I am here as a result of a massively fucked-up system. How can I work within that to be a part of struggles that I very much identify with?' These questions, while carrying particular weight for Urvi given her home nation's process of decolonization, are similar to questions raised by others in solidarity.

Not unlike Urvi's attempts to 'work through' the problem of benefiting from a colonialism, nor unlike grad student Xesca's comments about trying to overcome her own shame and 'make a difference', Eiko's response to her settler identity has been to ask 'What do I do?!'. These responses reflect a pattern of relationship between knowledge gaps, essence shame and questions of method.

Emotions and tactical identity

While guilt, shame and confusion dominate many descriptions of H'up Chonas, some participants reflect upon this experience as a moral shock inciting them to improve their solidarity tactics. For example, Trina, a Center for Activism (CfA) member, who organized student support for the 2013 Balas Chonas, told me:

that first year we went to War Dance there were people who were with our group whose conduct I was not super proud of. Not that I'm a perfect example, but there are some pretty glaring things that you should not be doing when you're there for solidarity. So there's a huge difference between that year and this year. I think it's actually been a number of the same people but we all learned a lot and had specific ideas of how we wanted to be. Either how we wanted to present ourselves or like watch each other's backs.

'What do I do?' 'How can I work through it?' 'How can I make a difference?' For these respondents, sometimes painful knowledge acquisition elicits a will to develop shared methodologies, or a tactical collective identity.³⁷ Student solidarity workers in my sample consider their tactics a defining feature of membership with their group. In doing this, they readily point out how 'other solidarity workers' are actively perpetrating forms of oppression. This trend is similar to what other scholars have observed among solidarity workers.³⁸

All responses described subcategories of solidarity workers. Respondents mostly premise these subcategories on critiques of methods. These critiques strengthen tactical collective identity among university solidarity workers and serve as cautionary tales about what kind of behavior to avoid; common critiques include failing to respect the rules set by the Winnemem, cultural appropriations, and the 'white savior complex'.³⁹

The problem of cultural appropriation was ascribed almost entirely to non-student solidarity workers, and was frequently addressed in interviews.⁴⁰ All but one of the respondents who participated in the 2013 Balas Chonas spent time describing the problem of cultural appropriation. Most respondents who attended the 2013 ceremony questioned other people's motivations for engaging in solidarity. One participant told me they felt as if 'some people were there for "the experience"', a motivation they described as both 'problematic' and 'sad', but while describing what that kind of motivation might mean, they found themselves contending with the complexity of the ways they benefit from participation:

I think people were looking for 'personal growth' in the experience. I don't know, I mean obviously taking growth away from things is like, of course I learned things from it, but just not in ... an exotifying manner. I don't know, I saw a lot of that.

While this passage hints at possible complicity, it stresses the difference between 'learning' and the appropriative habits of those seeking 'personal growth'.⁴¹

Similarly, most of my participants were critical of any seemingly self-centered actions. All respondents were critical of solidarity workers who promoted themselves as 'special'. Even when solidarity workers had 'tangibly done really awesome things' they were still negatively appraised for exhibiting a 'weird attitude' of being 'better than you'. These types of attitudes were often called 'a savior complex'. Like appropriation, the 'savior complex' was reviled and 'checked' for in one's self and others as part of the respondents' tactical collective identity. People with savior complexes were prime examples of solidarity failures. In Rowen's interview she describes a person at the 2012 H'up Chonas who 'started to speak for the Chief'. For Rowan this is a clear failure to act in solidarity, premised on the transgressor's misguided notions of authority. She states:

when you're working ... with people from a different background, you need to be aware of why some wishes might exist and not question or get frustrated ... you're there as their ally. You've got to support them and the best way to do that is follow their wishes and take their action in the direction that they need it to go in.

In this case the savior complex represents not only a false (perhaps colonial) sense of authority, but also a breach with acceptable solidarity tactics as understood by the collective.

Interviewees expressed especially intense disapproval of failure to uphold codes of conduct especially within their own group. The disapproval they exhibit contains a complex mixture of guilt and shame. For example, Trina recounts the 2012 H'up Chonas with shame regarding the behavior of her fellow travelers:

It's not the tribe's job to tell us their standard of conducting themselves, so a lot of us had a lot of catching up to do. So there was this sheet of paper that had these really basic things on it of how we could like not make complete fools of ourselves and I think there were a lot of people who didn't read that (laugh). Or didn't do the things that were explicitly on it. Or you know, even worse, saw it as a restriction to their personal freedoms and deliberately didn't do things that were on that list.

As a result of problematic behaviors at H'up Chonas, Trina tried to change how her CfA affiliates participated at Balas Chonas 2013. She notes, for Balas Chonas 'I was a lot more on guard of how people were going to conduct themselves and deliberately not inviting some people.' More than excluding known offenders, though, Trina points to enhanced communication as part of her effort to improve solidarity. This enhanced communication included some pre-ceremony meetings and online organizing. As a result, she claims 'I think a lot of us came with more of a shared conversation about what we were doing whereas the year before I don't even really remember on the way over thinking about what we were doing as much.'

While the exclusion of some participants may seem to illustrate patterns of image shame and withdrawal, other comments suggest a desire to mobilize around transgressions in order to prevent them from occurring or 'check' them in the moment to prevent deeper transgressions. There are multiple things going on here: a confession of guilt, 'a lot of us had a lot of catching up to do', an expression of image shame suggesting people in the group did 'make complete fools' of themselves, and a sense of how misdeeds are hierarchical in the collective method, that is, to not know is one thing, to not read is worse, and to 'deliberately' violate protocol is the highest offense.

All 2012 H'up Chonas participants had stories of witnessing or hearing about transgressions, but most indicate that they did not 'call out' the guilty parties. Meg notes:

I'm trying to figure out the whole ally thing, but ... I think that's a weak point within our communities ... we have a hard time calling each other out sometimes. But I think that's maybe a form of ally-ship, being the person to call someone out instead of letting the [responsibility belong to] the person who's ... being oppressed or put down.

Meg expressed her commitment to improve on this within all of her activist communities but notes it is a challenging process.

Similarly, Zo explained the importance of 'checking' and 'calling out'. They claim, 'as a settler person there's no way for me to stop being the oppressor but I think that being aware of that, checking that, and being really *really* down to be called out on that ... is really important to me'. Nevertheless, even as Zo affirms the importance of calling people out, they also concede the lack of practice:

we didn't confront people and it's really hard for me to know in those situations what to do because sometimes things can be not productive at all, but sometimes you can work really

hard to meet people where they're at and that can be really discouraging ... I don't know if we knew quite how to approach things

Student collective methodology relies heavily on the practices of 'calling-out' and 'checking'. While universally approved by respondents, many admit there needs to be more emphasis on checking each other and those outside of student groups to improve solidarity. One of the primary blocks to increased checking is concern over negative emotional responses. In a solidarity practice partly shaped by feelings of essence shame, checking and calling out are necessary yet difficult because participants are aware that emotional responses may drive members away rather than transforming behaviors. Some respondents suggest that the work of increased checking might be best carried out inside pre-existing student groups where affective ties are already strong. They suggest that rather than trying to confront members of other solidarity communities (e.g. EF! or Occupy), a potentially volatile situation especially during high-risk actions, best results might come from talking with people they already know through a process of 'calling in' rather than 'calling out'. Other participants have stressed the importance of developing relationships beyond 'activism' as a way to improve solidarity practices. The process of developing a collective method is ongoing and takes place both in the moment of solidarity and through an iterative process of action, discourse and reflection, the goal of which is an enhanced capacity for solidarity work and stopping the inadvertent replication of oppressive practices.

Conclusion

Part of what makes the work of investigating settler-solidarity in indigenous-led environmental struggles so vital yet so daunting is its complexity. EJ, tribal sovereignty and decolonization are just some of the most prominent frameworks for describing these struggles. Each offers both explanation and limitation for addressing this particular case.⁴² At the core, attempts to seize control over land and resources, constitute colonization. As such, struggles against colonization are to some extent always environmental struggles, while those indigenous-led movements for land and water which might be properly called 'environmental struggles' are never strictly limited to issues of ecology.⁴³

When Winnemem people assert 'We were born from water, we are of the water, and we fight to protect it' they are asserting a deeply felt cultural identity which survives despite attempted genocide. Many who work in solidarity with the Winnemem learn quickly that the settler-colonial relations of power that threaten Indigenous ways of being are not just broken treaties or corporate sponsored plans to divert rivers but they are also built into everyday relations. Colonial assaults are not just insults hurled from passing motorboats that disrupt ceremony; they are bottles of water drawn from sacred springs. The material, spiritual, ecological and emotional aspects of life cannot be separated.

While coalitions have been the subject of numerous sociological studies, there is limited attention to solidarity work. And while solidarity work has not been adequately theorized generally, it has received even less attention in the area of social movements and emotions. This area of research offers tremendous potential for expanding sociological understanding of an important contemporary phenomenon.

Settler-solidarity with indigenous movements has been a growing political and social reality. Since late 2012, a surge of indigenous resistance has swept through Canada and

the United States. Although indigenous resistance is nothing new, the tremendous energy of Idle No More has announced to the world indigenous people's intentions to defend their lands and waters, their cultures and their rights.⁴⁴ From the outset, this public indigenous resistance has attracted the support of settlers prompting numerous organizations and individuals to develop guides for solidarity that have proliferated through Internet and social media.

These guides, mostly developed by indigenous organizations, as well as scholars (occasionally by settler-solidarity groups), offer rules and responsibilities to assist would-be settler-allies in achieving the goals of productively supporting indigenous-led movements. Among some of the more common responsibilities noted are those dealing with cultural appropriation, lateral oppression, and guilt. In every case I have found where guilt is mentioned, it is regarded as an undesirable trait for solidarity work. Deep Green Resistance, a young but prolific environmental organization that has become known a focus on indigenous solidarity tells their readers '[y]ou are doing Indigenous solidarity work not out of guilt, but out of a fierce desire to confront oppressive colonial systems of power'.⁴⁵ Similarly, Algonquin scholar Dr Lynn Gehl writes, '[d]o not act out of guilt, but rather out of a genuine interest in challenging the larger oppressive power structures'.⁴⁶

On the surface, these quotes seem to suggest that guilt and 'genuine interest' to 'confront' oppression are mutually exclusive. This suggestion may be internalized by would-be solidarity workers and present them with an untenable situation, namely to know that oppression exists and is wrong, but to feel no guilt about their complicity and benefit. Furthermore, these anti-guilt statements may shut down willingness to engage in struggle when would-be solidarity workers are unable to eliminate or block their affective responses. If large-scale solidarity is a goal, more nuanced considerations of guilt and shame in settler-solidarity is needed not only in the academy, but in activist circles as well.

Drawing on concepts from sociology and psychology, this case study illustrates how essence shame can constitute a mobilizing factor in settler-solidarity, circumscribe the boundaries of collective identity, and promote the development of an anti-oppressive solidarity methodology. In this case, essence shame should not be seen as a negative emotion, but rather as a logical and appropriate response to the acquisition of knowledge about colonial violence and oppression. As Trina succinctly put it, '[t]here's this systemic injustice but we can only respond to it through our personal actions'.⁴⁷ Rather than withdrawing from the shameful realities of settler-colonialism, these student solidarity workers seek out relationships with those who have been directly harmed by settler-colonialism, and look for ways to repair the damage through supporting indigenous-led movements and developing a highly reflexive methodology of support that attempts to eliminate replications of colonial power. Never seen as complete, respondents consider this work an ongoing process that permeates political and social action. Attention to the emotions of indigenous-settler solidarity may further illuminate the emotional harms of settler-colonialism and offer insights into furthering intergroup cooperation toward decolonization.

Notes

1. I wish to express my thanks to Chief Caleen Sisk for allowing me to conduct this research. I hope the work I have done here reflects my deep respect for her and for all the Winnemem people.

2. I recognize that some might see a focus on solidarity workers as re-centering settlers or inappropriately taking up space. While I have wrestled with these possibilities, I believe that the front-line work being done by indigenous peoples is centrally important, and I do not wish to take time away from those who are leading these crucial movements. At the same time I avoid the academic tendency to over-scrutinize indigenous peoples by focusing instead on settler practices.
3. I use the terms solidarity and support interchangeably in this document.
4. Settler-solidarity in this paper refers to work done by non-indigenous identified people in the interest of supporting indigenous-led movements for justice. While I am specifically talking about settler-solidarity in the context of the occupied indigenous territories known as the United States of America, this term is used in numerous other contexts (e.g. Canada, New Zealand, Australia).
5. James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
6. James Jasper and J. D. Poulsen, 'Recruiting Strangers and Friends – Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Antinuclear Protests', *Social Problems* 42, no. 4 (1995): 493–512.
7. James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 409.
8. To this end Jasper offers a typology of perceived threats and their likely emotional responses. In the case of 'threats embodied by humans' the likely responses include the identification of those at fault followed by blame and outrage.
9. See Marsha Vanderford, 'Vilification and Social Movements: A Case Study of Pro-Life and Pro-Choice Rhetoric', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, no. 2 (1989): 166–82; Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); and Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, *Why Emotions Matter: Passionate Politics*, ed. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper and Francesca Polletta (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
10. Thomas D. Beamish and Amy J. Luebbbers, 'Alliance Building across Social Movements: Bridging Difference in a Peace and Justice Coalition', *Social Problems* 56, no. 4 (2009): 647–76, 648.
11. While some scholarship may refute this claim, it is clear that my respondents are operating with the belief that there is a sharp and clear distinction between Winnemem identity (or indigenous identity more broadly) and settler identity. In this case collectivity may be expressed through shared goals and tactical approaches, but is not expressed as collective identity. Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest*.
12. June Price Tangney et al., 'Are Shame, Guilt, and Embarrassment Distinct Emotions?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70, no. 6 (1996): 1256–69; Pm Niedenthal, J. P. Tangney, and I. Gavanski, 'If Only I Werent Versus If Only I Hadnt – Distinguishing Shame and Guilt in Counterfactual Thinking', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67, no. 4 (1994): 585–95; Roy F. Baumeister, Arlene M. Stillwell, and Todd F. Heatherton, 'Guilt: An Interpersonal Approach', *Psychological Bulletin* 115, no. 2 (1994): 243–67.
13. M. Johns, T. Schmader, and B. Lickel, 'Ashamed to be an American? The Role of Identification in Predicting Vicarious Shame for Anti-Arab Prejudice after 9–11', *Self And Identity* 4, no. 4 (2005): 331–48.
14. Celia Haig-Brown, 'Indigenous Thought, Appropriation, and Non-Aboriginal People', *Canadian Journal of Education* 33, no. 4 (2010): 925–50; and Sabina Čehajić-Clancy et al., 'Affirmation, Acknowledgment of In-Group Responsibility, Group-Based Guilt, and Support for Reparative Measures', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 101, no. 2 (2011): 256–70.
15. Jesse Allpress et al., 'Atoning for Colonial Injustices: Group-Based Shame and Guilt Motivate Support for Reparation', *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 4, no. 1 (2010): 76–88.
16. *Ibid.*, 82. This echoes the concept of the 'moral shock' or 'moral outrage' presented by Jasper and Poulsen.
17. Julia Miller Cantzler, 'Environmental Justice and Social Power Rhetoric in the Moral Battle over Whaling', *Sociological Inquiry* 77, no. 3 (2007): 483–512; Alison Hope Alkon and Kari Marie Norgaard, 'Breaking the Food Chains: An Investigation of Food Justice Activism', *Sociological Inquiry* 79, no. 3 (2009): 289–305.

18. Daniel Brook, 'Environmental Genocide: Native Americans and Toxic Waste', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 57, no. 1 (1998): 105–13.; Gregory Hooks and Chad L. Smith, 'The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans', *American Sociological Review* 69, no. 4 (2004): 558–75; Thomas E. Shriver and Gary R. Webb, 'Rethinking the Scope of Environmental Injustice: Perceptions of Health Hazards in a Rural Native American Community Exposed to Carbon Black', *Rural Sociology* 74, no. 2 (2009): 270–92; and Brett Clark and Andrew K. Jorgenson, 'The Treadmill of Destruction and the Environmental Impacts of Militaries 1', *Sociology Compass* 6 (2012): 557–569. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2012.00474.x.
19. George Lipsitz, 'Walleye Warriors and White Identities: Native Americans' Treaty Rights, Composite Identities and Social Movements', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31, no. 1 (2008): 101; Mik Moore, 'Coalition Building between Native American and Environmental Organizations in Opposition to Development: The Case of the New Los Padres Dam Project', *Organization and Environment* 11, no. 3 (1998): 287–313.
20. Zoltan Grossman, "Let's Not Create Evilness for This River': Interethnic Environmental Alliances of Native Americans and Rural Whites in Northern Wisconsin", in *Forging Radical Alliances Across Difference: Coalition Politics for the New Millennium*, eds. Jill M. Bystydzienski and Steven P. Schacht (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 146–159; Zoltan Grossman and Debra McNutt, 'From Enemies to Allies: Native Americans and Whites Transformed Violent Treaty Conflicts into a Powerful Environmental Movement in Wisconsin', *Colorlines* (2001): 22; Adam Barker, 'Already Occupied: Indigenous Peoples, Settler Colonialism and the Occupy Movements in North America', *Social Movement Studies* 11, nos. 3–4 (2012): 327–34.
21. Celia Haig-Brown, 'Indigenous Thought, Appropriation, and Non-Aboriginal People', *Canadian Journal of Education* 33, no. 4 (2010): 925–50; and Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.
22. Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández, 'Decolonization and the Pedagogy of Solidarity', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 46–67, 46.
23. William Bradford, "'With a Very Great Blame on Our Hearts": Reparations, Reconciliation, and an American Indian Plea for Peace with Justice', *American Indian Law Review* 27, no. 1 (2002): 1–175, 104.
24. William Bradford, 'Beyond Reparations: Justice as Indigenism', *Human Rights Review* 6, no. 3 (2005): 5–79, 70.
25. Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within : Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 12.
26. Waziyatawin. 'You Can't Un-Ring a Bell: Demonstrating Contrition through Action', in *Response, Responsibility, and Renewal: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Journey*, ed. G. Younging, J. Dewar and M. DeGagné (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation), 191–202, 176.
27. William Bradford, 'Beyond Reparations: Justice as Indigenism', *Human Rights Review* 6, no. 3 (2005): 5–79.; Waziyatawin. 'You Can't Un-Ring a Bell'; and Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse – Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
28. Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 6th ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon, 2007).
29. All names presented in this work are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of my respondents.
30. Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, 'Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria', *Qualitative Sociology* 13, no. 1 (1990): 3–21.
31. Is this respondent talking about guilt or shame? Typically, a conversation about bad actions would reflect guilt, and I think guilt may be part of what is going on here, but since the respondent seems unclear about if she in fact did anything wrong, I understand her distress as arising at least in part from shame. Someone has been guilty of transgression, but it implicates the group especially in a context of settler-solidarity. Whether this is essence or image shame is a bit harder to determine. It seems to me that it verges more on an example of image shame since it is unlikely that an individual who is unsure of if they have done something wrong understands the transgression as a violation of 'an important moral standard'.

32. Debra Javeline, 'The Role of Blame in Collective Action: Evidence from Russia', *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 107–21; and Evan Montgomery, 'Counterfeit Diplomacy and Mobilization in Democracies', *Security Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013): 33–67.
33. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 17.
34. Among my respondents 'word' is a term of affirmation similar to 'right on' or 'for sure'.
35. Furthermore, although he does not directly mention shame, his expression of a 'need to have a better relationship with the land and with the people' suggests that knowledge of violence caused by the in-group has motivated his behavior in an effort to repair the damage that has been done. Like Xesca, Samuel's final comment suggests a need to accept what is shameful in order to move on and be in solidarity.
36. For Zo, her 'settleness' is 'one of the more like certain things about my identity; other things are more complex'.
37. Francesca Polletta and James Jasper, 'Collective Identity and Social Movements', *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 283–305.
38. Susan Munkres. 'Being 'Sisters' to Salvadoran Peasants: Deep Identification and Its Limitations', *Identity Work in Social Movements* (2008): 189–212.
39. This is perhaps unsurprising since the process of 'calling out' such transgression is an ongoing practice among the students and works to affirm collective ideas of what solidarity should look like. I will discuss this practice in detail in the next segment.
40. One interviewee who did not address the appropriative habits of others disclosed that H'up Chonas 'was definitely one of those moments of recognizing all the times that I've culturally appropriated things'. When asked how she came to that realization, Meg said:

Winnemem Wintu people, seeing their responses to the ceremony, that kinda clicked in my head, like, this is why it's so inappropriate to like dress up like a Native American. Because that's just totally mocking this whole really important ceremony that people are doing right now asking for power ... That was definitely a moment of *this* is why we don't do those things and *this* is why I'm gonna try really hard to not do those things and hopefully *never* do them. I feel like I've done a good job of that.

Meg's disclosure of past complicity with something reviled by her social circle was unique and seemed to have something of a confessional quality. This is one of the rare explicit instances of guilt, not shame, which I saw in the study.

41. The negative regard for those who appropriate or 'seek personal growth' is powerful and almost universal among my respondents. While the disdain for appropriation is pretty much unequivocal, the relationship between seeking growth and learning remain more complicated and is something I hope to unpack future research.
42. The general, though not exclusive, US Environmental Justice orientation toward a civil-rights model, which seeks equality under the law and appeals to the state for remediation and restitution, constitutes a major problem with this framework. Although this orientation logically emerges from the historical and material conditions that sparked the development of environmental justice in the American south, it is not fully applicable to the needs of indigenous peoples for whom the very existence of the state constitutes the primary injustice from which ecological disputes arise. Sovereignty is another framework for addressing the experiences of indigenous peoples and in describing indigenous responses to environmental destruction under colonial occupation. In the US sovereignty has highly variable legal, spiritual and cultural connotations, this powerful concept may be difficult to apply in the case of federally unrecognized indigenous peoples.
43. Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse; Winona LaDuke, All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press; Minneapolis, MN: Honor the Earth, 1999); Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*, 1st ed (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005).

44. Terry Wotherspoon and John Hansen, 'The "Idle No More" Movement: Paradoxes of First Nations Inclusion in the Canadian Context', *Social Inclusion* 1, no. 1 (2013): 21–36. And The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Press, 2014).
45. See 'Deep Green Resistance Indigenous Solidarity Guide.' <http://deepgreenresistance.org/en/what-we-do/deep-green-resistance-indigenous-solidarity-guidelines>.
46. See Lynn Gehl 'Ally Bill of Responsibilities.' <http://www.lynngehl.com/my-ally-billof-responsibilities.html>.
47. To be clear, Trina, and other respondents did not believe that their personal efforts alone would be enough to repair the damage of colonialism, but they expressed an understanding that personal efforts to rebuild relationships and resist colonial power structures were a fundamental part of creating strong movements for change.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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