

## Sovereignty, Intimacy & Resistance: Legal and Relational Responses to Gendered Violence and Settler Colonialism | Text Transcript

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This is a text transcript for the recorded lecture "Sovereignty, Intimacy & Resistance: Legal and Relational Responses to Gendered Violence and Settler Colonialism." This was the second event in the Indigenous Scholars Lecture Series 2020-21. The event was recorded on February 26, 2021 and was moderated by Prof. Leah Levac, Department of Political Science, University of Guelph. The guest speakers were Aimée Craft, Sarah Hunt / Tłaliłila'ogwa, and Jasmine Feather Dionne.

Transcript:

### Joanne Moores:

...Indigenous politics and. Not only does their work help us to understand you know, the latest thinking in these important fields. It really is helping to envision how to build relations that are more respectful and equitable on multiple levels. And these are the kinds of discussions that are so very important, as many of us as individuals and as institutions are Trying to understand how to become fully decolonial, anti-racist and anti-sexist.

And, but before we introduce our speakers today I want to express my thanks on behalf of all of us at the University of Guelph, For the opportunity to be in relation with you, our panelists and for providing us so graciously with this learning opportunity and I want you to know that there really is significant interest in, in this topic and in this presentation we had over registrations and there's many people that are still coming online as we're getting started here today.

To make sure that we set our discussion in the right context and to help ensure a good beginning, I want to acknowledge that today's webinar is being hosted from the ancestral lands with the Attawandaron people and the Treaty land and territory of the Mississauga of the credit first nation. I also want to acknowledge our Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours and to honour our territorial hosts the Anishinaabe.

On behalf of all of us organizing this webinar today we pledge to live and act in accordance with the seven core values of honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, love, respect, and courage. So, once again, thanks to everyone for joining us today from all the traditional territories that you're joining us from and now it's our pleasure to introduce the members of today's panel. Marissa could you get us started with the introductions?

### Marissa Fowler:

So first off is Jasmine Feather Dionne, Jasmine is Métis and Nehiyaw Cree from treaty eight territory in northeastern Alberta. She was born in Fort McMurray, Alberta, also known as the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo. She has spent many moments of her adolescence in the

boreal forest (Saka Wiyiniwak) Wood Buffalo region where her family and relatives that from. She is a second year PhD student in political science at the University of Victoria, where she works with her doctoral supervisor Dr. Heidi Stark.

She's a Pierre Elliott Trudeau foundation scholar and a SSHRC Vanier recipient. Her research interests are Indigenous research methods, Indigenous diplomacy, and political relationships, and Indigenous feminist and gender studies. Joanne when you want to give the next one.

### Joanne Moores:

Yes. And so next up, we have Sarah Hunt. Sarah Hunt is passionate about creating alternatives to violent state systems through nurturing community networks with shared orientations toward decolonization, self-determination, and solidarity. Indigenous peoples have long advanced a deep interrelation between the governance of Indigenous lands and bodies, calling for approaches to justice that push beyond colonial framing to account for these interconnected scales of life.

Building on her previous community driven work in law, violence, gender and self-determination, Sarah's current research focuses on fostering justice across the nested scales of lands waters, homes, and bodies by engagement of coastal people's embodied knowledge and land based cultural practice.

Her writing has been published in numerous anthologies such as Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters, as well as scholarly journals including Atlantis and cultural geographies and numerous research projects, sorry, reports, podcasts, and other media. She is Canada research chair in Indigenous political ecology and assistant professor in the school of environmental studies at the University of Victoria on the unceded lands of the Lekwungen & WSÁNEĆ peoples. Marissa, back to you.

### Marissa Fowler:

Next is Aimée Craft. So Aimée Craft is an award-winning teacher and researcher recognized internationally as a leader in the area of Indigenous laws treaties and water. She prioritizes Indigenous lead and interdisciplinary research, including through visual arts and film, co-leads a series of major research grants on decolonizing water and governance, and works with many Indigenous nations and communities on Indigenous relationships with and responsibilities to nibi or water.

She plays an active role in international collaborations relating to transformative memory and colonial context and relating to the reclamation of Indigenous birthing practices as expressions of territorial sovereignty. Professor Craft is an associate professor at the Faculty of Common Law at the University of Ottawa and an Indigenous Anishinaabe-Métis lawyer from Treaty territory in Manitoba. She's the former Director of research at the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and the founding director of research at the national Center for truth and reconciliation.

She practiced at the public law, sorry, public interest law Center for over a decade and she was voted one of the topmost influential lawyers in Canada. *Breathing Life Into the Stone Fort Treaty*, her award winning book focuses on understanding and interpreting treaties from an Anishinaabe Inaakonigewin legal perspective. She is past Chair of the Aboriginal Law section of the Canadian Bar Association and a current Member of the speaker's bureau of the Treaty relations Commission of Manitoba. Her current work is on the revitalization of Indigenous birthing practices and it's linked to territorial sovereignty and women's jurisdiction.

### Joanne Moores:

Thanks Marissa, and, finally, we have Dr Leah Levac. Leah is a mother, dog lover, and outdoor enthusiast. She is a settler scholar who by training and passion approaches her research and teaching relationships as a critical community engaged scholar. For years she has been committed to building meaningful relationships across disciplines, sectors, communities, and nations for the purpose of responding to complex social problems and highlighting women's and communities' capacities and knowledges.

Leah has been a faculty member in the political science department at the University of Guelph since 2013. She is also a faculty advisor for the university's Community Engaged Scholarship Institute. Broadly her research relationships focus on intersections between wellbeing and political engagement, particularly for northern settler and Indigenous women and young women, and the framing and development of public policy, she also explores the ethics and practices of critical Community Engaged and decolonizing teaching and scholarship. Her research is funded by SSHRC and by an Ontario early researcher award.

Her work has been published in journals including *Canadian public policy*, *gateways International Journal of Community research and engagement and politics*, *groups, and identities*. With Sarah Wiebe, she is co-editor of a recently released edited collection called *Creating spaces of engagement: policy, justice and the practical craft of deliberative democracy*. So, as you can see, we have a wonderful lineup of panelists to speak with us today and I'll just hand it over to Dr Leah Levac and thank you for agreeing to moderate this session, so over to you.

### Leah Levac:

Thank you very much, can everybody hear me okay? (Nods yes) Great so my name is Leah Levac, it's a real honour to be here moderating today's discussion, so thank you for the invitation and thank you for me as well to our esteemed panelists for their willingness to participate in their forthcoming comments, I also want to personally acknowledge my presence and work on this territory, the ancestral territory of the Attawandaron people and the Treaty territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, but also my work in the territories of the Innu nation and the Inuit and with the Haisla nation in collaboration on ongoing research relationships in present day Labrador and Northwestern British Columbia.

For generations Indigenous women have been experiencing and working to counter the violent effects of settler colonialism. Indeed, settler colonialism, an ongoing process of dispossession

not only perpetrates but also depends on gender violence. As today's exceptional panelists have detailed through their teaching, research and practices this violence, but also importantly its resistance, play out in myriad ways. One way as scholars and land defenders have long pointed out, is through the inextricable connections between violence against the land.

Often, through extractive industries and violence against Indigenous bodies, the answer to the question, whose bodies are affected, and in what ways is deeply gendered. In response to this violence Indigenous peoples around the world continue to assert their sovereignty. They have created movements, consider, even just recently I don't know more, and the Wet'suwet'en land defenders work and tools for supporting activist responses. Today's panelists are also actively engaged in this resistance, including through fostering embodied knowledges and land-based practices.

As knowledge holders, teachers, and researchers have detailed, a second way that this violence plays out is via the epidemic violence that has systematically been inflicted on entire knowledge systems. Again answering the question, whose knowledges and generated through which community roles and relationships demands attention to gender. Resisting this violence has included language revitalization efforts courageously highlighting the pernicious role of the academy, and thus many university researchers and these affairs, and asserting more appropriate ethical and methodological protocols in response.

The principles guiding Professor Craft's decolonizing water project, the ontological considerations raised by Dr Hunt and Jasmine's work on Indigenous research methodologies are all examples. A third, and perhaps the most obvious way that this violence plays out is through the blatant physical and sexual harm inflicted on Indigenous women, girls and 2S LGBTQIA people in many cases, this violence is upheld and enabled by public policies, police, prisons, and other political institutions and has the effect as Jasmine has argued in some of her writing, protecting settler society and criminalizing decolonial futures.

From the recent retrial of Cindy Gladue's murderer to the sentencing hearing of Barbara Kentner's killer to statistics, highlighting dramatic rates of over incarceration, it is clear that Indigenous women, girls and 2S LGBTQIA people face astounding injustices. In response, however, countless, tireless efforts resist this violence. From arts-based responses, to fighting for legal reforms, to dedicated efforts, to building more just relations between Indigenous people and settlers, the resolve for a different future is palpable. Ultimately, what is clear is that the consequences of settler colonialism are widespread and not historic. Indeed, they are playing out in the lives of people every day.

What is also clear, however, is that the pathways of resistance are growing. Today's panel sovereignty, intimacy and resistance, legal and relational responses to gendered violence and settler colonialism invites us to explore responses to these and other critical challenges unfolding at this intersection. We are so fortunate to have this brilliant panel of scholars to engage with us around these topics so I'm excited to turn it over to them now, we will start with Jasmine Feather Dionne. Jasmine?

## Jasmine Feather Dionne:

Thank you Leah. (Speaking in Cree saying hello and her name) Hi everyone, my name is Jasmine and I am again Métis and Cree from the place with many trees, the boreal forest and the Nehiyaw place name of Saka Wiyiniwak white which, from my understanding is loosely translated as fat or large forest, which is very accurate. This place name refers to Northeastern Alberta, where I am from and where I will be working on my doctoral research, I have a personal attachment to the research that I do as I am from this place, I am going to share my screen, as I have some pictures, to help us situate the territory that I'm speaking about.

Here is, it's from when I was on the airplane way before COVID and there were clear skies. As you can see, this waterway here is the Athabasca river. Its source is actually from the glaciers to the West near Jasper, and it ends up moving downstream to the Lake Athabasca near Fort Chipewyan, this is one of our most central water systems. This is the boreal forest in the winter, and this is usually a place where we gather to get mosquito tea and, as you can see here on the far-right corner, where it says MNA region one with the list of first nations, starting at the top, all the way down to Chipewyan first nation, this is the area that I'm referring to.

And again, here is an example of our waterway starting all the way from Jasper and Athabasca is up here near Fort Chipewyan. It's important, I think, to share images of the territory I'm speaking of for the folks who haven't had any experience there. So, my doctoral research is premised on developing community lead responses to the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two spirit Indigenous crisis using the legal diplomatic approaches of the Cree Dene and Métis nations and Saka Wiyiniwak.

The key principles I look to are Kispewâsowewin, which is Cree for defend or protect and Piskeyihtamowin which is Cree for care and attention. Oftentimes diplomacy, especially in political science is understood strictly in terms of trade, and business relationships, marriages, or legal and political relationships and involving the distribution of resources and territory. But I want to shed light on a kind of diplomatic practice that has occurred in our area since time immemorial. And it is the idea that we look out for and care for those in our nation and our neighbouring nations. Which is the way that we also structure our kinship relationships, our diplomacy and kinship are very much transferable.

And I believe that, by looking at the diplomatic practices in our area and those legal principles that they invoke, (indistinguishable Cree) are going to be effective in how we develop our responses to the missing and murdered crisis and gender violence at large. Because we are then able to have these discussions around protection and care in a community lead way. So, today I will be talking about one of the steps that I have been taking in approaching my research, especially methodology. In this work, I often find myself thinking about how to properly engage and interact with one another and non-academic and non-institutional spaces.

To really be able to discuss our experiences or thoughts and also our expectations for accountability when we talk about something as harsh and as personal as gender-based violence. The field that is Indigenous research methods does offer crucial insight, but it tends to

be at the macro level with methodological principles that help frame and carry out the research, but the ways in which we engage with one another and how that materializes is often minimized or not always the central focus of the field. I'm not necessarily referring to interviews or forums, but instead the informal relationship building.

The gatherings, the conversations that occur while visiting in spaces, like the home at relatives' kitchen tables, at community centres even on car rides and other intimate spaces, I am really honoured to be speaking about how I am engaging and intimate spaces and my own work next to the wonderful scholar, whose work alongside Cindy Holmes generated the term, so thank you, Sarah and Cindy. Hunt and Holmes' work on the colonized queer politics really illustrates the way that intimate spaces in one's daily life and in their moments with family and friends are alternative sites of resistance in decolonization.

I'm also intentionally using the word visiting as a political act. This is coming from Palomino Gaudet and Dorian as this method of survival of dialogue and deliberation, of decision making and responsibility, as well as celebrating and sharing and caring for our relatives. My contribution is combining these works to show that law is made in these intimate spaces through acts of visiting. More specifically, deliberative law which is defined by John Borrows is discussion, debate revision that are necessary for Indigenous laws to remain pertinent.

Deliberative law allows for dialogue and multiple inputs of understanding perspective. Which are important when developing responses to gendered violence, my undertaking is highlighting where this law gets made. In my own research, it has been apparent that it's being made into intimate spaces with family and friends through the acts of visiting. Obviously, colonial hetero patriarchy sits at this core of causation in reference to gender-based violence.

And, to quote Leon Simpson is also the destruction of the intimate relationships that are nations and fundamental systems of ethics, based on values of individual sovereignty and self-determination. Intimacy is a common thread that runs through queer and feminist Indigenous scholarship and it is oftentimes this practice of our legal and political relationships and they structure, how we care for one another.

I have a story, but I won't be able to share it because of the time, but it's a story where these concepts coalesce. And, essentially in this story, an old man was walking in the winter, where he heard children playing around tents and he went over and they acknowledged him as a visitor and offered him some food, a place to sleep and he was invited into several tents at the campsite to visit out throughout the night when he woke up all the birds flew up those birds that he had taken for people.

He started traveling again and so another camp with children, and the same thing happened that night and he basically said at the end of the story you'll never trick me again. And so to understand the complexities of the story, I turned to an interview with Fort McKay elder James Grand Jam. Grand Jam notes that animal relatives are meant to help us when we are stuck. The Whisky Jack or old man was stuck in what would be referred to as like perhaps a personal crisis,

he was in need of a place to stay and he hadn't had any sort of visitation with anyone in a long time, so he needed kin to visit with, and for them to feed him.

So, as such, the birds sought to help and the birds in the story shape shifted to appear as humans, when the men first arrived to the camps, but when morning came. It was time for them to shape shift again. The birds use the power of fluidity and transformation to really bring them in the care that he needed. It can be inferred that he might have spent more time with the birds and their human shape and that it had been a long time since he had last seen them, which suggests that the old man wasn't maintaining his legal and political kinship responsibilities to them.

And, as such, the bird sought to make it known by tricking him more than once. Grand Jam says that the spirits look after you when you keep the promises you make to them. The spirits of the birds looked after the old man, despite the fact that he might not have been keeping up with his responsibilities to them. Because that is what kin ought to do when their kids are in need, what is also significant about the story is that the old man was invited into the intimate space of the campsite.

These camps weren't public, they were spaces, where families gathered, they ate and slept, the old men had to be invited into the space. And the opportunity for discussion and deliberation was made available during his visit and each tent that he was invited to. Conversation during a meal is a very prominent place for this critical dialogue to occur, and as such as a methodology for hunted homes, they refer to conversations. With their families and their partners in various contexts where they're able to talk about how colonialism has impacted them.

The Old Man and the story was being pulled to different tents by different kin because they were excited to have these important and diverse conversations with him. Visiting and intimate spaces with kin entice meaningful dialogue and create spaces for this dialogue to be turned into law. In relation to my own work, this has me thinking about how I am to engage in lawmaking conversations and yeah I'll leave it at that and move on to the next.

**Leah Levac:**

Thank you very much Jasmine. This idea of observing the everyday spaces, where laws are getting made and discussions are being had is really compelling so thank you I'm going to now turn it over to Dr Sarah Hunt.

**Sarah Hunt:**

(Saying hello in Indigenous language) and thanks so much Jasmine that I really love what you just ended on about law making conversations. yeah I think it also connects well with maybe what I'm- kind of a good lead into what I'm going to talk about so, gila khosla. My name is Tłaliŋila'ogwa, or Sarah Hunt and it's wonderful just to be in this circle today in the conversation I saw some familiar names kind of joining on the screen so thanks to everyone who is joining today and yeah these are sort of strange times for what you know I find that I'm really missing

the kinds of community spaces, where we can gather and have these conversations in person and so it's really lovely to be able to have this conversation today together so.

So thank you for the invitation to be part of this conversation. I'm speaking to you today from the Lekwungen territories. And I'm grateful to be a guest here, as I live at work now back home here on the island. I'm going to talk a bit about what we were asked to just sort of start by sharing a bit about some things we're currently working on and thinking about.

And so I thought I'd just touch briefly on three kind of main things that I'm doing right now or the three areas and how they may be interconnect with this work, and then I'm excited to have dialogue, I know where we don't have a lot of time, so I'm just going to sort of briefly touch on each of these. So one of the things I'm doing is working on a book manuscript based on a talk I gave a few years ago called decolonizing rape culture. And the original talk was really aimed at anti violence work on campuses and aligning that work with Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.

And so, for the book I'm kind of expanding that to speak to other areas of anti-violence organizing as well as Indigenous kind of resurgence and sovereignty movements and the necessity of thinking about anti violence work within those spaces and so in the process of revising and kind of finishing up this manuscript I have been looking back at kind of the earlier- the earliest work I did around gender based violence and sexual violence within our communities, and you know that was really starting when I was a teenager and it has been- I wanted to share this because for me it's really always, I guess you know they're there can be a feeling like people don't- doesn't everybody know about this like we've been saying these things for many years now, and just the sense that surely everyone is aware, surely you know, but when I kind of look back at looking back at that work from kind of the, it's very apparent to me that not a lot has actually changed.

And so I've been thinking a lot about the kind of writing about- on the one hand, the visibility around particularly missing and murdered Indigenous women. And visibility in a particular way, so when we look at social media, for example, we're seeing a lot of, kind of remembering missing and murdered Indigenous women girls and two spirit and queer folks, we're seeing kind of artistic things for that there's certain obviously symbols for that, with the red dress, other kinds of things.

But that kind of, I worry, because that can create especially thinking about our young relatives kind of the appearance that you know this is highly recognized that everyone's taking a stand, we've got kind of the appearance, that a lot is being done or that violence is not okay, that this change is happening, but then, on the other hand at the everyday lived and embodied level, the violence really has not changed.

And so just the continual, the sort of thinking about some odd years ago the silencing, the shame, the lack of ability if you're experiencing harm to be supported to be heard, to be believed, to have action happen, that has not shifted unfortunately in my, in when I see just the



kinds of disclosures that I, that I receive all the time and the kinds of situations that people are in.

And so thinking about you knows what is being achieved through this heightened visibility. And, and part of what I worry about is it's kind of a form of thinking of a kind of like a form of gaslighting and that there is this appearance like oh no we've got this handled, you know, things have changed when in fact they haven't changed and so. Especially thinking about that in the context of both you know the increased visibility around missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two spirit and queer folks.

As well as the simultaneous kind of visibility around land back and Indigenous sovereignty movements that across those different realms. Just the day-to-day experiences of harm, especially intergenerational abuse kind of sexual abuse, those are things we still don't really talk about, and there are also things that are kind of minimized and so really needing to politicize and think about the strategies we use for generating visibility.

So those are- I'm really- that's one kind of area that I'm really focused on and then secondly, then related to that thinking about the necessity of asking different kinds of questions to get different kinds of answers for what justice looks and feels like for in our communities and amongst our relations so. So the work that I'm doing really arises out of that reality I just described, but also for me the recognition that justice for us has little to do with law in the settler context, that, in fact, for Indigenous people law has been a tool of power and of injustice largely and that.

That you know ways of the other reality for me is that. The work happening within an Indigenous legal traditions is very powerful but we can't just in this moment turn to it when we're, you know, someone's being harmed. Those systems are not operational and I also personally don't necessarily trust that the ways that we're currently kind of tracing our legal traditions, if we don't have those same people that are experiencing harm, intimate forms of harm on an everyday basis, especially young people, especially gender diverse folks, and people who are experiencing stigmatization because of the internalization of respectability politics.

If those people aren't part of how we're imagining our legal traditions in the present, then, how well will they account for the violence that is happening and so it's part of what I'm doing that is asking kind of a different question which is not kind of what our legal traditions tell us about justice, but what does justice feel like for us today. How do we experience justice and answering that question through bringing together, so I'm focusing explicitly here on the coast, right now, gender diverse relations from across kind of coastal nations recognizing we've always lived and governed relationally here.

And you know sharing through cultural practices, seasonal kind of practices, clam digging my favourite, harvesting cedar, canoe journeys, those kinds of things through those activities across our nation's, bringing women and girls and gender diverse relations- Which I'm purposely using that term because you know two spirit is not necessarily a term that people are using, especially in rural or small communities, but.

Using instead other words within our languages to talk about gender and sexual diversity so thinking about kind of gender and sexual diverse relations beyond the binary so bringing us together across the generations to do things together, and through that, both our legal principles, and teachings, but also our practices kind of come alive so as one example kind of at the shoreline one of the important figures is doing Dzunuk'wa or the wild woman of the woods so who really governs the place at the shore, and thinking about you know what the stories about Dzunuk'wa are different ways that she appears in kind of our, our origin stories, place names, those kinds of things and then how our relationship with Nicola and respecting her role and governance can kind of guide us for how we take care of each other.

Those kinds of things, so, so it's through being in the place where it's you know quiet lives that we can really come to embody and think about what that means for how we imagine justice today. And then just moving on to just aware of time so just the third thing that I've been doing, which is related to all of this is, is just continuing to, and I want to name this as part of the work is continuing to work in kind of an intimate community level to build relations with people who are often positioned outside of our cultural and sort of traditional spaces due to, as I said before, kind of stigma and respectability politics, this includes our relations, who use drugs, who trade and sell sex, who are queer non binary two spirit, who are unhoused, or institutionalized, or incarcerated.

We still have a lot of work to do to resist the hierarchy of kind of respectability politics introduced by colonization and so, for me, continuing to show up and build relations with people, I was giving a workshop, the other day on making sensory self care kits with an Indigenous sex worker group here, and you know just sort of found myself thinking, like, I wonder how many of my colleagues at the university do workshops like this and it's an important part of, you know, this is the kind of intimate kind of care work and relational work that we do as members of our communities so being an academic doesn't mean, you know I only do that when I have a grant for it, for example, it's just part of being in community, and it also keeps me accountable to ensure that the formal work is actually addressing the needs.

And not just responding to kind of scholarship or other spaces, where- because the folks that I'm sort of thinking about and I'm always attuned to are often in their name different anti violence work is happening, but they're not being included at the decision making table, given the funding, or seen as governing those practices or those projects and so that's part of the gap that I think we need to continue to be accountable to, so I will end there, thank you.

**Leah Levac:**

Thank you very much that was, I'm- your line about how we engage people experiencing harm in you know tracing and reimagining legal traditions in the present is really, it is really provoking a number of thoughts and questions, so thank you for all of that, let me and finally turned out to Professor Craft.

## Aimée Craft:

(Dr. Craft speaking in Anishinaabe language saying hello) I'm really grateful for this beautiful day and to be in my home territory in treaty one. Oh, my mind is spinning. Thank you Jasmine and Sarah for your interventions and I love the idea of a car ride and visiting as a place of law, and I, like the I love the idea of asking the question what does justice feel like, and those are key questions, because I think. If you take a step back and think about the violence that's affected through law and trying to reframe it through colonial law and reframe that through Indigenous legal orders and spaces as a response to that colonial legal violence.

These are two really brilliant interventions and I want to just acknowledge that. So I kind of focus on a couple things that in my work that I think are relevant to this conversation that I'd like to bring out the first, I think, is the violence that's affected through law and sort of the dissociation between how we understand giving effect to justice in law in a very male centred way, and I'm thinking specifically about how we anchor treaty and aboriginal rights in very male dominated practices and I'm not the first person to speak to this.

But I want to kind of use that as the point to contest sort of the male centred domination of Western legal systems as giving effects to Indigenous perspectives and reorient and recenter women's jurisdiction within that. So the work that I do is really all about you know, acknowledging that continuing and retained and affirmed jurisdiction of women, especially overland and waters, which has been essentially attempted to be stripped from Indigenous women.

In a variety of different ways that I won't get into today, but I know that many of us are familiar with those attempts and thinking about how our treaties and our land and water practices actually our points of continued affirmation of that jurisdiction and responses and legal responses affected through Indigenous women's practices to land violence and extractivism so there's a couple of spaces in which I think those interventions are important that I want to mention today.

The first is in response to mining and forestry and affirmations of water jurisdiction and land jurisdiction by women through the means of declarations and so I've helped the grand Council treaty three women's Council affirm that jurisdiction, through the Nibi declaration and essentially what they're claiming is what has been described externally as soft law, so they're creating a declaration it's non-binding they're doing this deliberative act of trying to pull together the different pieces of responsibility and presenting it in a very non-binding, non-confrontational way that doesn't associate with what we might think of as law in terms of penalties that are related to the non-fulfillment of obligations.

So I think that those interventions are important, but I think that there's a possibility for them to be misperceived by the outside world, and that by that I mean the colonial state and its interactions with continued mining and forestry. In there in the Treaty, three territories, so this is a space where I think that we have the opportunity as academics, to support sort of what a change in thinking about what jurisdiction looks like.

And what these affirmations actually mean in terms of the deep normative values that engage land and territory, and I think that's coming to, to a head in this current global climate crisis where people are understanding that long term relationships with land that are based on responsibilities and obligations are more important than sort of punctual decision making, or at least I like to think that this is coming to the fore.

A couple of other places where I think these interventions are important are contesting the nexus that exists between the state and extractive industry so in Manitoba we have a crown corporation in Manitoba hydro that is one of the largest proponents of extractive industry within the province, with a significant impact on Indigenous territories and so part of the work that needs to be done around that is exploring the significant impact on relationships as defined within Indigenous legal paradigms so relational, relational ideas of how we form and how we inform sets of responsibilities and looking at the examples of highly affected hydro communities, I shouldn't call them hydro communities, Indigenous communities that are affected by hydro.

And looking at the impact on those relationships and particularly the dissociation of women's relationships with lands, waters, territories, and each other. And so, looking then at you know exploring how we bring back spiritedness and agency of lands and waters as part of defining those relationships and reinvigorating those relationships as a location for the exercise of Indigenous laws and legal orders.

And there's I think a great potential I know this was said in the introductory comments about sort of my bio and work I do, but I think there's a huge potential to do that through art practices and so reclamation through traditional pottery practices, has been one of those sites of reclamation and trying to understand through that, you know how our creation stories come about, how that relationship with land and water is fundamental, how women are represented, not only in the making of pottery but actually in the physical form of the pots that are created that we find within our territories as the land erodes because of hydro so linking all of those sort of past engagements, this ongoing women's jurisdiction and thinking about the reclamation of deliberative law making processes that are- I love this idea of car ride, because where I work primarily on Lake Winnipeg there's a long car ride to get there and there's so much that happens in that car ride on the way to, to work with the women of Misipawistik Cree Nation.

So I just love that image and I'm going to carry that with me on my car rides Jasmine. I kind of want to talk a little bit about a shift in terms of where some of this work is going and thinking not only about responses to violence on land, but also in violence on bodies. And the consideration of the land body nexus, which is a little bit new for me and there are scholars, who have done really amazing work, including you, Sarah on exactly that and I like the idea of linking jurisdiction of land, water, and body and thinking about how, there have been further attempts at colonial dispossession through things that are disguised as not related to lands and waters.

Are directly related to women's bodies, but are kind of justified in a medicalized world and that's in relation to birthing, so, I don't know if many of you are familiar with the evacuation policy, but a lot of our Indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba and North Western Ontario are subject to an evacuation policy by which we take women who are expecting out of community to deliver in Urban centres, and this has really created a medicalization of birth, which is completely disassociated from past practices, and this is in the last two generations.

And so there's a disconnect that happens, then with urban birthing or medicalized birthing. A disconnection from land, and culture, and spirit. And then we disconnect also from the birthing practices and ceremonies and also the rights of passage, all of which kind of collectively are linking us to further jurisdiction relating to our territory, so the ability to birth on territory to bring life, which is the most important jurisdictional act of a woman, has been stripped away through federal policy.

So this next phase of work is kind of trying to build around this, build around some collectives of birthing and rites of passage trying to understand those reclamation practices as connected to affirmations of territorial sovereignty and kind and trying to rebuild the practices, but also the understanding of what those practices entail in terms of those deep affirmations have the ability to not just decide for but decide with lands and waters within our territories and reinvigorating those long term connections. Including the jurisdictional kinship connections that our children can have with their home territory. So.

I think re engaging Indigenous women in affirmations of sovereignty, not only in response to land violence and extractivism, but in response to bodily violence, and cultural and spiritual violence that results from that which is all part of this attempt at colonial dispossession of lands and territories is sort of where I want to head with- with this this ongoing work and with these really amazing women who are part of the treaty three additional birthing collective and other women who are doing this work, so I just want to acknowledge that this is happening in many different territories in many different ways.

And the more we can talk to each other about it and mutually support each other in this kind of work, the better off we'll be in terms of pushing back against some of that, you know that colonial violence that continues to be perpetrated so and so and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have this discussion, miigwetch!

**Leah Levac:**

Thank you very much, Professor Craft a having just had a baby I- This is a you know these are very poignant thoughts and I think really important discussion about, you know about affirming territorial sovereignty and how women's bodies are affected in these situations, I, we have now about 10 minutes or so for a bit of a conversation, so I would, we're going to open the chat and welcome if there's maybe, we might tuck in one question from the audience, but in the interim, I wonder if we maybe could just start here where you've left us off around this question between territorial sovereignty and bodily sovereignty and ask if anybody else on the panel Dr Hunt, Jasmine, or if you have further thoughts on Professor Craft want to add to the answer to

this specific question, what is the relationship or how are we, how are you thinking about the relationship between territorial sovereignty and bodily sovereignty?

**Sarah Hunt:**

Jasmine do you want to go first or, or?

**Jasmine Feather Dionne:**

Yeah, it kind of had me thinking, by connecting both, like the idea that you brought forward Sarah around embodiment. But in relation to the ways in which Indigenous bodies have Indigenous legal orders and perhaps, like those conceptions of justice encoded within them. And that our bodies carry that and that's why they're so targeted. And they provide those alternatives to the current, like the Western legal system.

And it has me thinking about what our bodies contain more than just legal orders, but. They obviously are these containers that hold generations of knowledge and also the ability to consent and thinking about these intrusions on territories that are not consensual and so once that barricade has kind of been broken down the body is the next place to do that, after the territory so yeah. I'll leave it.

**Sarah Hunt:**

Yeah I, I guess for me there's a couple things that I think are important for me. One is just the you know, in order to be able to. To. See legitimacy in claiming our lands the settler state had that all rests on a racist imaginary that as peoples we don't have the we're not people's we don't have the ability to formulate law. To govern at every scale and so and that that part of that dehumanization or part of the denial of our ability to be governed to govern is the normalization of violence against us and to you know both to see Indigenous peoples as inherently violent our spaces and communities as violent and to also naturalize our bodies as sites of violence and so.

That- you know we think about that, historically, maybe, but in the present day that's you know, in the removal of children, like the fact that. We can keep having over and over and over again reports commission's you know, knowing that youth are actually in BC more likely to be sexually abused in care than out of care. Reports from the. You know there's been report after report after report, and yet it doesn't actually matter because there's this underlying you know racist kind of view that.

That removes us from within, you know our as individuals from within kind of I think of these nested scales of governance or sovereignty, that is our bodies within our homes, within which often like here on the coast it's particular families who have responsibilities to particular sites on the land so it's taking us out of our families is taking us outside of our governing relations, and so there is a way in which that is justified or naturalized just through those kind of racist views, we have to keep I think reminding ourselves of that it's, not just in the past but we're always being denied our ability to be, to govern our all across all of those spaces that's justified and normalized all the time today, and so I think it's important also to think about the territorial

sovereignty and body sovereignty as being culturally specific like the, the explanation for that is not going to be the same everywhere.

So, within our language I'll just very briefly say within our language you know I've been it's been very useful to, to learn more about our language and the ways in which our bodies are kind of nested within our again our kind of houses or family groupings and onto the landscape and thinking about how that appears culturally, for example in ceremony our button blankets, with our crests are mirrored at the outside of our big houses which have crests which are also mirrored on the landscape and place names, other ways of marking the land and so those are all expressions of our law across those and our sovereignty across those scales so removing, you know people violence at the bodily level, it is not only a denial of our body sovereignty it's also a denial of the land to have those governing relations that uphold its wellness and it's...

The authority, the forms of authority that have existed there for thousands of years, which is across those scales it's not humans imposing that but it's relational, so I think. You know, we can't just I think there's often like a kind of simplistic way of thinking about body sovereignty has only being about decisions, like that is important but it's also to think about the way in which the removal of any of those scales means the fullness of our sovereignty is, is being fractured essentially so. We could go on and on for hours about this, but I'll stop there.

### Aimée Craft:

We certainly could and I'll just add one brief dimension which is food sovereignty, which I think is an important point of connection between territorial sovereignty and bodily sovereignty. If you actually think of our bodily makeup, we're 70-80% water, babies are even more than adults, so we actually are the land and water inside of our bodies. So what's happening to water and insecurity around water, it has a significant impact on our bodies.

And I think the same goes for the foods that we eat so in terms of prioritizing you know I don't think I would have imagined that I would look. So significantly at water as sort of the point of connection between questions of jurisdiction, territorial sovereignty and gender as I do, thinking about women as water carriers and being composed of water like it really, that's what we are is water. And I've been starting to think about it, also in terms of the relationship with some of our foods like fish and wild rice, which are two Anishinaabe traditional foods.

And that connection between the health of those relatives of ours, and our well-being so not only sort of spiritually understanding their wellness as being impactful on our wellness our overall wellness, but actually their physical wellness having a direct, direct impact on us and them being connected to all of the other sets of responsibilities that we have and I'll just very briefly mention that I love what's been done on the US side in terms of recognizing the rights of moment so recognizing the rights that wild rice have to a healthy environment, including clean water.

And the trickle-down effect that you know decenters the human perspective and actually brings us back to land relatives as being the center of you know how we affect wellness and how we

connect the concepts of territorial sovereignty and bodily sovereignty to the wellness of these, these other relatives.

### Leah Levac:

Thank you very much, so I have pages of questions next to me, but I also see that we have about seconds left in our time, so let me just extend again my own gratitude for this rich and thought-provoking conversation and then I'll turn it back over to Joanne Moores who will, who will wrap things up, for us, so thank you so much for all of your thoughts today, Professor Craft Dr. Hunt and Jasmine.

### Joanne Moores:

Thank you so much, Dr. Levac and all the speakers for this wonderful discussion. As I said to Dr Levac before we started this event I bet our only regret will be that we only had an hour and then I think that is certainly proving true. But these- everything that you've brought forward to me has been such a rich discussion and I really appreciate it on a personal level, and on behalf of the University of Guelph and the Department of Political Science, I want to thank all of you.

And before we do close out, I will mention that we are very excited because we have two more events coming up in the speaker series. So mark your calendars, we are going to be discussing the political determinants of health on March the 26th, and on April the 29th, we are planning a discussion with Indigenous scholars around resources, I guess you know that's the Western colonial word that that is used, but looking at some of the kind of flash points of conflict that have been coming forward lately, which very much closely relates to some of the things you brought up today.

So once again, miigwetch, thank you to all of you so much, and we will be looking into putting a recording of this session online, but we will certainly touch base with you our panelists before we do that, to make sure that that works for everybody, so once again on behalf of our organizing team. We really appreciate the time and the insight that you've brought to us today.

[End of transcript]