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SPACES OF SOLIDARITY: NEGOTIATIONS OF DIFFERENCE AND WHITENESS AMONG ACTIVISTS IN THE ARIZONA/SONORA BORDERLANDS

Dissertation

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Kentucky

By
Carrie Yvonne Mott
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Anna J. Secor, Professor of Geography
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2016

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

SPACES OF SOLIDARITY: NEGOTIATIONS OF DIFFERENCE AND WHITENESS AMONG ACTIVISTS IN THE ARIZONA/SONORA BORDERLANDS

Interpersonal conflict poses a serious threat to social justice activism. In the context of multi-racial solidarity activism in southern Arizona, conflicts are often born of the challenges accompanying differentials in social privilege due to differences in race and ethnicity relative to white supremacist settler colonialism. We can see these tensions topologically through the very different relationships white, Latin@, Chican@, and indigenous activists have to on-going processes of white supremacy. This dissertation explores the factors contributing to successes and failures of multi-racial activist ventures in the context of the Arizona/Sonora borderlands, particularly the challenges of negotiating social difference among communities of activists.

Arizona occupies a contentious position with regard to securitization practices on the US/Mexico border. Social justice activists come to southern Arizona to involve themselves in humanitarian aid projects that address human rights issues emerging from border securitization processes. Over time, many of these activists connect with other social justice work in southern Arizona, leading to the existence of particularly rich and dedicated networks of activists in Tucson, southern Arizona's largest city. Subsequently, we see the development of a diverse array of activist ventures deliberately orienting themselves around racial justice. This dissertation examines the paradox of becoming anti-racist for white activists, through which white activists work to address problematic aspects of their socialization as white subjects within the hierarchy of white supremacist society, a process that must co-exist with the knowledge that one cannot 'unwhiten' oneself.

Tucson has a rich history of social justice activism that contributes to a particularly diverse activist landscape. Since the early 2000s, the primary concern of grassroots political activism in the city has been migrant justice and opposition to the militarization of the US/Mexico border. In the aftermath of Arizona's notorious 2010 racial profiling legislation, SB 1070, The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet) was founded as a collaboration between undocumented migrant activists and white allies, with the express goal of fundraising to support migrant led activism in Tucson. Much of ProNet's success is rooted in the long-term relationship building between migrant activists and white allies, and intentional commitments to bridging gaps between the humanitarian aid and migrant justice communities. Members of ProNet challenge the spatial dynamics of activist networks Tucson, connecting Latin@ and Chican@ activist communities in and surrounding Spanish speaking South Tucson with activists in parts of the city where the effects of the militarized border are less present, and where residents are predominantly white.

KEYWORDS: Solidarity, Whiteness, Activism, Arizona, Borders

Carrie Yvonne Mott

April 28, 2016

SPACES OF SOLIDARITY: NEGOTIATIONS OF DIFFERENCE AND WHITENESS AMONG ACTIVISTS IN THE ARIZONA/SONORA BORDERLANDS

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Dedicated to Linda Mott, and in memory of Greg Mott

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Introduction

Southern Arizona is a place of many contradictions. In the borderlands, extreme Right and the radical Left come together in a strange dance, constantly circling and pushing back against one another's advances. Since the 2010 passage of Arizona's now notorious racial profiling legislations, Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070), the conservative political climate in Arizona has meant an era of unprecedented fear and repression for people in the borderlands whose identities make them vulnerable to the power of a militarized border. The effects of border and immigration enforcement are not experienced equally by everyone in the borderlands, however. While areas with high densities of Native American, Latin@, and Chican@ residents are regularly targeted by surveillance, policing, and violence, those living in predominantly white parts of cities like Tucson may only rarely, if ever, see evidence of the militarized border in their neighborhoods.

This is a story about solidarity on the US/Mexico border, where people from very different backgrounds come together to combat the injustice occurring within their communities. Of particular relevance here are three groups of people: Latin@ migrants, members of the Tohono O'odham Nation, and white social justice activists. Conservative political figures in Arizona like Governor Jan Brewer, former state senator and chief sponsor of SB 1070, Russell Pearce and, "America's toughest sheriff", Joe Arpaio, push an agenda that is undeniably white supremacist, targeting migrants, indigenous people, and other marginalized populations of color in the state. Meanwhile, activist networks statewide have mobilized to combat the repressive laws pushed by the Right at every turn. Migrant and indigenous communities have certainly mobilized on their own to work against the forces of conservatism in Arizona. However, the state also has a significant presence of white solidarity activists, many of whom have long worked to

ally themselves with the struggles of populations directly affected by a militarizing border infrastructure that seems to have no limit as to the fear and insecurity it can perpetuate. It is the collaborative nature of such solidarity work that is under scrutiny here, through which I attempt to highlight the ways that different grassroots groups struggle together, despite the significant challenges presented by attempts to work across gulfs of difference that position people on opposite ends of racial and class hierarchies.

The obstacles facing grassroots activists are formidable, and include such everyday problems as balancing a full time job and family life alongside one's political work, as well as much larger concerns, like how to mobilize against a constantly changing landscape of racist politics and policies emerging from the state level. As Laura Pulido (2006) points out:

> The extent to which activists or organizations are successful is decided not only by their skills and abilities but also by the forces arrayed against them. While there will always be resistance to oppressive conditions, the precise nature and content of that resistance are often determined by history. The alternatives people envision, the methods they employ, and the way they mobilize all occur within a particular historical and cultural milieu. (Pulido 2006: 32).

In addition to external forces that work against grassroots political activists in Arizona like police action, anti-immigrant legislation, or right-wing activist groups, are also the internal obstacles presented by the differentials in privilege experienced by activists who come to the work from very different backgrounds relative to white supremacy and settler colonialism.

As I have moved through the process of researching and writing for this dissertation, I have been guided by a set of core questions about the nature of solidarity. These questions, while deceptively simple, have actually proven very difficult to answer and my search for an adequate response to them is ongoing. In the context of social justice networks and activist communities that often claim to be 'in solidarity' or to do 'solidarity work', the term itself is rarely dissected and unpacked. Therefore, I continue to ask: What is solidarity? How do we know when we've

really done it? How can people of relative privilege ethically and meaningfully work in solidarity with directly affected communities in ways that are immediately useful and relevant to their struggles? Quite often, 'solidarity' is used rather uncritically, as a ways of simply saying that one acknowledges the oppression of another and offers some support through that acknowledgement[1]. However, as I show throughout this dissertation, solidarity in grassroots social justice work is a thing in motion, something that happens through conscious, intentional practice that is rooted in long-term connection with activists from directly affected communities.

In activism oriented around opposition to militarized borders, it has become commonplace to equate border securitization, particularly walling practices, in various parts of the world as a gesture of solidarity. In Tucson, as in other parts of the US Southwest, the Israeli apartheid wall is often conflated with the US/Mexico border wall, a topic taken up by Boyce et al. (2015). As they show, describing an equivalence of bordering processes in different places in the world can be a rather dangerous move that does not take into account the very specific and place-based nature of the struggle at hand, failing "to appreciate the contingent and site-specific dimensions of walling projects, as well as the trans-local networks and affinities that inform their construction" (Boyce et al., 2015: 290). The tendency to equate bordering practices and their accompanying injustices reveals a persistent tension at the heart of solidarity efforts. Articulations of solidarity often emphasize the shared nature of various struggles globally, without engaging with the specific movements at a local scale. Certainly, important linkages exist through global flows of capital and transnational social networks, however a nuanced understanding of the specificities of place is crucial to an articulation of solidarity that is really rooted in knowledge of the local. The role of a universal solidarity in articulations of a common

[1] For example, consider Facebook or Twitter declarations of solidarity, where one changes their profile picture to reflect 'solidarity' with a particular person, place, or cause.

struggle is meaningful, as Hannah Arendt explains, in moments of recognition that force us to see a shared humanity (Reshaur, 1992). However, the specificities of place and locality should not be disregarded in the pursuit of a way to articulate sameness in the face of oppression.

Social movements are often discursively constructed as somewhat homogenous entities, whether in the context of the local or the global, a tendency that appears throughout the activist networks of Arizona just as it does elsewhere. It is commonplace to hear reference to "the movement" in Arizona, which is typically a reference to migrant justice activism throughout the US. As Routledge and Cumbers (2007) show in their analysis of the Global Justice Movement, it is highly problematic to assume a unified understanding of solidarity, tactics, or goals among networks of social justice activists. In fact, Routledge and Cumbers argue, political and geographical factors contribute to divisions within social movements, and space, place, and scale significantly inform dynamics at play within activist networks. In a similar vein, Raymond Williams' discussion of the movement against nuclear weaponizing highlights diversity within that movement, showing that multiple campaigns were underway simultaneously but they didn't necessarily all agree on strategy or goals, outside of the broad aim of nuclear disarmament (Williams, 1980).

A homogenization of movements for social justice not only fails to account for diversity within the movements, but can also mask issues of violence and abuses of power that come from activists themselves. Sara Koopman shows through her discussion of a number of rapes rumored to have taken place at the 2005 World Social Forum in Brazil the ways that gatherings oriented around social justice themes do not guarantee women's safety from patriarchal violence, and in fact can mask incidences of violence under the guise of a horizontally organized, egalitarian space. Too often, there is a "will to forget" events that seem contradictory to the image of social movements and their spaces as liberatory safe-havens from systemically oppressive forces at

play in the world (Koopman, 2007: 151). Indeed, throughout the course of my fieldwork and prior engagement as an activist I have seen this tendency at work on the ground in Arizona, through the testimonies of allies who endured violence carried out by other activists, as well as my own multiple uncomfortable encounters as a women who regularly experienced activist spaces in ways that diverged considerably from that of male friends and allies who were often unwilling or unable to hear a version of events that contradicted their own. In a sense, the "will to forget" moments that speak against the core values of social movements is embedded in a prevalent utopian idealism that does not mesh well with the messiness of reality. However, as Stuart Hall points out, this utopianism highlights an on-going process of becoming that "will always have to have a certain utopian dimension to it, because it is always configuring something that doesn't yet exist." (De Peuter, 2007: 126). The difficult negotiation here is to simultaneously become the utopian vision without ignoring the fact that our reality is far from ideal, activists themselves can perpetuate unjust and oppressive actions, and meaningful growth and change can only come through intentional and careful processes of self-reflection.

The struggle for social justice movements to actually be just in themselves continues, and activist and popular educator Harsha Walia's (2013) book *Undoing Border Imperialism*, offers a provocative exploration of pathways forward in solidarity work. Walia discusses the ways that grassroots political work requires conscious self-reflection in order to be sustainable and meaningful for all participants. She writes:

> It behooves us to build (and share the labor of building) movements where we are emancipated rather than alienated, where we are more resilient and have more capacity to be present for movement projects because we feel supported as we move through our own traumas, and where we encourage honesty among each other and challenge each others' harmful behaviors, but learn to do so without hurling daggers at ourselves or one another. This requires intentional practice— a deliberate learning of how to manifest and align ourselves with our vision for the world (Walia, 2013: 270).

Walia speaks here to both the challenges and the hopefulness that comes when participants in movements for justice connect their own behaviors and socialized tendencies to the greater struggles against oppression happening in the world outside. Part of the ongoing nature of solidarity lies with this kind of organizing, where activists from different backgrounds take the time to really listen to each other, learn about each other, and meaningfully challenge the immanence of oppression and the ways that it plays out through the micropolitics of individual relationships, thoughts, and actions. "Resistance", writes Foucault, "is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power". Just as "points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network", so too are relations of power present in moments of resistance (Foucault, 1978: 95).

In addition to solidarity, the second core theme running through this dissertation is the phenomenon of whiteness and white supremacy, and how these things are negotiated by activists who do multi-racial solidarity work. In recent years, a number of scholars have confronted the ways that whiteness is a force in the world that produces real material conditions through the ways white supremacy is embodied and inscribed variously through differently racialized bodies (Ahmed, 2007; Gahman, 2015; Finney, 2014; McKittrick 2006, 2011, 2016; Price, 2012; Saldanha, 2007), though important commentaries on white supremacy are certainly found earlier (Fanon, 1952; Deloria, 1969; hooks, 1981; Rawick, 1967). In the context of muliti-racial solidarity organizing, negotiations of whiteness by among activists from all racialized backgrounds is hugely significant and a major source of conflict and ongoing struggle within the activist networks in Arizona.

Quite often when discussing 'allies' or 'solidarity activists' these terms imply a person who is white and economically privileged in relation to the communities most impacted by oppressive forces. A number of activists of color have written and commented publically on this

phenomenon, often in ways that aim to point out the ways that white activists' actions can be highly problematic for movements led for and by people of color (Benally, 2013; Garza, 2014; Goggans, Lorde, 1984; Nopper, 2003; Woods, 2014). In an open letter to white anti-racist activists, Tamara Nopper (2003) describes the oxymoronic character of the white anti-racist, where whites remain coded as superior within institutionalized hierarchies of race and privilege, regardless of their own sentiments or personal commitments to activist intervention. Nopper writes:

> …whiteness is a structure of domination embedded in our social relations, institutions, discourses, and practices. Don't tell me you're not white but then when we go out in the street and the police don't bother you or people don't ask you if you're a prostitute, or if people don't follow you and touch you at will, act like that does not make a difference in our lives. Basically, you can't talk, or merely 'unlearn' whiteness, as all of these annoying trainings for white people to 'unlearn' racism will have you think (Nopper, 2003: np).

The very different ways that space is experienced by whites and people of color extend into our experiences as activists. During a demonstration in the street or in front of a public building, for example, people of color are much more likely to be targeted and harassed by police than whites. Nopper points at a problem that appears frequently in multi-racial activist circles- namely, that there will be white activists present who *do* feel that they have unlearned whiteness, or that they have unlearned racism. Meanwhile, structures of domination continue and are evident in the ways that white bodies are socialized to dominate spaces, to talk over people of color or disregard their experiences and contributions, or to feel that they somehow know 'better' than the activists of color in the room.[2]

The majority of the research for this dissertation was carried out in Tucson, where I lived prior to beginning a doctoral program, from 2004-2010, and again for my dissertation research in

[2] Of course, these phenomena are intersectional, and the situation is also exacerbated by patriarchal male privilege, Cis-gendered privilege, and heteronormativity, in addition to whiteness. Although certainly identities outside of Cis-male heternormativity embody white privilege and perform it in various ways.

2013-2015. However, throughout the course of my dissertation research I also spent time on the Tohono O'odham Reservation- primarily in Ali Jegk, a village about a half-mile north of the US/Mexico border, on the western edge of the reservation. During my fieldwork, I also visited an O'odham village in northern Sonora, and traveled as well to Flagstaff, Phoenix, El Paso, and other significant places along the US side of the international border. My initial knowledge of social justice activism in Arizona and the complexity of the activist networks propelling the struggle came through my own experiences as an activist in Tucson prior to beginning my PhD at the University of Kentucky (see Mott, 2015). Through my participation with Dry River from 2007-2010, an anarchist infoshop and community space in Tucson, I began to develop relationships with activists involved in various sectors of social justice work throughout southern Arizona, including Tohono O'odham activists from the reservation, people involved in humanitarian aid work in the desert, as well as people working for migrant justice locally in Tucson.

When I returned to begin my fieldwork in January of 2013, I was struck by the ways the networks of activists I had known before had shifted. In part, these changes were simply the natural process of a city that attracts transient activists. Many of the people I'd known before had left the city while I was away, and new faces had arrived and become prominent in the activist scene. In addition to the usual problem of transience in Tucson was another typical challenge in grassroots political work— simply getting along and sustaining collaboration despite interpersonal conflict. There were a number of projects and alliances that were strong when I left Tucson in 2010, but which had fallen apart by the time I returned in 2013. Conversely, many new projects and collaborations originated during the same time period. Most significant for the changes in the landscape of activism in Tucson, however, were the 2011 implementation of SB 1070 and the ban on the teaching of Ethnic Studies, events that required much innovative

creativity from grassroots activists on the ground in order to combat the injustices perpetuated by these developments.

The aims of SB 1070 to create a hostile climate of fear for undocumented migrants in Arizona were certainly successful (Williams and Boyce 2013), as have been accompanying moves in the practices surrounding migrant detention (Williams 2015; Martin 2012, 2015), deportation (Slack et al., 2015), and prosecution (Burridge 2009). The overt racial profiling demanded by SB 1070 has meant that anyone who appears to be of Latin American descent can be stopped and asked for documentation at any time, including migrants residing legally in the state, as well as Chican@ citizens whose families may well have been established in Arizona for generations, since it was actually a part of Mexico.

For indigenous borderlanders like the Tohono O'odham, the consequences of the militarized border are very different than they are for migrants in urban Tucson, but they are certainly no less destructive (Madsen 2007, 2014; Kilpatrick, 2014; O'odham Solidarity Project, 2016). For members of the Tohono O'odham Nation who live in rural communities along the border, constant surveillance serves to restrict people's freedom of movement and to induce much fear and insecurity in everyday life. Linguistic, cultural, and political practices integral to traditional O'odham life in northern Sonora and southern Arizona have been destroyed by the ever-tightening border (Castillo and Cowan, 2001), which makes it extremely difficult to maintain connections across the boundary line. Many roads and pathways across the border have been closed, or are under very close surveillance by Border Patrol agents who regularly harass O'odham who attempt to cross.

The situation facing the Tohono O'odham on the border has certainly been met with resistance. O'odham activists have publically protested in various ways, especially since construction of the border wall in previously open parts of the reservation began in 2006. The

challenges facing the Tohono O'odham in the face of the militarized border are formidable, however. Many O'odham villages in northern Sonora have become ghost towns, emptied out because the tightening border forced people to abandon their homes to move north onto the reservation in the US. Ceremonial practices have been profoundly affected, as Border Patrol frequently interrupt and prevent O'odham people from carrying out traditional practices that require them to be out in the open in remote areas, vulnerable to surveillance and harassment. Traditional political systems, built through personal connections between O'odham elders in northern Sonora and southern Arizona, have been profoundly impacted by the fear people face in having to cross the border and deal with ongoing harassment by the Border Patrol.

Within southern Arizona, Tucson has been a hub for social justice activism for some time and has been particularly well known as a center for migrant justice activism since the origins of the Sanctuary Movement in the early 1980s. Today, the city attracts activists from other parts of the United States as well as internationally, seeking to involve themselves in humanitarian aid work on the border and border opposition work generally. Tucson's status as a popular destination for social justice activism has contributed to a rich network of Leftist activism throughout the city, and a diverse array of grassroots political projects.

A collective focus on social justice does not necessarily mean that everyone gets along, or that the work undertaken is done so in ways that all agree are ethical. To the contrary, all activist scenes are undergirded by histories of conflict, mistrust, and frustration. In some cases, this is simply natural for people who have worked together for a long time, and who have run up against the same conflicts and disagreements over many years of collaboration. However, in many interviews and conversations with activists in Tucson, the topic of transience came up as a regular challenge to solidarity work. As I will show repeatedly throughout this dissertation, relationship building is a key focal point of the long-term activists in the city, something that is

very difficult when someone is only in town for a few months at a time. Quite often, this conflict between transient and local activists plays out along lines of race and class. Transient activists who come into the city typically fall into one of two categories: (1) white people in their early twenties, who are either current college students or recent graduates, and (2) white retirees known as 'snowbirds', who winter in Tucson, but spend the rest of the year in northern parts of the United States. In contrast, many of the local activists are Chican@ residents whose families have lived in Arizona for generations, Latin@ migrants who have settled permanently in Tucson, Tohono O'odham and Yaqui people whose cultures are intimately tied to their lands, and whites who have long-time local roots.[3]

This dissertation is organized into three chapters, each of which functions as an article that stands on its own.[4] Each considers a different aspect of solidarity work in the Arizona borderlands, and delves into aspects of the challenges and rewards of the particular endeavor in question. The articles are all rooted in my experiences as a participant observer and supported by material from the interviews I conducted with social justice activists in Tucson. Each one considers some different aspect of the activist networks I worked with, and approaches the challenges and successes of particular grassroots political projects. At the core, however, each article targets the same questions about the nature of solidarity that I discussed above.

In the first article, "The Activist Polis: Topologies of Conflict in Indigenous Solidarity Activism" (Mott, 2016), I discuss an activist collaboration between relatively young white activists and Tohono O'odham elders. "The Activist Polis" is rooted in an analysis of white

[3] Of course, Tucson is much more diverse than the groups listed here and there are also significant communities of Black, Muslim, Jewish, and other groups dedicated to social justice in the city. However, the groups discussed here represent the majority populations of activists within Tucson and southern Arizona and they are the communities I worked with most closely throughout the course of my dissertation research.

[4] "The Activist Polis" was published in *Antipode* (2016), 48:1. "Precious Work" received a 'revise and resubmit' with very encouraging and productive reviewer comments from *Social and Cultural Geography*. "Working within Difference" is in preparation for submission.

supremacist settler colonialism, and examines the ways that tensions between individual activists are often exacerbated by the pain and trauma associated with both white supremacy and settler colonialism. I consider the ways that difficult emotions are a part of a topological connection to times and spaces that are not one's own, but which nonetheless shape reactions in the present moment. To illustrate, I discuss a conflict that occurred between activists involved in solidarity efforts surrounding the 2013 blockade in Vicam, Sonora, a protest in response to the diversion of water away from the Rio Yaqui and towards the city of Hermosillo (Norrell 2013).

The second article, "Precious Work: the Paradox of the White Anti-Racist," addresses the paradoxical nature of white anti-racist activism, through which whites target themselves through processes of self-work that are often emotionally fraught, but which are nonetheless crucial for meaningful social change. I consider the ways that white activists must necessarily embody a process of 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, 1987) anti-racist, which requires a state of accepting one's limitations and inability to change completely. As I highlight through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming, there must be some acceptance of the fact that one remains oneself throughout the process of trying to change. Through interviews with white social justice activists, I show that people struggle with the imperfect nature of social change, and their own continually problematic positionality within systems of oppression, despite the fact that they are trying to change those same systems.

The third article, "Working within Difference: Tucson's migrant justice movement and the pursuit of an ethical practice of solidarity", focuses on an example of on-going solidarity through relationship building by highlighting The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet), a Tucson based collaboration between Latin@ and Chican@ activists and white allies. "Working within Difference" demonstrates that ethical and sustainable practices of solidarity are rooted in long-term relationships across difference and trust that develop over time. Through looking to

the dynamics of difference within this network of Latin@ and Chican@ activists and white allies, I show ProNet as an example of a collaboration that has been very successful, both in terms of its aims to fundraise in support of the activism of directly affected communities in Tucson, as well as in its ability to sustain collaboration over the course of several years.

The ways that knowledge is considered authoritative and valid are also under critique here, and I examine the nature of academic authority in the context of such topics as solidarity, anarchism, race, indigeneity, and political activism. I have come to fully appreciate throughout the course of my dissertation work that within these topics are many concurrent conversations happening, both within different fields of the academy, as well as in the public sphere. I work here to challenge particular hegemonies of academic authority, to push various literatures into conversation with one another, and to include public discourses alongside the academic as equally authoritative.

The path of my research and writing has certainly been impacted by my own positionality as a white thirty-something woman in a doctoral program. What I offer here is not a perfect picture of activism in southern Arizona. Rather, it is merely a slice of the things that I was able to observe and experience during my time there. What you read here is shaped by the places that I went and the people I talked with along the way. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has shown, academic research is never an innocent abstract exercise, but is always something invested with power, subject to the ethical (or unethical) consciousness and actions of individual researchers. While I tried throughout my research and writing to maintain awareness of how my own whiteness and class privilege has inflected this study, this dissertation will certainly reveal my own blind spots through the ways that I engaged with activism in southern Arizona as a white researcher. I have spent significant amounts of time in Arizona throughout the last decade,

however, like many who find themselves involved in activism in southern Arizona, I am also transient and this has profoundly shaped my own relationship to on-going local struggles.

I have aimed to contribute here something that will be useful beyond the academy.[5] The realization that interpersonal conflict is a major challenge to sustainable grassroots social justice work has significantly influenced the ways that I have approached this project. It may seem obvious that people simply need to be able to get along and work together to bring about meaningful change, but I believe this to be a moment where academic scholarship doesn't quite "see the forest for the trees". As I found through numerous conversations with activists of varied backgrounds, the micropolitics of interpersonal conflict, and the ways that these conflicts are often exacerbated by differences in race and class privilege is a serious one, and is a major threat to the long-term potential for grassroots groups to bring about lasting change in their communities. In places like Arizona, where repeated and on-going threats from the Right serve to induce terror and insecurity into the everyday lives of various communities, it is crucial that the Left be able to fight back, every step of the way, without internal divisions destabilizing their power.

[5] It is my intention also to convert each of my dissertation articles into a non-academic video lecture that will be available online, in addition to my ongoing commitment to post all of my academic publications online through open access forums.

Chapter 1: The Activist Polis: topologies of conflict in indigenous solidarity activism

Abstract

Interpersonal conflict poses a serious threat to social justice activism. In the context of indigenous solidarity activism in southern Arizona, conflicts are often born of the challenges accompanying differentials in social privilege due to differences in race and ethnicity relative to white supremacist settler colonialism. This paper examines activist collaboration between Tohono O'odham and non-Native anarchist activists in southern Arizona, arguing that a topological activist polis is a useful lens through which we can better understand the roots of conflict in social justice activism. Non-Native activists are often aware of the ways white supremacist settler colonial society privileges particular identities while marginalizing others. Nonetheless, settler and white privilege give rise to tensions which can be seen topologically through the very different relationships non-Native and indigenous activists have to on-going processes of white supremacy and to histories of the genocide of indigenous peoples.

Keywords: settler colonialism, topology, anarchism, indigeneity, whiteness, activism

Introduction

"…it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken."

-Audre Lorde (1984: 44)

The threat of dissolution from within poses a serious challenge to grass-roots social justice activism. Quite often, internal conflicts are fueled by differentials in social privilege that accompany differences in race, ethnicity, class, or gender. This paper confronts the interpersonal challenges facing indigenous solidarity activism in the US/Mexico borderlands, and argues that a topological approach to an activist polis provides a helpful way to understand the failures of many activist ventures. "All movements need an anchor in a shared positive vision," writes Harsha Walia, a vision that can "dismantle hierarchies, disarm concentrations of power, guide just relations, and nurture individual autonomy alongside collective responsibility" (Walia, 2013:

10). In this sprit, this essay is an attempt to contribute to discussions about how social justice activists from different backgrounds might more effectively work together. Through a nuanced approach to the conflicts and challenges that come up within activist networks, we may better prepare ourselves to successfully work in solidarity. I attempt to expand our thinking about activism and activist community beyond the emotional or affective experience of collective action (i.e. Gould, 2009; Juris, 2008; Routledge, 2012) to consider the ways that the activist polis reflects the orientation of the individuals within it through their topological connections to times and spaces outside of their immediate experience.[6] As Pickerill (2009) points out, negotiations of difference among indigenous solidarity activists are a source of both optimism for future collaboration and critical reflection upon how we may better develop activist strategies and tactics.[7]

To approach something topologically is to approach it with an understanding that phenomena which might appear distant in time or space in a Cartesian paradigm are actually localized in the subject through memories, lived experience, and emotional attachments.[8] The heart of the concept of topology, as it has been mobilized by human geographers, is that particular qualities of things "retain their integrity despite being twisted or stretched out of shape" (Allen, 2011: 5; see also Blum and Secor, 2011; Martin and Secor, 2013; Secor, 2013). In

[6] In discussing 'activists' here, I deal specifically with individuals who resist border militarization and various forms of state-sponsored social oppression, and who ally themselves with anti-authoritarian organizing practices.

[7] My own positionality as a researcher is important to note. I am a white settler activist who grew up in Washington state, in occupied Yakama territory, and I have lived for much of the last decade in occupied Tohono O'odham lands in southern Arizona. This research was carried out through participant observation, in which I worked to stand in solidarity with traditional O'odham activists, a process that was itself fraught with my own conflicted and on-going confrontation with white supremacist settler colonialism and my position within it.

[8] While topologies originated as a mathematical concept, there is much support for the notion that the context in which we utilize the concept has necessarily evolved over time (Allen, 2011; Haikli and Kallio, 2014; Martin and Secor, 2014; Blum and Secor, 2011). Topological ideas have played their part in scholarship in human geography for some time, though they often appear in different guises and under other names.

the context of indigenous solidarity activism, a topological approach can help us understand how it is that legacies of indigenous genocide, processes of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and white privilege can simultaneously appear spatiotemporally distant from individual activists, yet still bear heavily upon our interactions with one another.

Häkli and Kallio discuss the idea of a "topological polis" made up of "the bundle of significant others, communicative relations and material objects that make up the discontinuous ecology of one's [everyday] concerns" (Häkli and Kallio, 2014: 189). Building on their use of the concept, I put forth the notion of a specifically activist polis, as a politicized community formed by people's knowledge of one another through activist work, as well as through friendships and more casual interactions. The activist polis comprises a collective understanding of "socially constituted, prevailing ways of feeling and emoting, as well as the embodied, axiomatic understandings and norms about feelings and their expression" (Gould, 2009: 10). As activists struggle to work together despite social differences, topological connections to things outside individual experience or understanding become intimately personal, such as white supremacy and the history of Native American genocide. To bring topology into this examination of the activist polis is to consider the ways that our emotional selves are a nexus for linkages that transcend space and time, through attachments and aversions to moments which are outside of ourselves but which nonetheless shape who we are.

In the early 2000s, the landscape of activism in southern Arizona began to shift as increasing energy was devoted to combating the deadly effects of border security. Heightened militarization of border cities like El Paso/Ciudad Juarez and San Diego/Tijuana produced a 'funnel effect', through which migrants began to cross through more dangerous (though less surveilled) points along the border, such as the Sonoran Desert, which spans southern Arizona, on the US side of the border, and northern Sonora, Mexico (Rubio-Goldsmith et al, 2007).

Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070), Arizona's notorious racial profiling law, went into effect in 2010 and spurred widespread protest throughout the state and beyond. That same year, Arizona's governor Jan Brewer signed into law a state ban on the education of Ethnic Studies, a move that also faced widespread opposition. Border militarization, the overt racism of SB 1070, the Ethnic Studies ban, and, more recently, the xenophobic reception unaccompanied child migrants have encountered in the US Southwest (for example: Martinez et al, 2014) are stories that have circulated widely in the national press, often favoring the view that border militarization and the increased policing of migrants are necessary to national security, and that open borders and unregulated flows across them threaten US citizens. Southern Arizona's largest metropolitan area, Tucson, is a particularly important site to consider, as a place where activism in opposition to border policing has a long and powerful history, and also because of the degree of intention taken by activists in Tucson and throughout southern Arizona to situate themselves and their work as explicitly anti-racist (Lloyd, 2012: 134).

Social justice activism has consistently confronted and challenged the state of Arizona's increasingly oppressive strategies for dealing with immigration and border enforcement, and there are many groups dedicated to border opposition activism and migrant justice. Less publicized however, are protest movements aimed at the effects of border enforcement on indigenous peoples. The Tohono O'odham Reservation is the second largest Native American reservation in the US and is situated immediately on the US/Mexico border in southern Arizona. The ancestral lands of the Tohono O'odham are on both sides of the Arizona/Sonora border, and border enforcement has profoundly impacted the ability of the Tohono O'odham to maintain their traditional ways of life in the region (Madsen, 2007, 2014a, 2014b).

Much smaller in number than those who are involved in migrant justice work, networks of O'odham solidarity activists are made up of people who are Tohono O'odham alongside their

non-Native allies, who are often white anarchists based in Tucson.[9] Connections between Tucson based anarchists and traditional[10] O'odham activists were formed through solidarity actions that began with protests against the heightened militarization of the border in the mid-2000s. Today, collaboration between anarchist and O'odham activists has moved beyond border issues to include any calls for support issued by O'odham activists, whether it is for help with gardening projects on the reservation, fundraising travel expenses to allow traditional O'odham to gather together, or fundraising for other causes supported by Tohono O'odham activists, such as the efforts in support of Yaqui resistance in Vicam, Sonora, discussed below.

Through a topological approach to the activist polis, we can unravel the difficult emotions involved in interactions between non-Native and indigenous activists within southern Arizona's activist networks. Considerations of the complex role that emotion plays in the success or failure of social justice projects can provide clues to the roots of inter-personal conflict within activism, and thus contribute to the sustainability of political work. Though activists may come together with a shared aim of targeting an injustice, those participating in the project can be nearer to or farther from that injustice in their personal lives. As Clough rightly points out, "The quest for affinity [or solidarity], that feeling of emotional connection and trust that such a concept comprises, is difficult emotional work" (Clough, 2012: 1673).

To confront some of the emotional difficulty inherent in solidarity activism, I first look to southern Arizona's activist polis, as a topological space where anarchist activists hold each other accountable in relation to highly politicized collective norms surrounding behavior as people

[9] I use the term "anarchist" here to describe activists and strategies that are anarchistic in character, as well as the individuals who may utilize such strategies, though participants may not name them as such (Barker and Pickerill, 2012; Day, 2005; Gordon, 2007).

[10] I use the term "traditional" here because it is the term that these activists use for themselves. To be traditional O'odham means that one practices a lifestyle that preserves ways of life that were in existence prior to contact with whites. This takes shape in the context of everyday practices, as well as in religious and political life.

who resist systems of domination. Next, I move to consider the complex topology inherent in interactions between non-Native and indigenous activists in the context of efforts by O'odham and white anarchist activists to fundraise and gather supplies in support of the 2013 Yaqui road blockade in Vicam, Sonora. Throughout, I highlight the ways deceptively mundane interactions are rife with topological connections to powerful emotions and histories, aiming to show how conflicts born of these tensions are often the reason that many activist endeavors toward solidarity flounder. Further, I show that the activist polis, as a space of politicized social encounter, is a topologically dense locus for complex emotion and trauma and that this challenging density is often at the heart of many failures in activist ventures where both non-Natives and indigenous people are involved.

I. The Activist Polis

The personal and relational emphasis found in anarchist organizing, a "politics of affinity" (Routledge, 2009: 85), often relies on consensus based systems of communication through which individuals attempt to work collectively through disagreements in pursuit of equitable outcomes. In intentionally constructed collectivized spaces, such as those written about by Clough (2012), Eisenstadt (2013), Ince (2012), Routledge (2009, 2012), and Chatterton and Pickerill (2010), parameters for communication are typically established by participants. However, as Pickerill and Chatterton point out, autonomous organizing is also more broadly "a sociospatial strategy, in which complex networks and relations are woven between many autonomous projects across time and space, with potential for translocal solidarity networks" (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006: 732). There is a politics of scale to anarchist organizing and as such, communication between communities and groups can be considerably messier and more difficult than working with one's small affinity group or collective. Within wider, less formalized networks of anarchist activists the same ideals of the personal-as-political prevail.

However, interpersonal checks on individual behaviors and actions often occur through informal conversation outside of regulated meeting spaces. The activist polis functions as a public sphere through which individual actions are condoned, supported, and discussed among networks of activists. An examination of the activist polis can enhance our understanding of how activist communities order themselves, albeit in ways that are messy and often fraught with interpersonal tensions.

For Häkli and Kallio, a topological polis describes the ways in which a given space is automatically politicized through participants' linkages to things external to that space. Self-work is a crucial element of prevailing norms of behavior for individuals within southern Arizona's activist polis, especially for white activists grappling with their privilege within white supremacist settler colonial society. Despite on-going efforts by white activists to distance themselves from the problematic aspects of whiteness as an oppressive social institution, these efforts inevitably fall short, and this falling short in turn becomes an important element of the on-going nature of such self-reflection.

Within the activist polis, bonds of trust and solidarity are crucially important. There is much emphasis placed on 'the community' and on the maintenance of social bonds within the community. Often there is a sentiment that larger networking within the community is an outgrowth of the ideals of consensus and horizontal organizing that are typically identified with more structured meeting processes. However, such ideals of horizontality and community can mask the fact that some people are more readily welcomed in particular activist circles than others, which often results in the marginalization of those who are less equipped to interact in such settings (Barker and Pickerill, 2012; Clough, 2012; Hodkindson and Chatterton, 2006).

For white activists involved in solidarity work with indigenous people, there is often a desire to be an ally who works to redress wrongs and to be, in a sense, a different kind of white

person. White guilt plays its part as a heavy weight that contributes to awkward deference and uncertain interactions (Barker and Pickerill, 2012; Lagalisse, 2011). As Berg (2012) points out, the process of self-reflection that accompanies multi-racial activism is often joined by feelings of guilt and confusion, because most white activists come from a 'color-blind' paradigm that denies difference. In his treatise on indigenous resurgence, Taiaiake Alfred (2005) explains why it is crucial for sympathetic whites to really listen to what their indigenous friends and allies are telling them and to allow the indigenous partners in multiracial projects to take the lead:

> If non-indigenous readers are capable of listening, they will learn from these shared words, and they will discover that while we are envisioning a new relationship between Onkwehonwe[11] and the land, we are at the same time offering a decolonized alternative to the settler society by inviting them to share our vision of respect and peaceful coexistence (Alfred, 2004: 35).

For indigenous activists, there is often a drive to educate willing whites about what they can do to help, and to put them to work when called upon. At the same time, there is much mistrust and suspicion that settler activists are really capable of meaningfully confronting their privileged socialization.

White supremacy and settler colonialism are two distinct phenomena, but which occur as inextricably intertwined in former colonies settled by Europeans or people with European ancestry, such as in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. By taking 'white supremacist settler colonialism' together as one term, I work with the understanding that forms of social oppression are intersectional and inseparable from one another. Following Smith (2010b), I agree that there is a grave danger in scholarship that does not take into account the role of settler colonialism in processes of racialization and racial privilege. For scholarship to disregard the impact of settler colonialism enacts the further marginalization and invisibility of

[11] Onkwehonwe means 'original people' (Alfred, 2004: 19).

indigenous peoples and the specific nature of social inequalities that they face. At the same time, however, there is no simple binary comprised of white settlers on one side and brown skinned indigenous people on the other (Todd, 2013). For the purposes of this essay, my use of 'settler' refers specifically to non-Native people living in the United States who are European descended and self-described settlers.

Settlers carry with them the socio-cultural foundations of the colonizing sovereign and are, in a sense, representatives of that larger settler society, reflecting the hegemony of colonial power. Through their identification with the colonial power, settlers maintain the biopolitical order, continually reifying the ideals of settler society. White supremacist settler colonialism conditions all political, economic and cultural processes and the effects of this social paradigm extend broadly into the fabric of social life (Morgensen, 2011a, 2011b). Veracini's (2010) book on the histories of settler colonialism shows how *settler* colonialism is distinct from colonialism, in that settlers never plan to go 'home', in opposition to colonialists who ventured out from Europe, stayed for a time in a colonial land and eventually returned home again. Further, settler colonialism is difficult to meaningfully confront, because there is no specific locus to place responsibility or complicity (Barker, 2012).

Settler colonial societies were formed through a triad structure of settler-native-slave, and those who were forced into slavery and their descendants should not be considered settlers, though neither are they indigenous to the lands they currently inhabit (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Settlers, unlike migrants or the descendants of slaves, have come to occupy their place through conquest, whether that of their own or of their ancestors (Mamdani, 2012). Beyond the triad of settler-native-slave, migration functions along lines of difference, whereas settler migration is indicative of sameness (Veracini, 2010). Migrants often appear different from the dominant population in any given settler colonial society, whether through language, skin color, clothing,

or cultural practices. In contrast, settlers and their ancestors occupy a dominant position because of their similarity to the original settling society.

Activists I spoke with frequently cited relationship building as the single most important part of long-term activism, particularly work that involves solidarity across racial, ethnic, or class differences. Despite widespread discussion of the significance of relationship building within southern Arizona's activist polis, conflicts often arise. White supremacist settler colonial society means that whites are typically socialized to be more assertive in conversation, to be relatively immune from the eyes of the law, and to have easier access to higher education. Despite the fact that many settler activists are aware of these effects of white supremacy, there is still a pervasive ignorance of the ways in which "entire ways of being in place, of perceiving spaces, underlie the colonial project" (Barker and Pickerill, 2012: 1709). Indeed, a crucial aspect of the success of whiteness through settler colonialism has been the widespread acceptance of particular hegemonic ways of life and an unawareness of other ways of being (Povenelli, 2011; Veracini, 2010).

As Barker and Pickerill (2012) show, a frequent mistake made by anarchist activists is an assumption of unproblematized common ground in solidarity work with indigenous peoples-- a situation that can lead to conflict and which generates mistrust. While the two groups may share suspicion of statist paradigms and institutions, challenges often arise in solidarity work between non-Native and indigenous activists through "unintentional (often unwitting) transgressions and appropriations" (Barker and Pickerill, 2012: 1705). Despite these challenges, many settler anarchists express an affinity with indigenous struggles and desire to build relationships based on a sentiment of mutual discontent with the white supremacist settler colonial state (Alfred, 2005; Graeber, 2009; Lagalisse, 2011). While many Tucson-based settler activists who express solidarity with Tohono O'odham activists are aware of the privileges and exclusions perpetuated

by white supremacist settler colonialism, mere awareness of these phenomena is not necessarily enough to change individual behaviors. As hooks (1994) has discussed, the intellectual and emotional process of awakening to one's own contribution to systems of injustice is a meaningful part of a process that should ideally lead one toward action (hooks, 1994). Tensions sometimes come about because white activists overstep in ways that serve to derail the plans and vision of the O'odham activists, unintentionally causing offense in the process. As a result, O'odham activists must often mitigate their own sentiments of wariness and mistrust in working with non-Native, self-proclaimed allies- people who may still be at an early stage in their own process of conscientization (Friere, 1970; hooks, 1994).

Gaztambide-Fernandez points out that the concept of solidarity brings with it much troubling ambiguity and is typically mobilized "without a consistent set of parameters" (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012: 46). Consequently, declarations of allyship or solidarity should not be equated with any reliable expectation of behavior or action. "Solidarity," write Tuck and Yang, "is an uneasy, reserved, and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict" (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 3). Self-proclaimed solidarity activists often mobilize solidarity as way to show support and a willingness to provide help to directly affected communities. It is, however, an act that originates from the activists who profess their solidarity. Quite often, an expression of solidarity is something that serves to qualify the subject, while the objects of solidarity activism are discursively constructed as passive recipients. In the context of indigenous solidarity activism by white settlers, the diversity and complexity of those who benefit from settler privilege "exponentially complicates" exactly what is implied by the concepts of solidarity and allyship (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 7).

In southern Arizona's activist polis, people are often involved in more than one project at a time. People who work with migrant justice groups are sometimes also involved in solidarity

activism with members of the Navajo, Hopi, and Tohono O'odham Nations. Tucson's activist scene can feel remarkably tight-knit and familiar for a metropolitan area with a population of close to a million, and people within activist circles tend to be aware of one another, even if they aren't participating in the same projects. This familiarity within the community comprises a polis through which collective grievances are aired, individuals and projects gain tacit approval or dismissal, and social movements are propelled forward by the collective energy. The relationship between the individual and collective in autonomous movements is complicated and often one's personal autonomy is held in check by the sentiments of the larger community (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006).

While the polis has no defined boundaries, activists in southern Arizona do describe a sense of inclusion within 'the community'. To be a part of the activist community indicates that one is involved in social justice work, has an anarchist approach to organizing, and is known to other activists in the area. As Häikli and Kallio (2014) note, something becomes 'political' when someone cares about it and is invested in the outcome. Building on Arendt's (1958) understanding of the polis as a politicized public sphere, Häikli and Kallio put forth the polis as simply any space in which politics are enacted by people who have some personal attachment to the outcome. This understanding of the political resonates strongly with the activist polis in southern Arizona, as everyday personal interactions among activists become heavily weighted by the pressure to overcome oppressive forces in one's daily life just as one combats them on a larger scale.

Such self-work is, however, fraught with difficulty. hooks explains that the failure of many social justice movements lies with an inability for people to meaningfully carry out revolutionary praxis, though "that historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one's political circumstance" is indeed a crucial developmental

stage (hooks, 1994: 47). Through her reading of Paolo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, hooks explains that this process of awakening through conscientization should not be considered an endpoint, but rather that one must first pass through this stage in order to understand how to incorporate the praxis required to meaningfully bring about social change in oneself and others (Friere, 1970; hooks, 1994).

Understandings of one's privilege are always already at odds with aspirations to upset racialized hierarchies and to redistribute social privilege in order to be useful in struggles faced by people of color. There may be a sincere drive to be a different kind of white person, i.e. one who is aware of the depth of violence and injustice inherent in white supremacist settler colonialism, and who works to face the internal perpetuation of these phenomena. However, this tendency for white activists to 'check their privilege' exists in perpetual fraught tension with the fact that one cannot really rid oneself of such things. As Sloan Morgan points out, there is a fine line between white settlers' acknowledgement of themselves as such and a reification of settler power and privilege "under the guise of respectful relations" (Sloan Morgan, 2014: np).

Acknowledgments of privilege often take on ritualized forms, through which individual activists communicate to those around them an awareness of social hierarchies and their positionalities within them. Such statements are frequently offered as a part of the process of introduction when going around the circle at the start of a meeting, or as a part of a public speaker's initial remarks. Sloan Morgan reflects on her own ritualized acknowledgment of privilege through an introduction she has given repeatedly: "I am a sixth generation settler from unceded Coast Salish territories" (Sloan Morgan, 2014: np).[12] As she explains, such statements are made with the intention of disrupting dominant narratives of nation-state sovereignty, however it is important to understand that they do not actually "relieve settlers of their

[12] In Canada.

complicity in processes of colonialism" (Sloan Morgan, 2014: np). Further, as Smith has shown, privilege is not undone through this process of confession, but "through the creation of collective structures that dismantle the systems that enable these privileges" (Smith, 2014: np).

There are important dynamics at stake when we consider who is expected to make self-reflexive confessions of privilege and positionality, and who is expected to judge such statements (Kobayashi, 2003). Smith writes:

> Native peoples are not positioned as those who can engage in self-reflection; they can only judge the worth of the confession. Consequently, the presenters of these narratives often present very nervously. Did they speak to all their privileges? Did they properly confess? Or will someone in the audience notice a mistake and question whether they have in fact become a fully-developed anti-racist subject? (Smith, 2014: np)

As Smith shows here, there are important politics of difference at stake in self-reflexive acknowledgments of privilege. Such statements are a mode through which white activists may hope to alleviate some of the discomfort of white guilt, or seek some absolution for unwitting perpetuations of whiteness and white supremacy. At the same time, the privileges and positionalities of people of color are assumed to be mere by-products of white supremacist settler colonialism.

For indigenous activists working with whites, then, there is a difficult negotiation underway because many white activists *do* feel that they are a different sort of white person, or that they have somehow undone their privileges. One settler activist I spoke with offered some poignant insight into how one might think through engagement in solidarity work with indigenous people:

> It feels like the best thing sometimes is to be enacting new ways of solidarity, and trying to forge these new paths of understanding, and building relationships and starting commitments but with every two steps forward, like, doubling back over in your steps and being like, 'wait, how am I being fucked up?' You know you are somehow, you know you're fucking up somehow. Don't fool yourself to be like, 'I'm going to be the one person that has the solid analysis that makes the first white and indigenous

> relationship that's going to change everything and we're going to be solid and… it's all like, that dream, you know? (Interview with Jaime, 17 March 2014).[13]

Indeed, 'that dream' that one will be able to meaningfully alter themselves out of a state of privilege poses a central problem in solidarity efforts between white and indigenous activists. As Koopman asks, '…how much of an egalitarian space can we really create within a world of imperialist, white supremacist, hetero patriarchy?" (Koopman, 2007: 159). An important and often disregarded aspect of settler colonialism is that it is very much present and ongoing, in contrast to popular portrayals of colonialism as an unpleasant historical moment that we have since moved past. Sherene Razack encourages people "to remember that we are in the throws of a full blown, ongoing colonialism. It's not in the past" (Razack, 2011).

As I have shown here, indigenous solidarity activism can be an experience that is deeply emotionally fraught. Within the context of white supremacist settler colonialism, non-Native activists struggle to come to terms with their privilege so that they might meaningfully and productively engage with indigenous activists. With conceptions of home, belonging, and privilege that are often widely different, there is much room for error and the need for negotiation and sensitivity is great. As much as non-Native activists may struggle with their identities and privileges, one cannot undo such things altogether. The difficult and on-going process of self-work activists go through is something endless, where individuals must find peace with the fact that there are problems that they cannot solve completely.

II. Topology of a Conflict

In June, 2013, Yaqui activists blockaded highway 15, about 200 km south of Hermosillo, near the village of Vicam in the state of Sonora in northern Mexico. The blockade was

[13] All names given throughout this article are pseudonyms.

maintained into the fall of 2013 to protest the completion of a new aqueduct, which diverts water from the Rio Yaqui away from Vicam and other places south along the river. In October, after Tohono O'odham supporters in Arizona issued a call to gather money, food, and other resources in support of the Vicam blockade, settler activists in Tucson began to coordinate donations. In some cases they had prior experience working with Tohono O'odham activists. However, several were relative newcomers who, like many in Tucson's transient anarchist activist scene, had initially arrived in southern Arizona to volunteer with humanitarian aid groups on the border and later involved themselves in other social justice projects.

In the time between the initial call for support and the deadline to deliver supplies to Vicam, several incidences occurred that speak, unfortunately, to the depth of the gulf between the traditional Tohono O'odham activists and the mostly white non-Native activists involved, and to the difficulties inherent in activist organizing across differentials in race, class, and ethnicity. Despite an initial sentiment of solidarity, there were serious breaches of trust that occurred throughout the duration of the project that ultimately led to the irreparable dissolution of relationships between particular non-Native and Tohono O'odham activists. These differences reveal an important topological landscape of activists' positionality relative to white supremacist settler colonialism. This topology shows that the people participating in the Vicam solidarity action held differing conceptions of the right ways to act in solidarity and different sensitivities to behaviors that were experienced as offensive to the O'odham activists involved.

Unlike many other parts of the United States, Arizona has a sizable population of Native Americans who still live on or near their ancestral homes, with many people who still speak their ancestral language. About 5% of Arizona's population is of Native American heritage, and over 25% of the state's landmass is federally designated reservation land (US Census, 2013). For traditional O'odham, the physical connection to their lands is crucial to the maintenance of

culture. Should they move away, many important cultural practices would be lost. In contrast, many younger anarchist activists can be characterized as 'transient,' meaning that they are on the move, traveling from place to place. In Tucson, this often means that the activists who attempt to tap into indigenous solidarity work are people who have not been around for more than a year or two, do not plan on basing themselves in southern Arizona in the long-term, and consequently are poorly equipped for long term organizing and relationship building.

For traditional Tohono O'odham elders who live on reservation lands, everyday life looks very different than it does for young, settler activists residing in Tucson. Rose, a traditional O'odham elder, was the primary organizer behind the drive to gather resources in support of the Yaqui blockade in Vicam. Rose is from a village situated almost directly on the US/Mexico border on the Tohono O'odham Reservation. Rose's house, where she herself was born and raised, is on the southern edge of her village, about a quarter of a mile north of the border, a two and a half hour drive southwest of Tucson. From her house, you can see the line of the border's vehicle barriers as they extend out into the horizon, as well as the Border Patrol vehicles that station themselves on nearby hillsides. One day, when I was visiting Rose's house, two of her neighbors were over, Leonard and his 12 year old son, Daniel. At one point, Leonard looked up and pointed to something in the sky, asking playfully, "Is that a plane or a missile?" Father and son went back and forth, discussing the ways in which the object was moving, explaining that you could tell it was a missile because of the particular arc of the flight path. I had been told before that low flying military planes and missiles were often seen overhead there, exercises carried out nearby US military bases. As I sat with them, struck by the ordinary, playful nature of their conversation about something that would be considered absolutely horrifying in nearby Tucson, the missile exploded in a puff of smoke above where we sat.

The US/Mexico border divides the Tohono O'odham Nation, and about 1400 of the tribe's 30,000 enrolled members live in northern Sonora, Mexico. Until about 2006, tribal members were able to cross the boundary line with relative ease, using the same roads and pathways that the Tohono O'odham have used for generations. As Madsen points out, academics may presently be occupied with a broadening of how we understand borders and bordering processes. However, "the Tohono O'odham […] have been compelled by the reality of contemporary political life as experienced at the border to accept the nation-state's dominance after functioning years on the margins of its constraints" (Madsen, 2014a: 59). For many O'odham, heightened securitization of the border is both a relatively new difficulty presented by white supremacist settler colonialism, as well as a continuation of a long history of oppressive strategies that have been carried out by the US federal government to further contain and divide indigenous North Americans.

Because Rose lives less than a mile north of the US/Mexico border, difficult encounters with Border Patrol are a daily experience. All day long, one sees the green striped vehicles speeding around the village roads as they stir up clouds of dust, and stories of border patrol harassment are something shared by everyone in the village. During another visit to Rose's house, I witnessed a second event, that, had it happened in nearby Tucson, would be considered an outrageous wrong. However, because it occurred on the reservation, it was simply another everyday encounter with Border Patrol. We sat outside again, chatting, and saw in the distance what looked to be a local truck racing off through the village. Soon after, a Border Patrol helicopter began to circle the village, low enough that we could see the men inside with their binoculars as they searched for the truck. At one point, the helicopter hovered low above Rose's house for several minutes, presumably to see what we were up to, sitting outside on a sunny

morning. We all made obvious use of our cameras and phones and, after awhile, the helicopter moved away.

It is one thing to learn about the violence of colonialism, but it is quite another for non-Natives to attempt to understand the ways that indigenous people are violently evicted from settler life in contemporary everyday society (Razack 2014). For white activists who hear of the depth of day-to-day injustice endured by their indigenous friends, such information can be quite shocking or hard to believe because it is so far outside the typical experiences of whites (BMIS). In the moments where Tucson-based settler activists are made aware of the everyday struggles faced by their Tohono O'odham friends and allies, we catch a glimpse of the profound contrasts in positionality that contribute to very different topological linkages relative to white supremacist settler colonialism. Interpersonal conflicts like the one that occurred in the context of the Vicam solidarity project are heightened because of the depth of these differences, exacerbated by non-Natives' inability to understand the profundity of everyday trauma experienced by indigenous peoples like Rose, Leonard, and Daniel.

The unjust racial implications of these moments at Rose's house are easy to spot. Such things are not experienced in nearby Tucson, certainly not in the parts of the city with high densities of white residents. While Tucson-based settler activists may be aware of the kinds of things that Rose and other O'odham deal with on the reservation, it is an intellectual knowledge that comes to them secondhand. As Razack notes, "[t]he colonial city belongs to the settler" (Razack, 2014: 53). Rural areas, where the vast majority of reservation land exists in the United States, are out of sight and mind of people in nearby cities, despite the fact of glaring levels of racial inequalities and daily injustices facing indigenous people living on reservation lands.

Within settler society, indigenous people are what Povenelli terms "the part that has no part" (Povenelli, 2001: 43), occupying a crucial piece in the foundation stories of settlers as

markers of what was overcome, the opposition of the rhetorical ideals of settlement and civilization (Veracini, 2010). At the same time, narratives of settler society often fail to incorporate the reality that indigenous people are indeed still present, and that settler colonialism continues unabated. To compound this difficulty, the emphasis on indigenous people as an aspect of settler society's past negates their existence in the present, making their suffering irrelevant and unbelievable. There is a sense that such injustice is not possible in today's egalitarian, multicultural society, as if "[i]t can't be true that our society is a murderous one, even if we acknowledge its bloody origins" (Hubbard and Razack, 2011: 327).

As Ahmed has explained, it is important that non-indigenous people listen to stories of the violence and trauma indigenous people have experienced, to allow themselves to grieve and to be moved (Ahmed, 2004). It is a very difficult thing for an outsider to appreciate the trauma of genocidal violence, particularly when understanding such a thing involves "unlearning the forgetting of this history", referring to the collective process of forgetting the past which plays such a crucial part of the legitimation of the norms of the present (Ahmed, 2004: 36). As Andrea Smith has pointed out, a crucial piece of white supremacy is that indigenous people "must *always* be disappearing", emphasizing the fact that indigenous genocide is very much an ongoing phenomenon (Smith, 2010: 2, italics hers). Similarly, Walia explains that "[t]he founding violence of settler colonialism is, by definition, against Indigenous people", and it is critical that social justice activists bring an awareness of this to their solidarity efforts (Walia, 2013: 130).

Sarah and Ellie were two of the young white activists who were involved in the effort to gather supplies in support of the Vicam blockade. Along the way, Sarah had contacted people she knew in places outside of Arizona to solicit donations. Questions were raised about the management of donated money, questions which were understood by Rose and her friends and family members as targeting their trustworthiness and which were found to be highly offensive

and hurtful. Because of scarce financial and technological resources, donations for the Vicam blockade were to be submitted through a third party's PayPal account, which was accessible to one of the Tohono O'odham activists involved. This person would then take the donated funds and personally deliver them to the activists in Vicam. Sarah was communicating concerns she had heard from people who did not understand the very small-scale, grass roots nature of the fundraising project. Such questions are perhaps understandable in the context of widespread attention on the ways charitable donations are often used to pay staff and overhead costs, rather than going directly to the causes they claim to represent (Hundley and Taggart, 2013). However, for the O'odham activists behind the fundraising for Vicam, these questions resonated as a deeply personal attack on their credibility, made particularly more insulting because they came through a transient non-Native activist who did not understand the sensitivity of such questions, nor the consequences at stake in pressing the issue.

In another situation, Sarah, Ellie, and another settler activist suggested that they form a media team to accompany the supply vehicles to Vicam in order to document the protest and the delivery of supplies. In the aftermath of the conflict over the routing of donations, which was still a very raw issue for Rose and her friends and family members, this was the last straw. Because the suggestion to form a media team did not come from the O'odham activists themselves, and it did not arise through conversations with them, it was felt as an intrusive and overbearing act. In the context of an already sensitive moment, this suggestion signaled an attempt by settler activists to take over the project, despite the helpful intentions that motivated the idea. The longevity of relationship between the O'odham and non-Native activists was very important in how these events were understood. For settler activists who had been working with O'odham activists over a longer time span, it was easy to understand why these incidents were offensive. For the younger transient activists, the situation was bewildering and frustrating. Their good

intentions had come across as offensive and insensitive, and they did not understand exactly why.

Ultimately, the solicitations for money and other resources were successful and Rose and other O'odham activists were able to deliver the donations to Vicam. However, in the aftermath of these incidents, the relationships between Sarah, Ellie, and Rose were irreparably damaged. Sarah and Ellie stepped back from their work with the traditional Tohono O'odham. The sentiment was sadly mutual, as Rose and her friends and family described feeling very uncomfortable with the offending non-Native activists. Longtime white allies of the O'odham activists found themselves caught in the middle, in the difficult position of trying to process the incident through separate conversations with the parties involved. In the end, many relationships could not be salvaged and much frustration remained.

The ramifications of this conflict spread far beyond those immediately involved, throughout the various realms of southern Arizona's activist polis. Friends and family members of the O'odham activists were very offended by the apparent mistrust of the non-Natives regarding the appropriation of donated funds. Many settler activists were troubled by Sarah and Ellie's ostracization from the circle of Tohono O'odham solidarity work. Interestingly, blame for this was initially placed on David, an older white man who is Rose's longtime friend and supporter, and who directed strong negative feelings toward the settler activists who were at the heart of the conflict. As time went on, however, Sarah and Ellie's sentiments evolved toward more self-reflection upon their actions, and the feeling that the incident was something they could learn from for future solidarity efforts with indigenous people.

We see through the description of this conflict the ways in which the activist polis is shaped by activists' topological connections to white supremacy and settler colonialism, both in the ways that individual behaviors contributed to the conflict, as well as through the ways the

conflict was interpreted and experienced. For the O'odham activists, the conflict came about because of offensive behavior on the part of the non-Natives involved in the Vicam solidarity project. For the non-Natives, the conflict was initially seen to have come about because of misunderstandings generated by David, and only later were they able to see the ways that their actions were offensive to the O'odham activists and that David's sentiments on the issue came from his close relationship to Rose and her O'odham friends and family members.

After some months passed, the strong emotion of the incident subsided. Rose and her traditional O'odham community have continued on with their work, while David and other Tucson-based settler activists continue to support them. Traditional O'odham activists have expressed a desire not to collaborate with Sarah and Ellie, however they continue to welcome assistance from other non-Native solidarity activists through collaboration on public events and support for projects happening on the reservation, as well as with more overt political activism. The very different topological connections each activist has to social privilege and marginalization certainly play their part in how such conflicts are interpreted by those involved. However, as Pickerill (2009) points out, the ability of indigenous and non-Native activists to work together is often predicated on the length of time dedicated to developing the relationships. In this case, longevity of relationship was certainly a factor, as the offending non-Native activists were relatively new to solidarity work with the traditional O'odham. In contrast, those activists with more longstanding ties to the O'odham activists understood more clearly the roots of the conflict and why particular behaviors were so offensive to begin with.

In their reflection on the use of topologies by both Freud and Lacan, Blum and Secor (2011) put forth the concept of psycho-topology, the ways that material and psychic processes shape one another, to show how the external becomes internal through emotional attachments and aversions. For non-Native activists, the external is internalized through the process of trying

to learn the depth of trauma that their indigenous friends face. As Caruth notes, through stories of others' trauma, we are able to listen to the source of another's pain (Caruth, 1996). While the trauma of listening certainly is not equal to enduring the traumatic experience, it constitutes a sort of internalization of trauma nonetheless. The knowledge about such atrocity changes one's approach to the world, meaning that we "[inhabit] the surfaces and bodies and worlds differently" (Ahmed, 2001: 36). While such changes are real and profound, they do not negate settlers' Otherness to such trauma. At the same time one seeks to understand and redress wrongs, the internalization of the knowledge of indigenous trauma sits uneasily alongside the fact of one's own place in the hierarchy of settler colonial society, an aspect of the "topological complexity of psychic space" (Blum and Secor, 2011: 1032).

In the context of activist projects, individuals bring with them their own conflicted relationships to race, activism, and power. Difficult emotions borne of collective trauma arise, often triggered by representatives of ongoing forces of oppression, such as white supremacy and settler colonialism. Sentiments of mistrust and apprehension can be easily triggered, despite the knowledge that all present desire, in some way, to aid in helping alleviate suffering and redress injustice. "Pain," writes Ahmed, is "the bodily life" of histories of trauma and harm (Ahmed, 2004: 34). Although pain and trauma are things ultimately experienced by the individual, they are shaped by collective histories, both histories lived by the individual as well as things one has simply learned about and been impacted by second-hand. Such emotions are comprised of a complex topology through which experiences far beyond the personal come together to coalesce in the individual's relationship to larger oppressive forces. The unconscious, as a "site where a traumatic truth speaks out" (Žižek, 2007: 3), is our irrational connection to times and places not our own, but which shape our bodily surface nonetheless.

Ultimately, the conflict described here had reverberations throughout southern Arizona's activist polis. However, it is significant that the conflict was experienced very differently by people depending on their positionality. In the incident discussed here, the ways that settler and Tohono O'odham activists connect to processes of white supremacist settler colonialism constitute contrasting topological relationships. On the one hand, non-Native activists can learn about the trauma of white supremacy and settler colonialism through witnessing incidents and listening to stories, but are also always privileged to turn away. On the other hand, indigenous activists like Rose and other traditional O'odham live those incidents and stories everyday. In the end, while the two contrasting positions can work together through activism, form friendships, and build alliances, it is critical that all understand the sensitivities at stake.

Conclusion

Processes of white supremacist settler colonialism not only shape our individual identities and experiences, but also color our interactions with others. For white and other non-Native activists working in solidarity with indigenous activists, this necessitates an on-going process of self-reflection coupled with the adoption of behaviors that challenge the racialized hierarchy and its attendant ranking of privileges and marginalizations. As Andrea Smith points out, a mere confession of privilege is not enough. To simply acknowledge the realities of inequality does little to meaningfully challenge the perpetuation of unjust phenomena, nor does it facilitate our ability to work across differences (Smith, 2013).

I have argued here that through the lens of a topologically constituted activist polis, we are able to tease out the complexities underlying conflict in indigenous solidarity activism. Through considering the diverse and multifaceted relationships individual activists bring to the trauma of white supremacist settler colonialism, we can better understand how seemingly

mundane matters are imbued with deep political significance. In the context of indigenous solidarity work, this means a constant and precarious balancing of our respective positions and the emotional struggles that come with them. Indigenous activists must negotiate their deeply painful connections to the legacy of Native American genocide and ongoing processes of white supremacist settler colonialism with attempts to work in collaboration with non-Natives. At the same time, white activists shoulder the guilt and shame accompanying their ancestral role in the perpetuation of these events, alongside the knowledge that one's privilege and social authority often arise unbidden, despite attempts to negate such socialized tendencies.

While these challenges may appear insurmountable or cause for despair, I agree with Pickerill (2009) that they constitute an important opportunity to work through difficulty and emerge with a more balanced tactical perspective on collaboration across differences. Such a working through is a necessary aspect of any social justice effort. The acknowledgement of inequality and the cultivation of awareness in our own roles perpetuating unjust social institutions are hopeful steps in the right direction, though we must also remain cognizant that awareness and self-work are only part of the process. As Smith reminds us, "for this process to work, individual transformation must occur concurrently with social and political transformation" (Smith, 2014: np). While emotionally difficult and fraught with inevitable tension, embarking on such a path can better enable activists to work across difference, to create more sustainable social justice projects, and to develop more longstanding relationships with other activists invested in struggles for social justice.

Chapter 2: Precious Work: The paradox of the white anti-racist

Abstract

Arizona occupies a contentious position with regard to securitization practices on the US/Mexico border. Social justice activists come to southern Arizona to involve themselves in humanitarian aid projects that address human rights issues emerging from border securitization processes. Over time, many of these activists connect with other social justice work in southern Arizona, leading to the existence of particularly rich and dedicated networks of activists in Tucson, southern Arizona's largest city. Subsequently, we see the development of a diverse array of activist ventures deliberately orienting themselves around racial justice. This paper explores the ways that white activists negotiate whiteness and privilege within Tucson's activist networks. Quite often white activists are aware of their position within white supremacist society and intentionally seek out support roles within social justice projects led by people of color. Through excerpts from interviews and reflections on experiences as a participant observer from 2013-2015, I discuss the figure of the white anti-racist activist. In particular I examine the paradox of becoming anti-racist, through which white activists work to address problematic aspects of their socialization as white subjects within the hierarchy of white supremacist society, a process that must co-exist with the knowledge that one cannot 'unwhiten' oneself.

Keywords: whiteness, race, activism, social justice, Arizona, Deleuze and Guattari

"It is not always a matter of the actual bodies in the room, but of a life dedicated to a growing awareness of who and what is *missing* in that room; and responding to that absence. *What ideas never surface because we imagine we already have all the answers?"* –Cherrie Moraga (2015: xix, italics hers)

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, border security and the policing of migrants in Arizona have contributed to the state's contentious position within discussions of race and white supremacy, though issues of racism have long been a part of Arizona politics. Following the 2010 passage of Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070), Arizona's notorious racial profiling legislation, nation-wide calls to 'Boycott Arizona' resulted in a loss of revenue state-wide as performers canceled Arizona dates and tourists booked their travels elsewhere. This was not the first time protesters had boycotted Arizona over racist state policies, either. In the early 1990s, after Governor Evan Mecham ruled that it was illegal for Martin Luther King Day to be observed as a paid holiday, the ensuing

boycott resulted in the loss of an estimated $200 million when the National Football League moved the 1993 Super Bowl from Arizona to California (Berman, 2014).

While racist practices certainly manifest in myriad ways throughout Arizona politics, the focal point in recent years has been on the border and the policing of migrants. Border securitization strategies throughout the 1990s focused on urban centers along the border in Texas and California, funneling migrants through Arizona's Sonoran Desert, where scarce water and extreme temperatures make for a very difficult and often deadly journey (Rubio-Goldsmith et al, 2007). Since 2001, the Border Patrol's Tucson Sector has led US border sectors in both migrant apprehensions and deaths. Despite a recent decline in the numbers of migrant deaths (Sanders, 2014), crossing the US/Mexico border into Arizona remains a dangerous venture, not only because of the challenges of the desert, but because of the violent policing of migrants within the state (Burridge, 2009; Borderlands Autonomist Collective, 2012; Loyd 2012; Launius, 2014). To address this humanitarian crisis, grass-roots organizations such as The Tucson Samaritans and No More Deaths began to emerge in the early 2000s to provide direct aid to migrants crossing the desert (Williams, 2015), while many other groups work to support migrants as they negotiate the array of policing strategies facing them.

I am interested here in the ways white racial justice activists in southern Arizona challenge the material manifestations of whiteness through their collaboration with social justice projects led by people of color, as well as through their own processes of introspective self-work. Southern Arizona's contentious political climate serves as a magnet for activists who come to the area from other parts of the United States, as well as internationally. Typically these activists begin their involvement with No More Deaths or another large-scale organization and, over time, branch out into other projects in the area. Consequently, southern Arizona, and Tucson in particular, are home to a considerable network of people involved in social justice, whether

through paid work or voluntary activism. Many of these activists are relatively young, college educated, and white.[14] Their forays into migrant justice, indigenous solidarity, or border opposition work mark an early phase in their conscientization (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970) as whites who are developing awareness of their own complicity in white supremacist processes and the hegemony of whiteness throughout social spheres. For many people I spoke with, their political awakening as self-proclaimed activists and their contemplation of white supremacy began when they arrived in southern Arizona, and has continued throughout their time in the area.

The power of whiteness lies in the invisibility of its normativity. Internalized white supremacy often manifests as racism masked by color-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), enabling whites to simultaneously disavow personal culpability within white supremacy while still benefitting from the privileges of whiteness. This "possessive investment in whiteness" (Lipsitz, 2006: 7), makes it all the more difficult for whites aiming to work against white supremacy as anti-racists. The investment is so deeply rooted that people are often unaware of the extent of its hold on their individual beliefs and behaviors. Historically, traditions of whites embracing anti-racist practices often result in the continued elevation of whiteness and support white supremacy (Bonnett, 2000).

In this paper, I explore the paradox of becoming anti-racist for white activists in Tucson, Arizona. At the heart of this paradox is the drive to become anti-racist and ameliorate one's own culpability within white supremacist society. This desire however, must face the 'sticky' nature of whiteness (Saldanha, 2007), the ways that it clings to bodies and material space, including in

[14] Young, college educated whites do have a considerable presence in southern Arizona's activist networks, however it is important to note the presence of many other activists from very different backgrounds, including people who are Tohono O'odham or from other indigenous groups, people who are Chican@ or Latin@, people who are Black, as well as older white activists- many of whose activist involvement dates back to the Sanctuary Movement of the early 1980s. Further, the emphasis in this paper on white activism stems from my own participant observation as a white activist.

situations where one is trying to maintain distance from it. As Audre Lorde (1984) and many others have pointed out, too often the burden of educating whites about the nature of their oppressive behaviors falls on people of color. As I show here, many white racial justice activists have taken to heart calls from activists of color that white communities be accountable for their own education about their role in oppressive processes, and the transformations of self that should accompany this knowledge (Benally, 2013; Garza, 2014; Goggans, 2014; Nopper, 2003; Woods, 2014). The process however, is slow and emotionally fraught.

This 'precious work', as one activist I spoke with called it, is a struggle to embody solidarity through changing one's oppressive social conditioning, a struggle to build a better world through changing the self and one's relationship to oppressive social institutions. White racial justice activists must be able to sit uncomfortably with a paradoxical position, desiring to be a 'different' kind of white person, someone who is aware of the privileges that are bound up in having a white body, and who is working to counter their own perpetuation of white supremacist norms and behaviors. At the same time, however, there is often knowledge that one cannot really undo whiteness, that no matter how much awareness one cultivates of the ways white supremacy manifests, such things continue and white bodies remain problematically implicated in systems of oppression. For white racial justice activists, one's own white body becomes a target of activism through processes of self-work, the goal of which is the breaking down of socialized norms of privilege and authority. In the attempt to become anti-racist, white activists must come to terms with the fact that whiteness and white supremacy are institutions that continue to maintain their solidity through white bodies.

Research for this article was carried out in southern Arizona from early 2013 through the summer of 2015. Through my own participation in racial justice projects and in conversation with activists, including whites as well as people of color, I explored the paradox of white anti-

racism within the racial justice movement. The methodology employed for this research was based primarily on participant observation, as well as recorded interviews that most often took the form of casual conversation. I had been somewhat involved in Tucson's activist scene from 2005-2010. When I returned in 2013, I relied heavily on my existing relationships as I worked to re-integrate myself into regional activist networks. My own positionality as a white doctoral student researcher was significant and the topic of much consideration and conversation (Mott, 2015). Regardless of the intent or ambitions of the researcher, social science is never innocent, but is "an activity that has something at stake" (Smith, 1999: 5). In part, this is why I developed a deliberately slow moving and organic research process, through which interviews were only carried out with people once a certain level of trust was developed between us, many people were intentionally *not* interviewed due to the sensitive legacy of academic work in communities of color, and I was very careful to involve myself in activist projects where my own whiteness would not be a problem for people already involved.

This paper is organized into two major sections. In the first, I review literatures within both Critical Whiteness and Settler Colonial Studies, as well as public discourses addressing whiteness through popular media. A major challenge for academic work on whiteness is the disparate nature of the scholarship, which ranges from the humanities through the social sciences, resulting in separate disciplinary conversations around similar topics. Further, an even larger gap exists between academics writing about whiteness and public intellectuals speaking on the topic through blogs, twitter, and other social media, as well as through non-academic publishing outlets. Here I attempt to bridge some of those gaps to bring various strands of thought regarding whiteness, white supremacy, and racial justice activism into conversation with one another.

In section two, I turn to focus on the paradox of becoming anti-racist through Deleuze and Guattari's (1986, 1987) treatment of becoming minor. White racial justice activists exist as a political minority within white supremacist society, as they work both to distance themselves from white supremacist norms and behaviors, and to encourage other whites to do the same. This process, while slow and often imperceptible beyond communities of activists, nonetheless serves as an important aspect of becoming anti-racist, where individual and collective transformations are underway, regardless of concrete evidence of success or completion. I show this paradox of becoming anti-racist through discussing excerpts from interviews carried out with white racial justice activists exploring both the challenges and successes of the endeavor.

I. Whiteness: Academic and Public Discourses

Critical Whiteness Studies typically refers to the academic study of whiteness and white supremacy, a scholarly trajectory that emerged from Critical Race Theory in the 1990s. In contrast, Settler Colonial Studies has emerged from within humanities scholarship addressing the lived realities of indigenous peoples in settler states. The two bodies of work share a critique of the hegemony of white supremacy; however, they approach this through different avenues. As Kauanui (2008b: 10) has argued, within Critical Race Theory "land and indigeneity have been neglected in relation to the study of racial formations and the legal construction of race". While these two bodies of work have much to offer one another, they often operate in isolation such that questions of racialized difference are treated as distinct from issues of indigenous sovereignty and rights to land.

In addition to academic discourses, considerations of race and whiteness are certainly found outside of the academy, circulated through popular media sources. Quite often, these public discourses are thoughtfully informed by current events and written in ways that are more accessible to most readers than the average academic text. I suggest that academics would do

well to incorporate some of these public writings into our analyses of whiteness and white supremacy as a way to broaden the conversation beyond the insular world of conference presentations and academic journals. To that end, I offer a review of academic literature that speaks to the field of Critical Whiteness Studies and Settler Colonial Studies, followed by a discussion of the works of public intellectuals and activists on the topic of white supremacy and the role of white activist allies.

Critical Whiteness Studies

Critical Whiteness Studies began to emerge from Critical Race Theory in the 1990s, though important studies of white supremacy can certainly be found earlier (Fanon, 1952; Deloria, 1969; hooks, 1981; Rawick, 1967). Anoop Nayak has organized some of the various strands of Critical Whiteness Studies by looking at work that attempts either to abolish, deconstruct, or rethink whiteness (Nayak, 2007). The field includes diverse multi-disciplinary approaches that bring together many different methodologies. However, as Nayak shows, we find a degree of unity through three core concepts that underpin scholarship throughout Critical Whiteness Studies: first, that whiteness is "a modern invention" that has changed throughout times and places, second, that whiteness is a social norm attached to particular privileges and third, that humanity would collectively benefit from the bonds of whiteness being broken and deconstructed (Nayak, 2007: 738).

In Geography, recent scholarship addressing whiteness emphasizes materiality and spatiality to highlight the ways that race is far more than metaphor and is something lived, embodied, and visceral (Joshi et al., 2015). Arun Saldanha's work with the viscosity of whiteness in the Goa trance scene (2007) shows how whiteness persists, despite attempts by white individuals to distance themselves from it. The 'viscous' nature of whiteness is what gives it

power, it is through a slow stickiness that white supremacy clings to itself and to the world at large as the dominant way of life. Race is indeed a social construct, however the material effects of racialization are what convince us of its reality. As Saldanha reminds us, what is important is "not the representations of an event, but its actual unfolding" (Saldanha, 2007: 5).

The unfolding of white supremacy through the materiality of everyday life reinforces its strength through its normativity. McKittrick (2006: xv) explains that "the naturalization of 'difference' is, in part, bolstered by the ideological weight of transparent space, the idea that space 'just is'", suggesting that an uncritical acceptance of the ordering of the world around us reinforces the understanding that some bodies belong, while others do not. Processes of racialization within white supremacy are vast, systemic, and overarching, while at the same time remarkably close and personal. Price (2013) reminds us that the effects of white supremacy play out in the ways skin is perceived, through the intimate spaces of the body. Similarly, Slocum (2008) shows how racialized bodies group together (and are grouped) in public spaces, discussing the relationship that these groupings have to people's movement through farmers markets in Minneapolis. While many geographers approach whiteness and race through their empirical research, others have turned the gaze inward to critique the whiteness of the discipline (Gilmore, 2002; Joshi et al, 2015; Kobayashi, 2002; Pulido, 2002; Berg, 2012), and the ways that that this in turn manifests as "emotionally toxic material spaces" for geographers of color (Mahtani, 2014: 360).

Quite often, academic scholarship addressing white supremacy is rooted in the past, moving toward a non-racist present or near future, though more recent scholarship approaches white supremacy in a more contemporary light (Baldwin, 2012). While historical moments and historicized processes are certainly important, if we understand racism and white supremacy as things of the past, "[t]he racist past is, thus, used to explain the racist present," absolving the

present and the future of responsibility (Baldwin, 2012: 174). Baldwin shows how geographic scholarship could benefit from an analysis of the role futurity plays in present articulations of whiteness, and how expectations for the future are themselves racialized and built upon a white supremacist present that is expected to continue.

Whereas geographers are investigating the material effects of whiteness and the ways race is inscribed in and through bodies and physical space, there has been much scholarship within the field of education that has developed the discussion to focus on the institutionalization of white supremacist norms in school systems (Dixson and Rousseau, 2005). Such approaches consider the ways that white supremacy shapes educational policy (Gillborn, 2005), the process of training teachers (Aveling, 2004), as well as dynamics that occur within classrooms and among students (Rogers and Mosley, 2006). In addition to examinations of the ways primary and secondary education is racialized, studies of whiteness within education have also considered the white supremacist dynamics in college and university classrooms (Leonardo, 2002; Charbeneau, 2015).

Feminist scholars have worked to make visible the hidden processes of white supremacy. Ahmed (2007) has approached the materiality of whiteness through the vantage point of phenomenology, to uncover the ways that whiteness manifests "as a category of experience that disappears as a category through experience", meaning that the invisibility of whiteness is largely due to its pervasiveness and the fact that it structures the world around us so profoundly that it is difficult to actually localize (Ahmed, 2007: 150). Building on Fanon (1952), she discusses racialized histories that lie below the surface of the body, such that we understand the body's surface amid larger social contexts. The raced body is spatialized through how it can move "toward objects that are already in place", objects signifying a regime in which certain bodies are better equipped than others to comfortably inhabit social space (Ahmed, 2007: 153).

Similarly, Weigman has considered the complexities of the psychic nature of race, in both individual and collective contexts. As she argues, "there is a split in the white subject- between disaffiliation from white supremacist practices and disavowal of the ongoing reformation of white power and one's benefit from it…" (Wiegman, 1999: 120). This duality in the subject, where whites simultaneously seek distance from white supremacy while continuing to benefit from it, is typically an uncritical process through which whiteness remains privileged, but individual white subjects are absolved of responsibility.

Critical Whiteness Studies is a diverse body of scholarship, exploring in different ways the tension between understandings of race as a social construct, and the reality of white privilege within white supremacist society. As something visceral (Joshi et al, 2015), viscous (Saldanha, 2007), and material (McKittrick, 2006; Ahmed, 2007), the intimacies of whiteness contribute to its invisibility and the process of naming the phenomena discussed here brings an element of openness and visibility, allowing such work to deconstruct the power of whiteness.

Settler Colonialism

For analyses oriented around settler colonialism, whiteness is targeted through discussions of ongoing processes of colonization and the marginalization of indigenous peoples in settler societies such as the US, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Such scholarship examines whiteness and white supremacy as corollaries to the process of European colonialism, the global success of which hinged upon the figure of the settler as the embodiment of a sovereign white power seeking to annihilate indigenous peoples through violent displacement (Veracini, 2010). Some distance exists between discourses that deal directly with white supremacy and those that are rooted in settler colonialism. The history of the Civil Rights era structures discourses of race within both academic and public circles, whereas discussions of

indigenous rights are connected to understandings of nationality, territory, and self-governance (Kauanui, 2008a). Further, as Kauanui argues, the racialization of indigeneity is a persistent problem through which scholarship that racializes indigenous peoples alongside other people of color disregards the unique nature of indigenous struggles for self-determination as original peoples. While the two approaches have much to offer one another, settler colonialism is most often mobilized to address directly the plight of indigenous peoples within multi-racial settler societies whereas other analyses of race and white supremacy occur through Civil Rights era discourses that tend to focus on black/white relations over other racialized encounters.

Tuck and Yang (2012) explain that settler colonialism occurs through a triad structure of settler-native-slave, in which slaves and their descendants occupy a position where they are certainly not settlers, but nor are they indigenous to the land. Further, as Morgensen points out, "in the Americas, white supremacy depends upon anti-blackness, Orientalism, and Indigenous genocide acting together to produce settler whiteness", where analyses of these different forms of oppression do not exclude one another, but work together to deconstruct the complex racialized landscape of settler states (Morgensen, 2014: np). Critiques of settler colonialism highlight the on-going and contemporary nature of the process, arguing that there is nothing 'post-colonial' about such societies. Gahman (2015) examines masculinities in rural southeastern Kansas, the ancestral lands of the Osage Nation. Through interviews with white working class men, Gahman (2015: 19) shows the ways that settler colonialism in the United States manifests in white spaces:

> For the rural community in Southeast Kansas where I conducted my research, as well as the settler society compromising the United States as a whole, it is apparent fictive myths about intrepid white settlers have become endorsed as 'truths'—truths now glorifying white supremacist discourses of patriotism, masculinity, nationhood, and war.

Beliefs in the superiority of the settler society are upheld through national mythologies, and Razack shows how such stories "have always depended on race", and that this emphasis

constructs who is meant by the collective 'we' on a national scale (Razack, 2004: 13). The privileges of whiteness are bolstered by the figure of the settler, as one who has effectively inherited lands, social structures, and normative behaviors imposed by their forbearers. Settler colonialism, and along with it white supremacy, are upheld through understandings that are shared collectively and supported in national mythologies in multi-racial settler societies. Understandings of settler colonialism can help deconstruct whiteness, what it is and how it functions, through examining the on-going nature of European colonialism. Contemporary settler colonialism manifests through legacies inherited by the descendants of settlers, taking shape through discourses of rights to land and property alongside myths of nationhood rooted in triumph through warfare over the original peoples of a place (Veracini, 2010). White supremacy remains inextricable from settler processes and the framework of settler colonialism speaks to the complex intersectionalities of race and privilege in settler societies in ways often missed by analyses solely rooted in discourses of racialized identity (Kauanui, 2008a).

Public Discourses

While the scholarship discussed here addresses whiteness and white supremacy through multiple lenses, it is crucial that academic work on race engage with public discourses that appear variously through social media, blogs, non-academic book publishers, and other sources. I highlight here contributions that speak to the ways different activists of color have articulated the challenges of working with white allies.[15] In doing so, I advocate for a scholarly approach that

[15] It is not my intention to present these contributions as if all activists of color feel the same way, or to conflate various racialized concerns under an umbrella of 'people of color'. However, there are common threads to be found in the ways activists of color from different backgrounds do speak about the challenges of working with white allies. It is these commonalities I wish to highlight here, with the understanding that each perspective comes from a unique place within the vast intersectional social apparatus that is white supremacy.

situates authority beyond the academy, and that seeks to connect with discussions of racialization and privilege that are rooted in the lived experiences of marginalized populations.

Through his blog, *The Well Examined Life*, Aaron Goggans offers his thoughts on race and the #BlackLivesMatters movement. In an essay titled, "Dear White People: Ferguson Protests are a Wake Not a Pep Rally", he reflects on the dynamics of race within spaces of protest where Black people have gathered together for solidarity with one another in times of mourning (Goggans, 2014). Specifically, Goggans discusses an impromptu rally at the White House in the aftermath of the Grand Jury verdict that determined Darren Wilson would not be charged for the August, 2014 killing of Michael Brown. Goggans writes that he went to the White House:

> hoping to be surrounded by my fellow Black people, to yell, to scream, to cheer, and to sing. I wanted to gather my people around me and boldly assert my humanity to the world. Yet that's not what I found. What I found was a mostly white crowd of college-age liberals chanting, hugging, and taking selfies with their overly-dressed up roommates (Goggans, 2014: np).

Goggans goes on further to describe the ways that a white presence can aggravate tensions within Black communities, a situation that he says prompted him to "perform my Blackness instead of just being able to be unapologetically Black when my people are dying". Concluding the essay, Goggans states outright that "racism is a problems for white people to fix", and he implores white allies to remember "that sometimes the most radical thing an ally can do is show up and remain silent, to allow Black people to lead" (Goggans, 2014: np).

Klee Benally is a Diné activist who has long been a part of Arizona's networks of indigenous and radical anarchist activism. In a 2013 interview, he discussed the significance of settler colonialism in the context of white solidarity activism with indigenous peoples, specifically on Black Mesa, where Navajo and Hopi people have been resisting relocation by Peabody Coal since the 1960s. As Benally explains, white activists are privileged to come and go

from Black Mesa as they please, whereas the elders they have gone there to help cannot leave, because if they do there is a good chance their lands will be seized, in addition to the enormous importance of Black Mesa for cultural practices and lifeways. Regarding the role of the white ally in solidarity work, Benally suggests that whites looking to help should engage with their own communities, rather than feeling that they must involve themselves directly in indigenous struggles:

> [For] some privileged white person coming from the suburbs… don't reject your class, engage and fight in it, fucking engage in struggle there and help de-stabilize the system to bring it down so we can, you know, liberate our lands and liberate our cultures as indigenous peoples (Benally, 2013: np).

Benally shows here the delicate balance that must be struck for white activists seeking to work in solidarity with indigenous peoples and that solidarity does not necessitate proximity. Rather than white activists descending upon indigenous communities offering help, Benally suggests that whites should focus on destabilizing white supremacy within their own communities of other whites.

!Presente! Latin@ Immigrant Voices in the Struggle for Racial Justice/Voces de Inmigrantes Latino@s en la Lucha por la Justicia Racial is an edited collection that gathers stories told by migrants about their pathways to activism and their experiences negotiating border and immigration controls (Tzintzún et al, 2014). The book features stories from migrant activists throughout the US/Mexico borderlands as well as in the US interior. The majority of the stories in *¡Presente!* describe situations in which people did not seek out activism, but found themselves compelled toward political action because the circumstances of everyday life demanded it, "the kind of stories that remind us how history is made by ordinary people who do extraordinary things" (Tzintzún et al, 2014: 9). In a chapter titled, "Apartheid in Arizona: When ICE and Criminal Justice Converge", we read excerpts from an interview with two organizers

from Tierra Y Libertad Organization (TYLO), a grassroots organization promoting "the ideals of equality, justice, and self determination…[through] positive social change and for the respect of land, people, and culture" (TYLO, 2015: np).

In the interview, Rosalba Romero and Cesar López explain their involvement with TYLO and how the organization negotiates Arizona's anti-immigrant legislation- as well as ways that organizers within TYLO have worked across differences in race and ethnicity. Here, Rosalba discusses some of the challenges she has faced in working with white allies:

> When SB1070 was passed, some white allies decided to leave the state. They were so upset that they didn't want to be in a place that was so against the immigrant community. Others became involved in the movement. Here we have a mixed-race movement. If you have white privilege, or the privilege of being born here, you may ask yourself, 'What is my role in the movement?' And I have had to work with allies to help answer this question.
>
> I am very interested in working with white allies. I am interested in their point of view. For example, I had a white friend who was very involved in the movement, and she told me she felt guilty because she had privileges that the rest of us didn't have. During that time, I was undocumented (now I have been documented for a year but previously I did all my organizing when I was undocumented). I told her that if we let ourselves be overcome by guilt, we are never going to win, because we need to work together. I told her we need to see the strength of every individual and how they can become integrated in the movement, that we should not be divided. We need to see what we have in common and, based on that, organize together. (Tzintzún et al, 2014: 69-70).

Rosalba gestures here to the fact that activists of color find themselves in a position where they are asked to comfort white allies and to assuage the paralysis of white guilt. As she explains, there is a great need for multi-racial solidarity. People need to be able to organize together despite the complex emotions that such work can provoke.

Aaron Goggans, Klee Benally, and the organizers of TYLO certainly come from different backgrounds and act from within disparate contexts. However, all speak to the experience of working with white activists, the frustrations and challenges of such work, and the need for whites to take on the task of educating themselves about white supremacy. Each gestures in some

way to problems posed by white activists involved in social movements led by and for people of color, and suggests that the difficulties here are really a problem for the white activists to solve within their white communities and through processes of self-work.

II. Becoming Anti-racist in Tucson

Throughout the course of my fieldwork, the imperfect and on-going work of becoming anti-racist was a recurring theme. Consider the following quotations, all taken from interviews with white activists involved in racial justice projects in Tucson:[16]

> [I]t's always ongoing, you know. And I catch myself all the time doing, or saying things that I realize are problematic later, or, you know, or I… I don't know, I feel that I'm being too assertive in a room full of people of color and I need to just shut up and sit back, or… you know what I mean? Like, it just happens all the time (Interview with Cora, 2013).

> I don't get to say that I am an ally. That's not for me to define. I don't get to say that I am in solidarity with you. Like, you can say that, and I act in a way… like, I try to behave that way. It's more a like, a verb, where you get to say when I'm doing it. So, an intention-action combination that takes cues from the person or people or thing that you are trying to act in solidarity with, or be an ally to (Interview with Jill, 2013).

> For me I really understand solidarity work, doing work as a white person around struggles for racial justice as consistently committing myself to being in really uncomfortable situations where I am going to learn and change… the more work I do, it's only going to keep doing that. I'm not… I mean, I understand being a white person is like, I'm never going to unlearn completely. That's not going to end… it's a continuing process (Interview with Ella, 2013).

In each of the three above quotations, we see that the question of what an ally is, and how one should act to be in solidarity with people of color is fraught with the imperfection of the process. As Cora says, one inadvertently says or does something problematic "all the time", despite trying to behave differently. In each of these quotations there is, in a sense, an acceptance of inevitable failure, through which the intentions and actions taken through solidarity are steps toward unlearning problematic behaviors that, as Ella says, can never be unlearned completely. In this

[16] All names given for interview participants are pseudonyms.

section, I examine the paradox of becoming anti-racist, a phenomenon in which white racial justice activists struggle against their own social conditioning in the drive to be a more ethical anti-racist subject who can act in solidarity with people of color.

Becoming anti-racist for whites is a process of learning to see the invisible and of coming to terms with one's participation in a vast web of oppressive social practices. It is also a process through which people must confront the nuances of their own behavior and social conditioning, often in ways that they'd never considered before. In May, 2015, I attended an event in Tucson called, "Answer the Call: A workshop for white folks on building anti-racist momentum in our communities". The organizers of the workshop wrote the following in an email sent out to promote the event:

> Why is this workshop aimed at white people? History is full of the moments when white people have been asked by leaders of color to take up the responsibility of organizing other white people to act for racial justice. Many leaders of color have asked this of white people so that they can claim the space to do the work they are called to, in organizing their own communities, and not having this burdened by needing to organize the well-intentioned white people too. We believe that as white people, it is our responsibility and calling to take this work on, and to create a supportive culture in which we help people grow, and recognize our mutual interest in ending racial injustice and white supremacy. Through engaging white communities- we hope to set a visible, anti racist 'pole' for other white people to gravitate toward and to contribute to a powerful multi-racial, people of color led movement for racial justice (Tucson Solidarity Group, 2015).[17]

The workshop consisted of various activities throughout an afternoon, with a shared lunch in the middle. Over lunch, I spoke with a man who told me that he was a retired professor and that he had only recently begun to think about his privilege as a white, heterosexual male. He was very interested in the material that had been presented in the workshop and was keen to discuss the things that had been addressed. At one point, I asked a woman sitting across from me what she thought about the workshop so far. Just as she began to speak, the retired professor interrupted, speaking over her so that she was unable to answer my question. It seemed he did

[17] Email correspondence, 4.21.15.

not realize that he had carried out this quick silencing. I observed as he continued to speak over others throughout the rest of lunch. The irony of the situation, of course, was that he was talking over others to say that he'd been learning about how he'd been socialized to dominate. This situation shows clearly the paradox of becoming that one moves through in trying to unlearn oppressive social norms. The retired professor knew that he had been taught to take up space and dominate situations, and that this was a symptom of larger societal problems, yet he could not remain silent. The paradox of becoming is that one remains oneself throughout the process of trying to change.

In seeking to unlearn socialized behaviors and to transform oneself into a more ethical person, one is confronted by challenges, not least of which is the fact that we are not always aware or in control of our own behavior. This process of transformation, what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'becoming' (1986, 1987) has no fixed beginning or end. The focal point of transformation is the on-going nature of the event itself, a powerful aspect of any revolutionary practice through which people are trying to change society. In the attempt to become minor, to become something other than the dominant majority, we must merely 'become':

> To become is not to progress or regress along a series. Above all, becoming does not occur in the imagination… Becoming produces nothing other than itself. We fall into a false alternative if we say that you either imitate or you are. What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 238).

Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of becoming minor can help us understand how the paradox of becoming anti-racist happens. For Deleuze and Guattari, a becoming indicates a process of change underway, through which something evolves into something else. However, the subject that becomes does not actually change into another unique subject. Rather, the positions exist at the same time, blending together in " a block of coexistence" (1987: 292). This process, as Deleuze and Guattari show, is a crucial aspect of any revolutionary movement.

As we see in the above quotation from the Tucson Solidarity Group, there is an understanding of the on-going nature of becoming anti-racist, where the organizers hope "to set a visible, anti racist 'pole' for other white people to gravitate toward". Other conscious whites are needed to meaningfully shift white supremacist dynamics such that whites are collectively willing and able to act in solidarity with movements led by people of color. Through Kafka's work, Deleuze and Guattari (1986) mobilize a linguistic analysis to show how any social movement in which a minority group seeks to break away from the majority involves three characteristics.[18] First, language must be deterritorialized. In the case of white racial justice activists, the 'language' of white supremacy, the ways it is communicated and reified through socialized behaviors that are themselves expressed materially (McKittrick, 2006; Ahmed, 2007; Saldanha, 2007) must be transformed. Second, individuals within the minority group must have some connection to a "political immediacy" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 18). Here of course, the immediate political concern is white supremacy and the ability of white people to take action against it. Finally, to become minor, there must be a "collective assemblage of enunciation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 18). The enunciation of the wrongness of white supremacy and of white complicity in the perpetuation of white supremacist norms carries with it the power of a new way of speaking, with the hope that others will be drawn to carry forward the collective experience of becoming anti-racist.

The process of becoming anti-racist is emotionally charged and fraught with the imperfection inherent in processes of becoming. Peter is a white activist involved with various projects around Tucson, including migrant justice work as well as events oriented around #BlackLivesMatter. As he explained, it can be really difficult not to react with anger when

[18] "Minority" in this usage is quantitative and does not necessarily signify a racial or ethnic minority.

someone unwittingly says or does something racist, and to exercise patience and understanding with people who are new to thinking about their own complicity in systems of oppression:

> [I]t's important for me to keep in mind because I'm still in that phase where I'm like, angry, you know. Like, the more I learn, I get pissed and then I, you know, I learn about stuff and… sometimes that anger comes out from me directed at people who are like, less radical or less politicized- and I'm like, 'how could you not know… how could you be so racist, or how could you be so sexist?' And like, it's not that long ago where I was saying the exact same thing or doing the exact same thing so… I think that's something that's really important. Because if people hadn't done that for me, then where would I be at? (Interview with Peter, 2014).

The process of conscientization, as hooks has written in her reflections on Friere's work, is undeniably important for social movements and is itself a reflection of becoming minor. Far more important to the process of developing a consciousness to the immanence of white supremacy and one's own role in its perpetuation, however, is the development of an anti-racist praxis (hooks, 1994; Friere, 1970). For Peter and many others I talked to, conscientization often comes hand in hand with frustration and the knowledge that one must be patient rather than risk alienating people who are at an early stage in the process.

Activists I spoke with frequently addressed the tension between predominantly white activist projects and the fact that many of those projects aimed in some way to aid or act in solidarity with people of color. Will grew up in the Phoenix area, but moved to Tucson in his early twenties. Like many social justice activists in Tucson, his involvement with social justice activism began through volunteering with No More Deaths (NMD), a humanitarian aid organization dedicated to alleviating the suffering of migrants crossing the Sonoran Desert. NMD volunteers go out in search of migrants who may be in need of medical attention, and leave food and water at designated stations in the desert (Burridge, 2009). Because of the scale of NMD and the organization's volunteer-based structure, it is a common entry point for activists seeking to get involved in border opposition work (Johnson, 2015; Sundberg, 2006). People

come from all over the US as well as internationally to volunteer with NMD for weeks or months at a time. Quite often these volunteers end up staying in the area- sometimes to continue their work with NMD, or engaging with social justice activism in some other capacity.

The work of NMD is undeniably a much-needed response to the necropolitics (Burridge, 2009; Mbembe, 2003) of border militarization, however the whiteness and hierarchical structure of the organization have been described by many within southern Arizona's activist networks as major shortcomings. This tension between the whiteness of NMD and the obviously important role the organization plays in countering the effects of border militarization is a topic that came up frequently throughout the course of my fieldwork. The evening before our interview, Will had attended a community forum sponsored by NMD, where migrant led groups had been invited to give their feedback on the work of the organization. While the gathering was meant to be a place to build relationships and share resources, the emphasis remained on what the community could do for NMD, rather than the other way around. In fact, as Will explained, it appeared that many of the NMD members present were unaware of prominent migrant led organizations that had been in existence in Tucson for some time.

> Most people in NMD dedicate their lives to NMD and I would say... I didn't count but I would say there were like 35ish people at this meeting and you know, at least half of them had never heard of Corazón de Tucson or Fortín de Las Flores.[19] I mean, [Fortín is] smaller so there's a lot of folks who don't know much about them but Corazón is big, you know, and they're people that live in Tucson, right? And I think that's a big problem. I mean, if you're doing migrant justice work, that's a big issue. I know that the first… almost the first four years that I was doing NMD work, I didn't know anybody on the south side of Tucson or in other parts of Tucson who were doing organizing. I knew a handful of undocumented people but that was because, you know, they made it out of the desert and they were out organizing…" (Interview with Will, 2014).

Here, Will gestures to some of the major challenges for white anti-racist activists specifically in Tucson, where much of the activism led by migrants is organized in Spanish in South Tucson,

[19] Corazón de Tucson and Fortín de Las Flores are both migrant led organizations that work to connect women to resources and community support.

itself a distinct municipality that has remained largely Spanish speaking and culturally Latin@. As Will points out, it is highly problematic that many of the active members of NMD remain unaware of some of the primary migrant led activist groups who are organizing in South Tucson and surrounding areas in Tucson.

The ability of an audience to really understand the testimony of oppressed populations is determined largely by the audience themselves and how equipped they are to actually listen to stories of Other's trauma (Pratt, 2012). Members of NMD may have organized the community forum in order to diversify the group's membership and to promote awareness of NMD within Tucson's migrant community. However, as Will explained, the undocumented migrant activists in attendance at the meeting had, through a translator, shared their personal stories as undocumented people, and that "they were giving really… articulate, powerful answers" (interview with Will, 2014). When the migrants present finished speaking however, and the floor was opened for questions from the white NMD members:

> [A]ll the questions that people came up with were like, 'how can we get more brown people to join our group?' and 'how can we do outreach in the immigrant community to tell them about all the great work that *we* are doing?' and that sort of thing. And just to say that like, these are people that I really respect, too. You know, in NMD- these are people who are dedicating their life, in a way, most of their energy into social justice in some way. But… I felt like a really *basic* understanding of what anti-oppression might look like, or what anti-racism in this example, might look like that kind of was just like, like there was a misfire there, you know? (Interview with Will, 2014).

A problem frequently cited by activists of color as a major deterrent to organizing with whites is the fact that doing so often means one must follow the white activists' agenda without having the efforts of activists of color recognized. Quite often white anti-racist work is "predicated on an economy of gratitude" through which people of color are expected to feel grateful that whites will contribute energy and resources toward social justice issues facing communities of color (Nopper, 2003). Indeed, Will's description of the NMD community forum

is indicative of larger systemic problems within southern Arizona's activist networks and many people I spoke with reported that, while the work NMD does is certainly very important, they had volunteered with NMD for awhile or attended a few meetings, but then left because of the whiteness and hierarchical structure of the organization.

There have been significant and powerful critiques by activists of color about the ways whiteness has a history of co-opting social movements led by people of color (Benally 2013; Garza, 2014; Goggans, 2014; Lorde, 1984; Nopper, 2003; Woods, 2014). Many of the white activists I spoke with in Tucson are aware of this history and of the tendency for white bodies to dominate activist spaces. As Will explained, the drive to work in solidarity within social justice movements led by people of color comprises a sort of 'life's work'- something incomplete but on-going. For these white activists, there is a constant negotiation underway through which they are often trying to work within white dominated organizations to curb the sorts of ideological 'misfires' that Will gestures to in his testimony about the NMD meeting. At the same time, they are also often working with directly affected communities of color, striving to stand in solidarity without directing the work that activists of color are doing. As a Spanish speaker who works directly with migrant justice activists in Tucson, Will is able to see the harm that NMD has done through the assumptions that the organization should get people of color to join up with what they are doing- rather than for NMD to find ways to contribute to migrant led projects. At the same time, he is aware of the deep feeling that brings many NMD activists to their work, and that they are often people who have "dedicated their lives to NMD" as a way of contesting the militarization of the border and the injustices of the state in perpetuating violence against migrants.

Moments of white supremacy like that described by Will occur frequently in white dominated activist spaces, including in projects that explicitly claim an anti-racist focus. Quite

often, there is some awareness among the activists involved that these hypocrisies and inconsistencies are simply a part of the work. If whites seek to become anti-racist, they have to start somewhere and be able to make mistakes. In this process of becoming minor, strong hegemonic ways of being must be broken so that "ruptures and new sproutings" can occur (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 29). While many of the activists I spoke with — whites as well as people of color— discussed how organizations must be able to strike a balance between their commitment to working against white supremacy in solidarity with projects led by people of color, and the knowledge that quite often whites come to these projects without having engaged in much self-work on the topic, and without realizing the ways that they themselves replicate white supremacist behaviors.

Paige, another white racial justice activist, talked with me about her own anti-racism, and explained that there were many mentor figures for her who she now realizes must have exercised a good deal of patience with her as she fumbled her way toward a deeper understanding of how to be an ally in the migrant justice movement. Here she reflects specifically on her friend Ramón, who is himself Latino and a prominent activist within Tucson's migrant community, and the ways that Ramón both supported Paige's development while also pushing her to be more aware of the privileged sense of entitlement that she initially brought with her:

> I do think that Ramón really did challenge me in certain ways…that other people hadn't, like I wanted to work at the workers' center and I wanted to be immediately involved.[20] I was like, 'oh my gosh, you guys are doing amazing work, I just want to work for you', you know what I mean, and he was just like… I mean, [I had] kind of more of a sense of entitlement that I had to be there. I was like, I'm willing, I'm down, why aren't you accepting me with open arms? And… [I felt] totally entitled and he was like, 'Um, you have to think of… what we're doing here, like how you are going to be perceived.' You know, there's issues of this white girl coming into our space and like, it's… you know… in a community of undocumented families who feel vulnerable because of that status. And not that vulnerability is the only thing they feel- like strength and power and total like, agency as well but you have to recognize that and you need to start showing up to

[20] The Southside Worker Center is a day laborers' center housed at a Tucson church.

> things and pretty much prove it, you know, that you're down [to work] and see how you operate in this space and you don't just like, take over- that you're able to listen, that you're able to be respectful and have conversations. I think it really helps that I know Spanish, I think that's been an asset. And yeah, so he really challenged a lot of assumptions that I had and made me kind of… slow down a little bit, or just be like, okay there's stuff that I need to work through. (Interview with Paige, 2014).

Paige's commitment to racial justice is clear here, as is her understanding of imperfection of the process of becoming anti-racist. "Political decision making necessarily descends into a world of microdeterminations, attractions, and desires", write Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 221). We see that Paige certainly desires to become anti-racist, that her action is rooted in a drive to be more ethically white. At the same time, the micropolitics of this situation emerge as we see her negotiate friendship and allyship alongside her own white privilege. Paige reflects that it was with a sense of entitlement that she inserted herself in a space that was occupied by people of color, people made vulnerable through the status of their citizenship, where the question of documentation can easily result in families being torn apart through imprisonment and deportation.

Power's 'microtextures' reveal the complexities and inconsistencies at the heart of hegemonic social structures (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 225). These microtextures show up through intimate scales of human interaction, reified through the mundane and everyday. Incidences of violence against people of color carried out by government institutions force us to name, clearly and openly, the oppressive nature of white supremacist society. However, these moments of violence are mere flashes of what is actually happening constantly and quietly, surrounding us. Through quotations and observations of activist networks in Arizona that I have shared here, I have aimed to demonstrate that the struggle to combat white supremacy within white communities is indeed powerful and important. But it is an on-going struggle to create a different world through the minoritarian politics of white anti-racism, a process fraught with

activists' desires to be more ethical white subjects, and simultaneously countered by their own socialization as white within the hierarchy of white supremacist society. "[I]n a becoming, one is deterritorialized" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 221), a process where one changes what one is, but so gradually and imperceptibly that the actual change is difficult to discern. Part of the difficulty of social change and the frustration faced by those who work toward a more ethical world is that such change comes only slowly, through myriad collective becomings and rearticulations of the self.

Conclusion

White anti-racist praxis requires an internal process of self-work while one targets the social institutions that bolster white supremacy. As I have shown here, this is true in the context of activism in Arizona just as it is in geography and other academic disciplines. Academic departments, as many have pointed out, tend to be dominated by white bodies (Berg, 2012; Gilmore, 2002; Kobayashi, 2002; Mahtani, 2014; Joshi, 2015), a norm made possible through historical legacies of whiteness in higher education. Citational practices (Ahmed, 2013), often reify social privileges that are racialized, classed, and gendered such that authority is typically grounded in intellectual work created by white male academics. However, alternatives do exist. Particularly when talking about racialized oppression, we should aim to highlight those voices that are Othered by whiteness, as well as by academia. Ahmed asks us to consider a question that is at once very simple, and very important: "who appears?' (Ahmed, 2013: np). Who appears as the authority that knows and understands racialized oppression? Who appears in the ways we cite and reproduce knowledge? Who appears as the expert? This article began with a quotation from Cherrie Moraga, who asks: "*What ideas never surface because we imagine we already have all the answers?"* (Moraga, 2015: xix, italics hers). When only certain bodies appear, and those

bodies believe they 'have all the answers', crucial perspectives are left out, and problematic relations of power remain intact.

The process of confronting oppressive social norms is fraught and ongoing. As we saw through many of the excerpts from my interviews with activists in Tucson, whites' desire to act more ethically and to become anti-racist is beset by the invisibilities of white supremacy and the fact that one often continues to replicate problematic behaviors, while simultaneously trying to be a different kind of person. One remains oneself while trying to change, and this is at the heart of the paradox of becoming. The mistakes and foibles of white anti-racism, however, are a part of the process of contientization (hooks, 1994; Friere, 1970), through which one becomes aware of one's own position within oppressive social structures such that they are able to change. The microtextures of power (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) are comprised of the subtle nuances of daily life, carried out through small moments in social space that are often so slight that we do not realize they've occurred.

The paradox of becoming, as I've discussed it here, is a process, a thing in flux, an unfolding— and one that cannot be completed. Many activists of color have discussed whites who proclaim themselves to be allies or in solidarity (Benally, 2013; Garza, 2014; Goggans, Lorde, 1984; Nopper, 2003; Woods, 2014), showing that often the proclamation is seen as a problematic endpoint, through which the white subject feels that they have come to an important realization about white supremacy and is now, therefore, in solidarity. A crucial aspect of becoming anti-racist for whites is that the understanding of oneself in relation to oppressive social processes *should* be in a perpetual state of evolution without a concrete endpoint, through which one challenges internalized beliefs and behaviors at the same time one is working to end racist practices in society more broadly.

Chapter 3: Working within Difference: Tucson's migrant justice movement and the pursuit of an ethical practice of solidarity

Abstract

Nuanced understandings of solidarity as an on-going practice contribute to the ability for grassroots political activists of diverse backgrounds to continue their work together. Too often, gestures of solidarity from activists from privileged backgrounds relative to the directly affected communities fall flat, as they are not rooted in long-term relationship building and the development of trust that comes with commitment over time. Since the early 2000s, the primary concern of grassroots political activism in Tucson has been migrant justice and opposition to the militarization of the US/Mexico border. In the aftermath of Arizona's notorious 2010 racial profiling legislation, SB 1070, The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet) was founded as a collaboration between undocumented migrant activists and white allies, with the express goal of fundraising to support migrant led activism in Tucson. Much of ProNet's success is rooted in the long-term relationship building between migrant activists and white allies, and intentional commitments to bridging gaps between the humanitarian aid and migrant justice communities. Members of ProNet challenge the spatial dynamics of activist networks Tucson, connecting Latin@ and Chican@ activist communities in and surrounding Spanish speaking South Tucson with activists in parts of the city where the effects of the militarized border are less present, and where residents are predominantly white. This paper explores these dynamics on the ground in Tucson, considering the ways that solidarity is enacted in ways that are always evolving and ongoing.

This land was Mexican once,
Was Indian always
and is.
And will be again. (Gloria Anzaldúa, 1987: 3)

…any politics catches trajectories at different points, is attempting to articulate rhythms which pulse at different beats. It is another aspect of the elusiveness of place which renders politics so difficult. (Doreen Massey, 2005: 158)

Introduction

The material effects of the contentious politics surrounding border militarization are always shifting, never static or easily contained. As the vast array of securitization practices are constantly changing, so too do the social justice movements that work to combat them. As I write this, a new wave of anti-immigrant legislation is worming its way through the capitol in Phoenix,

Arizona. The bills proposed are in direct response to gains made by migrant rights groups in recent years, as they have fought to combat the passage and implementation of SB 1070, Arizona's notorious 2010 racial profiling law. For example, SB 1487 is a proposed bill that would penalize municipal governments who diverge from state law pertaining to migrant policing. This proposed bill is an attack on sanctuary cities and places where municipal police forces have been reluctant to fully mobilize the racial profiling and collaboration between local police and immigration authorities that SB 1070 demands. On the ground in Tucson, activists have been learning about SB 1487 and other proposed anti-immigrant legislation, to better be able to confront these laws should they go into effect. An important and often overlooked aspect of the bordering process is the ways that social justice movements on the ground must be just as perpetually evolving as borders themselves (Coleman, 2007; Hiemstra, 2012; Johnson et al, 2011; Mountz, 2010), in order to combat the everyday violence issued from all scales of the militarized border. The border functions as a sort of many-headed hydra, snapping across scales and in multiple contexts. As such, grassroots activist groups must constantly shift their own strategies and targets in the struggle.

This is an essay about solidarity, about the ways in which solidarity is enacted and sustained in the context of revolutionary grassroots political praxis in pursuit of social change. Based on over two years of participant observation in the highly politicized borderlands of Arizona, this paper seeks to address the nature of solidarity across difference- in this case, within networks comprised primarily of Latin American migrants, long-time Chican@ and Latin@ residents, and white allies. A perennial challenge for grassroots activism is the issue of sustainability, and the ability of people to continue their work together in the long term. I am concerned here with the following questions: What constitutes solidarity? How do we know when solidarity work is successful? What are sustainable, intentional ways to work across

difference such that actions of solidarity are immediately relevant and meaningful for communities directly affected by everyday oppressive forces? In response to these questions, I present an example of solidarity work done in Tucson through The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet), a group dedicated to fundraising in support of migrant led organizing in Tucson. Through looking at the micropolitics of grassroots social justice work in the context of my participant observation and interviews with ProNet members, I offer a glimpse into the ways solidarity functions practically at a very local scale, revealing the transformative potential of grassroots political organizations committed to relationship building across difference.

I offer this as a feminist counter-topography (Katz, 2001; Mountz, 2011b) of bordering processes that speaks to recent calls from within border studies for heightened engagement with nation-state boundaries and the kinds of conditions they produce (Johnson et al, 2011). Like all international borderlands, the US/Mexico border is a pool of emotion, fear, and memory (Paasi, 2011) expanding far beyond the actual boundary, "a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge…a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (Anzaldúa, 1987: 3). For border states in the US Southwest, the politics of enforcement extend far north of the border, into the intimate everyday lives of migrants and other populations targeted by border enforcement. This complexity, particularly in a place like Arizona, on the front lines of the politics of border militarization, warrants "creative ways of mapping borders", as Mountz argues, to contribute "new cartographies of border enforcement" that explore the ways militarized borders permeates everyday life (Mountz, 2011a: 65).

Borders manifest throughout the spheres of everyday life, and this essay also articulates an anti-racist feminism that is rooted in participatory democratic practices (Mohanty, 2003). I examine geographies of solidarity as they emerge through feminism and anarchism, alongside an empirical example of the practice of solidarity work in the Arizona borderlands. Through doing

so, I aim to show how ideologies of the Left, such as feminism or anarchism, are too often treated as insular conversations in academic discourse, are in fact merged on the ground through grassroots political activism. In Mohanty's articulation, an anti-racist feminist practice of solidarity has at its core the understanding that "interwoven processes of sexism, racism, misogyny, and heterosexism are an integral part of our social fabric, wherever in the world we happen to be", and solidarity across difference should be "a political as well as ethical goal" in the practice of decolonization and anti-capitalist struggle (Mohanty, 2003: 3).

This essay consists of two major sections, each with their own interrelated aims. In the first, I consider the ways practices of solidarity have been articulated through academic and activist discourses as an ongoing praxis rooted in long-term relationship building and self-reflective organizing strategies. Second, I offer an empirical example of the ways anti-racism, feminism, and horizontal organizing weave together on the ground in Tucson, through the praxis of migrant justice activism. Through considering discourses of solidarity alongside its empirical practice in the Arizona/Sonora borderlands, I show the significance of the ongoing nature of solidarity work and the ways it extends far beyond mere declarations of allyship, necessitating continued engagement and long-term relationship building among activists from differentially privileged backgrounds.

I. Solidarity as Praxis

Solidarity, as a term, appears often in public discourse in ways that convey the impression that, in order for one to be in solidarity, one must simply declare that one 'stands with' some other group of people in crisis. For example, after the November, 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, France, images of the Eiffel Tower in the center of a peace sign, and the colors of the French flag projected on various international landmarks circulated throughout social

media alongside users' declarations of solidarity with the French people (Time, 2015). In fact, however, for social justice activists engaged in multi-racial solidarity work, understandings of solidarity are far more nuanced than this and require an ongoing engagement with the concept through action.

I contribute here to discourses of solidarity, both in activism and academia. While there has been some treatment of solidarity in academic scholarship (Boyce et al, 2015; Chatteron et al., 2013; Espinosa, 2014; Juris et al., 2014; Routledge et al, 2007; Routledge and Derickson, 2015), there has been very little exploration of the micropolitics of solidarity, and the ways that relatively mundane interpersonal interaction often informs whether efforts at solidarity succeed or fail in grassroots political work. Laura Pulido's (2006) analysis of activism in the 1960s and 1970s in Los Angeles explores solidarity work between Black Panthers, CASA (a Chican@ group dedicated to activism on behalf of migrants and farmworkers), and East Wind (a Japanese group focused on community activism). "Movements", writes Pulido, "are more than the sum of their parts. Their character, size, and shape are also determined by their interactions with other organizations and individuals" (Pulido, 2006: 153). I am concerned here with the ways small-scale, everyday interactions contribute to the "character, size, and shape" of grassroots movements for social justice, building from Pulido's acknowledgment that her own study would have benefitted from the inclusion of an analysis of white solidarity activism, as "a useful contrast to the Third World groups" (Pulido, 2006: 9) under study in her book. While the spatio-temporal concerns of the present essay certainly diverge from Pulido's *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*, I connect to themes she and other scholars interested in solidarity raise, through an emphasis on the place of whiteness in solidarity work and the significance of micropolitical interpersonal dynamics within grassroots political groups.

Numerous activists of color have written or otherwise articulated the complexities of multi-racial solidarity work (Benally, 2013; Garza, 2014; Goggans, 2014; Nopper, 2003; Walia, 2013; Woods, 2014). While each speaks to different place-based struggles and unique contexts, similar themes emerge. In particular, a recurring topic is the challenging nature of activist collaboration between whites and people of color. Quite often the urgency of grassroots political work demands a process that moves very quickly from the birth of an idea, to the gathering of people and other resources, to the actual execution of an action. Consequently, there is not always time for meaningful, critical reflection on the interpersonal dynamics at play within networks of grassroots political activists, or the ways that problematic power relations exists within such circles. Reflecting on this, activist and popular educator Harsha Walia writes:

> Movement building requires reflexivity. And yet it is rare to find open spaces of debate and discussion, outside of insular networks, where movement practices can be rigorously analyzed. I attribute this rarity to a variety of factors: the crisis-oriented nature of community organizing, skepticism about intellectualism stemming from a misplaced conflation with the elitism and inaccessibility of academic institutions, and our own personal fears and defensiveness about unsettling existing movement practices in which we are invested or implicated (Walia, 2013: 173-174).

As Walia shows here, movement building is a long-term process of developing relationships and taking the time to reflect on the organizing process. However, various factors impact the ability and willingness of participants in grassroots political networks to actually take that time to reflect and turn their critiques of power inward, toward the actions of themselves and their collaborators in the struggle.

Networks of grassroots activists comprise a topological activist polis (Mott, 2016), through which people's knowledge of one another as members of the local activist community create collective understandings of ethical practices of solidarity. It is certainly true, as the quotation from Walia above articulates, that members of locally rooted social movements often do not sit down to collectively reflect on the deeper meaning of solidarity work or their own

positionalities within the power dynamics of their own groups. However, this is not to say that such conversations do not take place. Rather, it is that they happen in more intimate spaces that reflect the complex micropolitics at play within the activist polis. Resistance, as Foucault writes, "is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978: 95). Even movements dedicated to challenging oppressive power structures contain their own problematic power relations through which microaggressions occur, often in ways that serve to replicate white supremacist and patriarchal norms prevalent throughout larger society.

An example of how these micropolitics might be visible in the practice of solidarity work can be seen through a moment that emerged during a 2013 workshop on whiteness and allyship that was organized by a group called the Tucson Solidarity Organizing Network. During an open conversation portion of the workshop, a member of the audience who is a long-time Tucson activist spoke, saying that he was very concerned that certain members of the activist community were saying negative things about other activists 'behind their backs', meaning that these conversations and critiques were happening through the channels of gossip and side conversations, rather than out in an open forum where the community could discuss them publically. In response to this, two female members of the audience responded that the reason why such conversations happened on the sidelines was because women are often unsafe when they articulate unpopular opinions publically, and there is a real fear of retribution or violence when women call out and name specifically incidences of male domination or domestic violence. At the heart of this conversation was the belief that a male member of the community had acted abusively toward women outside of his activist work, and there was widespread concern about this within the community, even though it had not been publically discussed.

Through this moment, we can see the ways that topological linkages to patriarchal oppression played their part in this conversation, and that they were present within the activist

networks simply through the belief that a member of the community had acted in a violently oppressive way in his personal life, even though he articulated a commitment to solidarity and anti-oppression as an activist. Approaching things through the topological enables a shrinking of space and time, such that things that appear distant in a Cartesian paradigm are in fact immanent and personally relevant through individuals' emotional connections, thoughts, and memories (Blum and Secor, 2011; Martin and Secor, 2013; Mott, 2016; Secor, 2013). When considering the micropolitics of solidarity within the activist polis, the topological shows itself through moments like that described above, where the topic of an event is to think about anti-racist allyship, but participants' connections to structures of domination are just as present within the room as are the liberatory politics under discussion. Further, moments like this show clearly what Koopman (2007: 151) describes as the "will to forget" or to ignore moments of oppression that happen *within* social movement spaces dedicated toward anti-oppression work.

There are a number of different conversations circulating within geographic scholarship that, in some way, are rooted in the ways solidarity should be practiced. Quite often these discussions emphasize the importance of anti-oppression strategies rooted in ethics of horizontalism and mutual aid, whether in the context of more ethical research, publication, and departmental practices, or in activism outside the academy (For example: Barker and Pickerill, 2012; Burridge 2010; Clough 2012; Koopman, 2008a, 2008b; Loyd 2012; Mahtani 2007, 2014; Massey, 2008; Pratt 2009, 2012; Peake and Kobayashi 2002; Pulido 2002; Sanders 2006; Shaw et al, 2006; Sundberg 2007; Wright 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Bradley and Herrera 2016). Each of these works theorizes, in its own way, solidarity through academic praxis, whether through research, teaching, or negotiating departmental cultures. However, these conversations do not always cross paths with one another, contributing to a situation where different discourses operate in isolation, when in fact the various approaches all speak to similar efforts to challenge

systemic oppression through some aspect of academic practice in ways that are egalitarian, horizontal, and attentive to the role that intersectional differences play in one's everyday experience of life.

Tallbear describes the urgency of finding ways to "seek out and articulate overlapping respective intellectual, ethical, and institution building projects- how to share goals and desires while staying engaged in critical conversation and producing new knowledge and insights" (Tallbear, 2014: 2). Similarly, Mohanty writes about her vision of an anti-racist feminist practice of solidarity: "In strategic terms, this vision entails putting in place antiracist feminist and democratic principles of participation and relationality, and it means working on many fronts, in many different kinds of collectivities in order to organize against repressive systems of rule" (Mohanty, 2003: 4). As both Tallbear and Mohanty show here, there is much power in bringing the ideologies of struggle into communication and collaboration with one another.

Feminist scholarship, broadly, is rooted in an ethic of solidarity that works to highlight the ways that social difference shapes human experience. "Feminist practice," writes Mohanty:

> operates at a number of levels: at the level of daily life through the everyday acts that constitute our identities and relational communities; at the level of collective action in groups, networks, and movements constituted around feminist visions of social transformation; and at the levels of theory, pedagogy, and textual creativity in the scholarly and writing practices of feminists engaged in the production of knowledge (Mohanty, 2003: 5).

In geography, feminist scholars have taken up the work of transnational feminist scholarship- itself rooted in an ethic of solidarity seeking to connect academic scholarship to grassroots feminist activist struggle (Erickson and Faria, 2011; Faria and Mollett 2014; Nagar and Sangtin Writers, 2006; Nagar 2013, Pratt 2009; Swarr and Nagar, 2010; Wright 2009b). Transnational feminism, like third world feminism, emphasizes gender and is rooted in analyses of oppression

as they impact women. However, where third world feminism (Herr 2014; Mohanty 1984[21]; Sandoval 1991) emphasizes the importance of women from the Global South telling their own stories and rooting analyses of oppression at local scales, a transnational feminist analysis emphasizes solidarity building among women from diverse contexts, with particular attention on the ways academic scholarship can work with grassroots feminist activism.

In geography, Transnational Feminism appears as a theoretical foundation to scholarship seeking a commitment to activism on the ground, whether through research and publishing practices, or simply through the formation of alliances and solidarities. In her progress report linking feminist and justice scholarship, Wright (2009a) considers the "political implications of interpreting certain movements and activists as 'feminist' based on their challenges to sexism and the gendered dynamics of power, when those same activists eschew the label and its correlated political meanings" (Wright, 2009a: 381). Citing Pulido (2006) and Browne (2006), Wright shows how the 'feminist' label can be mobilized (or not) strategically, but that it does not alter the character of the activism in question. The label is of secondary importance- the work that is actually being done is what matters, regardless of what we call it.

In *Playing with Fire* (2006), a powerful example of a practice of solidarity rooted in connecting academic discourse to activist action, Nagar and her collaborators, the Sangtin Writers, upset hierarchies of academic knowledge production through their collaborative methodology and writing process. In her forward to their book, Mohanty explains:

> The methodological contributions of the idea of a blended 'we,' of braiding the stories, of representing a fractured unity are all predicated on emotional labor and on the building of trust, transparency, and honesty among the *sangtins*. This chorus of voices, then, is no ordinary sum of the voices of its members: it is the result of a collective emotional and political journey of *sangtins*, women who have chosen to reflect and struggle together as sister-activists in the movement for rural women's empowerment (Nagar, 2006).

[21] While Mohanty's earlier work was foundational to the development of Third World feminism, she has since evolved as a central figure within Transnational Feminism.

Nagar and the Sangtin Writers provide an example of transnational feminism in practice. Through their collaboration as activists, the women, including Nagar, shape the outcome of the project, and the way it will be portrayed in writing. “Collaborative storytelling”, Nagar writes in a reflection on this collaboration, “allows co-authors from varied locations to draw upon and scrutinize their multiple — sometimes conflicting— experiences and truths while exploring, enhancing, and elaborating upon how these interconnect with ‘expert’ knowledges” (Nagar, 2013: 4).

An important way that grassroots political activism is able to build solidarity and support is through storytelling. Pratt’s work with Filipina domestic workers in Canada offers a powerful example of the ways hierarchies of knowledge production can be challenged through collaboration with directly affected communities. Pratt (2009, 2012) emphasizes the power of testimony in shaping whether or not the struggles of communities directly affected by oppressive conditions can be heard. However, as she also shows, testimonies of pain and suffering may fail to elicit feelings of empathy or concern from an audience. Seeking to bring about an “ethical awakening to the Other,” Pratt (2009: 7), considers the ways that transnational feminist scholarship and collaboration across difference run up against challenges in the way that an audience may or may not be able to really hear the full trauma behind the stories that are told. The hope of Pratt and her Filipina collaborators, as she writes, is to “tell stories about grief in such a way that a wider witnessing public cannot keep its distance, and is neither numb to nor able to voyeuristically gaze upon the spectacle of suffering and shame in ways that further objectify and dehumanize (Pratt, 2009: 17). The stories told, then, are far more than mere entertainment. They serve an important function in the building of solidarity between people from very different backgrounds through making a meaningful emotional impact on the viewer.

For many grassroots political activists, solidarity is an unfolding process in a constant state of evolution, or becoming. Mere declarations of solidarity or allyship are not enough. In order for solidarity to be meaningful, it must be rooted in long-term relationship building and ongoing processes of self-reflection such that the work undertaken is seen as helpful and relevant for and by directly affected communities. In the section that follows, I discuss an example of solidarity work undertaken by white activists in the Arizona/Sonora borderlands that speaks directly to the ways that solidarity happens through slowly building relationships over time, taking cues and directly from the directly affected communities, and routinely engaging in processes of collective self reflection that Walia (2013) and others have argued is crucial for building sustainable movements.

II. Working for Justice in Tucson

Solidarity is continual process of activist action, as I have shown above. To illustrate, I turn now to the empirical case of The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet), as a grassroots political project that mobilizes horizontal organizing strategies rooted in anti-racist and feminist approaches. ProNet's process, as I show below, is very much rooted in on-going relationship building within directly affected communities of color in Tucson- specifically the communities more impacted by anti-immigrant legislation and policing.

In the early 1980s Tucson moved to prominence as a center for social justice activism through the Sanctuary Movement, where faith leaders provided 'sanctuary' to Salvadoran Refugees, openly defying federal immigration laws. The Sanctuary Movement originated as increasing numbers of Salvadoran and Guatemalan migrants began coming over the Arizona border, fleeing violence in their home countries. In the summer of 1980, the bodies of a group of

13 people were found in the southern Arizona's Sonoran Desert, 12 Salvadorans and their Mexican smuggler. This event shocked many in Tucson and brought to light the serious problem facing these political refugees, who fled conditions of horrifying violence only to die in the desert heat. In the aftermath of this and many other instances in which Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees were found dead or close to death in the desert, the Sanctuary Movement established itself as a sort of 'underground railroad' throughout the US for Central American refugees in need of safe haven.

The numbers here are significant, particularly in light of the stark contrast between the situation facing Central American refugees in the early 1980s, and that endured by migrants crossing the Arizona border since the early 2000s. In the 1980s, the numbers of dead bodies found in the desert were limited to occasional incidences, usually just one body at a time, and these incidents were covered by local and state news media. By the early 2000s, however, group deaths similar to the one that took place in 1980 occurred more often, typically generating less public attention, and the total numbers of migrants found dead in the desert numbered into the hundreds, peaking in 2010 with 225 bodies reported recovered in the Tucson sector of the border alone, a number that is likely much higher, based on research revealing widespread underreporting of deaths by the Border Patrol (Trevizo, 2015; Rubio-Goldsmith et al, 2007).

Prior to the mid 1990s, the vast majority of migration across the US/Mexico border took place through contiguous urban centers, such as El Paso/Ciudad Juarez and San Diego/Tijuana. As Nevins (2002) has detailed, a series of Clinton era Border Patrol 'Operations' from 1993-1997 meant that those border cities were increasingly surveilled and securitized.[22] Unable to cross through the safety of a crowded urban setting, migrants were increasingly funneled through

[22] Operation Blockade, based in El Paso, TX, 1993; Operation Gatekeeper, based in San Diego, CA, 1994; Operation Safeguard, based in Nogales, AZ, 1995; Operation Rio Grande, based in Brownsville, TX, 1997 (from Nevins, 2002: 163).

dangerous rural areas. In the context of southern Arizona, Operation Safeguard began by targeting illegal border crossing near Nogales in 1995, but later expanded to include Douglas and other Arizona border towns. The strategy at play here, "prevention through deterrence", did not serve to deter illegal movement across the border. Rather, it "funneled hundreds of thousands of unauthorized migrants through southern Arizona's remote and notoriously inhospitable deserts and mountains", where summer high temperatures can exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit (49 degrees Celsius), and sources of water are very scarce (Rubio-Goldsmith et al, 2007: 1-2; see also Slack et al, 2015).

To address the humanitarian crisis of migrant deaths in the Sonoran Desert, several grassroots organizations were born throughout the early 2000s, among them Humane Borders (2000), The Tucson Samaritans (2002), and No More Deaths (2004). Many of the people involved with these groups were from the same faith based groups as the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s, but they also appealed to connections outside, through sponsoring visits from volunteers from afar and coordinating participation on the ground. While these groups occupy an important position within the landscape of activism in Tucson, particularly No More Deaths, there is a disconnect that exists between, on the one hand, the important work done by these humanitarian aid groups and, on the other, the organizing done by migrants themselves.

The disjuncture between the work of humanitarian aid groups and that of migrant activists themselves often follows problematic lines of privilege. Faith based humanitarian groups are typically predominantly white- many volunteers are either retirees and young, college educated adults and as such, participants in these groups are not people who are directly impacted by border securitization beyond the degree they choose to expose themselves to it. On the other hand, however, migrant activists are from the directly affected communities, many are themselves undocumented people who crossed the border through the Arizona desert. Certainly,

there is diversity among the membership of both activist communities, and interaction between them. However, there is typically considerable difference in the documentation status, race, ethnicity, language, and economic class of those involved. Consequently, a dynamic exists where many participants in predominantly white humanitarian aid groups are often unaware of the organizing being done by affected communities of migrants in Tucson.

There have been many attempts to bridge the disjunctures within Tucson's activist communities. The We Reject Racism Campaign was one such attempt that emerged to combat SB 1070. As Loyd (2012) explains, the goals of the We Reject Racism Campaign were to repeal SB 1070, but also to facilitate long-term collaboration within Tucson between the various autonomous networks of activists engaged throughout the city. A collaboration between members of No More Deaths and Tierra y Libertad Organization, We Reject Racism operated through outreach to neighborhoods and businesses in Tucson, as a conscious effort to "articulate the broad scale harms of migrant policing and to build the community institutions and relationships that create thriving, mutual cities" (Loyd, 2012: 139).

The existence of oppressive laws and policing strategies makes everyday life very precarious for migrants in the city, and a number of grassroots groups have emerged within communities of Latin American migrants, and longtime Chican@ residents, particularly in Spanish speaking South Tucson, a separate municipality from the larger city of Tucson. In some cases, these Chican@ and Latin@ led projects have longstanding roots in South Tucson, and others have come into existence in recent years, as anti-immigrant legislation and policing have become more prominent in Arizona. The Protection Networks are a coalition of six migrant led organizations, primarily based in South Tucson. The Southside Worker Center, Derechos Humanos, Tierra y Libertad Organization, Fortin de las Flores, Corazon de Tucson, and Mariposas sin Fronteras. In 2012, the majority of these groups formalized their connections with

one another as *Las Redes de Proteccion* (The Protection Networks), a coalition of grassroots community groups of Latin@ migrant activists dedicated to social change and the belief "in the power of community organizing led by the people most affected by unjust policing and inhumane policies" (Protection Network Action Fund, 2016). While the 'protection' element of The Protection Networks is rooted in ongoing struggles for migrant justice in the face of increasingly oppressive state policies, each of the groups within The Protection Networks focuses on other aspects of the experience of Latin@ and Chican@ residents of Tucson, such as offering legal aid and advice, support for queer and transgendered undocumented migrants, or working for migrant labor rights.

After the 2010 passage of Arizona's notorious racial profiling legislation, Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070), also known as the Support our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, the political climate in Arizona was decidedly hostile for Latin American migrants, as well as for other people targeted by the overt racial profiling demanded by the law. SB 1070 was intended to induce trauma into the daily lives of migrants, setting "a national precedent for restrictive immigration legislation that aims to disrupt the everyday lives of undocumented immigrants to such a degree that they 'self deport.'" (Williams and Boyce, 2013: 896; see also Loyd, 2012; Slack et al, 2015). Through bringing municipal police into closer collaboration with Border Patrol, an alliance locals call the *polimigra*, SB 1070 meant that, for anyone who appeared to be Latin@, interaction with police would require proof of citizenship (Menjivar, 2014). The goal of SB 1070 was to make life so unbearable for undocumented migrants in Arizona that they would chose to leave the state, a move that, as Williams and Boyce (2013) have shown, was somewhat successful.

The aims of SB 1070 to induce fear and trauma into the daily lives of migrants in Arizona were certainly effective. However, the experience of how this played out was experienced very

differently throughout Tucson. "Residents in some parts of Tucson," as Loyd (2012: 138) explains, "often do not even know that migration sweeps occur in the city, nor how a simple traffic stop can lead to deportation." The focus of migrant policing is typically on South Tucson, and the surrounding neighborhoods, while residents in predominantly white parts of the city may only rarely see evidence of the militarized border in their neighborhoods. This "low grade state terrorism" (Loyd, 2012: 138) appears very differently throughout Tucson, such that people in certain parts of the city regularly experience the power of the state to disrupt daily life through terror, while privileged others remain unaware that such practices are even happening.

The passage of SB 1070 had profound consequences particularly for undocumented members of the migrant activist community, who lived in constant terror that they would be taken at any moment. For many migrant activist projects, the urgent threat posed by SB 1070 created a situation where many organizations' resources had to shift their energies toward publicly protesting detention and deportation, as well as fundraising to bond their members out of the detention system.[23] The Southside Worker Center[24], in particular, was hit hard by immigration enforcement after SB 1070, and, as Will, a white activist who has worked closely with the Southside Worker Center for many years, explained:

> Basically, it happened that the Southside Worker Center went through a really challenging period, where they were just overwhelmed with detention, this was in the Spring of 2012. Where… they had in one single day they had five of their members detained and like, at one point they had like 21… I want to say between

[23] There are many reasons to bond someone out of immigrant detention, including the obvious drive to keep families and communities together. However, over the course of my fieldwork it was repeatedly made clear that those facing deportation proceedings have a much better chance of fighting deportation from outside of detention facilities. Deportation proceedings happen much more quickly when one is physically in detention, as opposed to having been bonded out.

[24] The Southside Worker Center originated in 2006, as the collaboration between Southside Presbyterian Church, and the migrant labor community in Tucson. As they explain on their website, they typically see "approximately 50 men daily, who, in spite of the hostile climate created by employer sanction laws and anti-immigrant legislation such as Arizona Senate Bill 1070, continue to maintain that they too have a right to work by gathering at the Center" (http://www.southsideworkercenter.org/about-us.html).

> like 20, 21, 22, something like that, of their members who were detained and who were getting bonds (Interview with Will, 2016).

The severe toll detentions had on the community was the source of many discussions about how to bond out members of the Southside Workers Center without getting into an endless cycle of fundraising that left them unable to pursue the real work of their organization- supporting migrants' rights to work. As Will continued:

> …we'd just talk a lot about the feeling of like, getting stuck in the mud, that they were feeling like, we are constantly having to stop everything that we do and just fundraise. I mean, they talked about how they would sell tamales to fundraise. And just like, all we're doing is making tamales at the Workers Center when we want to be doing so much other stuff, particularly things that might address the, more of the root cause, I suppose, of detention. Let's just actually build some power to address some of the root causes of detention (Interview with Will, 2016).

By late 2012, migrant and allied activists had begun to sketch out plans for The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet). The project began as a collaboration between white allies and directly affected migrant activists, with the expressed aim of fundraising bond money for members of the migrant activist community. Collectively, ProNet is comprised of activist allies, most of whom are white, and all of whom are documented. The group values relationship building and horizontal organizing within multiracial coalitions, and those involved in fundraising for ProNet have also been active in migrant justice work, with The Protection Networks as well as other groups in Tucson as well as with humanitarian aid work in the desert. ProNet's goals are relatively simple. First, they work to provide bond money to support detained migrant activists. Second, they offer small pots of money on a monthly basis in support of the ongoing work that The Protection Networks are doing.

Part of the ethic driving ProNet's solidarity work involves a clear distinction between the work of ProNet, as allies, and the rest of The Protection Networks, who are the communities directly targeted by anti-immigrant legislation and border militarization. This distance

emphasizes that the aims of ProNet lie in support work for migrant justice, in line with the desires of the migrant community in Tucson. Decisions about how money should be spent, and determinations about who should be bonded out of detention with ProNet funds lie with members of The Protection Networks rather than with ProNet itself. The groups within The Protection Networks each have their own process for deciding whether or not someone who has been detained is a good candidate for bond money through ProNet and, since the inception of the group, there has been deliberate distance between the fundraising done by allies within ProNet, and the decisions made by the migrant activists of The Protection Networks about how those funds should be allocated. Paige, one of the core members of ProNet who has also been involved directly with The Protection Networks for several years explains some of the dynamics of this relationship:

> …there's a set of internal conversations to when they approach the action fund (ProNet). But we've been pretty explicit that we want those conversations to happen in house, in organization so that we're not put into a position of making decisions… I couldn't really even tell you with the exception of a couple organizations (within The Protection Networks) what those stipulations currently are. So it's something that…those organizations take on that responsibility within their own groups to determine that, and I'm just going to trust that process and when they come to us, you know, there's a trust that the conversation has been had (Interview with Paige, 2016).

I worked with ProNet for a period of about a year, in 2014 and 2015. During my time participating with the project, the group consisted of anywhere from 4-8 core activists who met regularly to strategize fundraising campaigns, keep track of donations, and discuss ways to build the group's capacity. ProNet's activities consist of various efforts towards fundraising and community building. During my time with the group, we worked to facilitate donations through relationship building. For example, we launched a campaign called Rooting For Change that spanned several months and included a number of community gatherings in South Tucson, held in both English and Spanish. These gatherings had several aims. First and foremost was

relationship building between and among communities of activists of different backgrounds, and representing different projects throughout the city. The group saw these gatherings as important ways for activists to bridge the gap between white and non-white organizing in Tucson, addressing the problem discussed earlier where distance exists between predominantly white humanitarian aid groups on the border and grassroots organizing done by migrants. Secondly, these gatherings sought to communicate tools and strategies for fundraising specifically- things that we hoped would be useful for participants' individual organizational affiliations, as well as for ProNet. Throughout the Rooting for Change campaign, we held workshops on how to ask potential donors for money, various social gatherings oriented toward relationship building, and went on fieldtrips to observe and learn about some of the Protection Networks.

The goal of ProNet was to fundraise bond money so that migrant activists would be able to continue on with the other important work their organizations were doing. As Blake, a longtime activist with some of the Protection Networks, as well as with ProNet explained, this focus on fundraising has helped the members of ProNet to stay clear about their mission and goals, and avoided some of the pitfalls of activist collaborations where unclear aims can contribute to stagnation and seemingly endless conversations about what the group is and does. For ProNet, the mission has always been clear, in contrast to other groups Blake participates in, whose aims are much broader and less clear, such as racial and climate justice:

> I think one of the things that I've been really appreciating about ProNet in comparison to the other two groups I've been working with is… we've had such a clear mission. We've just always known what that is from the very beginning (laughing). It's amazing how clarifying that can be! I'm just like, "this is what we're doing, we're not doing more than that." And you know, it's a relatively narrow mission, which I think is also helpful because we're not feeling like we are going way past capacity at any point. We're fundraising and trying to step up in other ways to support the work that the Protection Networks are doing. But I just feel like the other groups I'm involved with, you know it can go everywhere (laughs). What does it mean to fight for climate justice or racial justice? Because it feels like such a big thing you're trying to take on. With just ProNet, it's narrow enough, I feel that that's helped us a lot (Interview with Blake, 2016).

Similarly, Paige discussed the relationship between the explicitly racial justice activism many of the core members of ProNet are involved in, and the work of ProNet itself which, while absolutely an endeavor rooted in an ethic of racial justice, it is not typically explicit about that aspect of the group's mission:

> There's some really obvious distinctions that I think result in…different practices. The first thing is that ProNet is not explicitly targeted at mobilizing white people into action for racial justice. So, its membership, while predominantly white folks, is multiracial. And so, who we're reaching out to is definitely multiracial. So I think for me, some of the challenges, particularly when I first got involved in TSON and now being more involved with SURJ[25]… that processing of that project… for me when I first joined, I had a lot of questions about that strategy, it wasn't necessarily intuitive for me. And so, it was the case...that TSON and SURJ does a little bit more of group processing in that way, and also I've seen that dialogue…shifting into action and the popular education model seems to be a priority of the work (of TSON and SURJ). Whereas, the action fund (ProNet)… well, at the end of the day what we're doing is raising money! (laughs). And the popular education project, and these ways of thinking through solidarity do happen (within ProNet), but they happen while that main project of shifting resources and fundraising money happens (Interview with Paige, 2016).

While the goal of fundraising has certainly simplified the mission of ProNet, the group's success has also contributed to a situation where decisions need to be made about potentially diversifying the vision of the group. Through consultation with members of the Protection Networks, ProNet has been able to introduce new ways of utilizing the funds that have been brought in. ProNet had not paid out a bond since August, 2014, contributing to a situation where there was a significant amount of money in reserve. There remains much concern that The Protection Networks will again find themselves under attack by the *polimigra*, particularly in

[25] TSON (Tucson Solidarity Organizing Network) (see Mott, 2015), and SURJ (Standing Up For Racial Justice) are both white organizations dedicated to educating other whites about white supremacy and racialized injustice. TSON was a Tucson based project, whereas SURJ is a national organization with a local Tucson chapter. Many of the core activists within ProNet were involved in TSON while it was active, and are currently involved with SURJ. The "processing of that project" that Paige refers to addresses the time spent within groups like TSON and SURJ discussing whiteness, white supremacy, and the challenges for white people trying to stand in solidarity with directly affected communities of color. A frequent critique, made internally by the activists themselves who are involved, is that such conversations, however useful they may be personally, do not necessarily always translate into productive work being done on the ground.

light of recent anti-immigrant legislation working its way through the capitol in Phoenix. Because of the surplus, however, it was decided through collective reflection within The Protection Networks that ProNet should maintain a certain amount of money in reserve, but that once that goal was met funds could be allocated to support other projects undertaken by the Protection Networks on a monthly basis.

A significant aspect of the work that ProNet does is rooted in relationship building, and attempting to build bridges between the predominantly white humanitarian aid organizations and the work done by Latin@ migrants themselves through the Protection Networks. In recent interviews with members of ProNet, I was told repeatedly about groups members' excitement regarding a joint fundraising dinner that would be sponsored by both ProNet and No More Deaths in April, 2016. In addition to the goal of fundraising, the dinner is also seen as a way to bring people who support No More Deaths together with activist from The Protection Networks to generate awareness of one another's work, with the hope of future collaboration between them. As Paige explained:

> In April, I'm really excited because we're going to have a combined fundraiser with No More Deaths and the Action Fund and the goal is we're going to be pushing sustainers. And so, you know, the people we're targeting is in many senses folks who probably have more familiarity with No More Deaths, probably are donating on a more routine basis to No More Deaths, maybe are less likely to know about the groups in ProNet, but the invitation is that they become sustaining donors for both the organizations. So, moving from this scarcity model where we have to choose one over the other, hopefully inviting kind of a sense of like, well, we can do both of these things, because both of these things are kind of approaching the issue in distinct ways, but like, let's focus on our affinity (Interview with Paige, 2016).

Beyond simply raising money, the goals of the dinner, like much of ProNet's work, are to "focus on our affinity," as Paige says, and to facilitate connection between the work of the different communities dedicated to migrant justice within Tucson across the differences in race, class, and

language that too often divide activists projects that are actually dedicated to very similar goals in the city.

Conclusion

For grassroots political activist groups like ProNet, the urgency demanded by oppressive state practices often means that there is an emphasis on action over explicit identification with any particular Leftist dogma. While participants in ProNet certainly operate in ways that are deliberately nonhierarchical, autonomous, and rooted in mutual aid, they are not explicitly anarchist, nor are they explicitly feminist or anti-racist. As the excepts from interviews above show however, ProNet is absolutely rooted in an ethic of anti-racism, feminism, and horizontal organizing, even though the group's focus on fundraising is the most important aspect of their work. During my time with ProNet, all of the core activists were motivated by a larger political vision rooted in feminist and anti-racist concerns, and all shared a commitment to horizontal organizing practices that de-centered the authority of whiteness. However, as Wright (2009a) points out, it is difficult to classify the ideological leanings of activist ventures when they do not state explicitly where they lie. Moreover, when thinking about the actual processes at work within solidarity activism, particular dogmas of the Left are perhaps not very important.

ProNet offers a powerful example of solidarity work done well— meaning that it has been carried out through on-going conversation with the communities most directly affected by anti-immigrant legislation and border militarization. The group checks in regularly with members of the Protection Networks in informal ways, such as through the everyday involvement in activist projects, and through friendships and casual social interaction. However, and more importantly, the communication between ProNet and the Protection Networks is also more formalized through occasional meetings where representatives from all the groups are present, with the goal of discussing their shared aims and goals. The members of ProNet, as

(mostly) white allies, are very intentional about taking direction from the Protection Networks themselves, and they are careful to avoid replicating problematic tendencies for white activists to co-opt or take over movements that are predominantly by and for directly affected communities of color.

The micropolitics of grassroots social justice work often dictate the success or failure of activist ventures. As such, it is crucial that we continue to interrogate the process of solidarity, and the ways that it is constituted through an on-going process of relationship building and self-reflection among communities of those directly affected as well as their allied supporters. This is particularly important for migrant justice work in Tucson, and elsewhere. As Harsha Walia writes, reflecting on her own involvement with migrant justice activism in Canada:

> Migrant justice movements… like other movements of people, have and continue to struggle to create and maintain leadership from communities directly under attack, people directly fighting back. A future that continues to be led by students and professionals, those who speak in a glossary of activist terms played on repeat, will not be led anywhere, nor arrive anywhere. Every time an undocumented mother walks into a school to enroll her child, it is an act of resistance and defiance… Simply staring down the bared face of violence and continuing to breathe is incredible resistance. Linking our political organizing to this chain of freedom is critical and one of our most urgent concerns (Walia, 2013: 281).

In the context of migrant justice work, allies who seek to stand in solidarity must do so through practice. As Walia shows in the above quotation, the stakes for undocumented migrant activists themselves are incredibly high and their resistance occurs through the day-to-day practice of living as undocumented, while "staring down the bared face of violence and continuing to breathe". To work in solidarity is to remain mindful of the profound differences between where white allies and migrant activists are coming from and, through on-going collaboration and relationship, to work in ways that leave power and leadership in the hands of the communities most directly affected by unjust immigration and border policies.

Conclusion

Throughout the process of researching and writing this dissertation, I have been guided by a series of core questions: What is solidarity? How do we know when we've really done it? How can people of relative privilege ethically and meaningfully work in solidarity with directly affected communities in ways that are immediately useful and relevant to their struggles?

As I have shown throughout, the answers to these questions are complex, context specific, and often elusive. In the case of the conflict discussed in "The Activist Polis", between Tohono O'odham elders and younger white anarchist activists, as well as the ongoing struggle to become anti-racist shown through "Precious Work", solidarity is defined in relation to what it is not. That is to say, a positive, productive example of solidarity remains so elusive that we are most often only able to see examples of it done badly and then conclude that something *was not* true solidarity. It is very challenging to find examples of solidarity that all agree are done well, or that really reflect a sense of authentic solidarity.

Through "Working within Difference", I aimed to highlight an example of solidarity done well through The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet). While this project is certainly not without its own set of headaches and on-going struggles, it remains rooted in the leadership, direction, and desires of the communities most directly affected by anti-immigrant legislation and policing, and border militarization in southern Arizona. I contend that we can consider ProNet as an example of effective and genuine solidarity work because of the group's grounding in an ethic of support that takes direction from the directly affected communities, as well as its longevity and success fulfilling their basic mission.

And so, we must ask at this juncture— What's the difference? What is the difference, on the one hand, between solidarity work done well, and that which is not? I argue that the difference lies, first and foremost, in long-term relationship building across difference. As

discussed at various points in the articles above, Tucson's activist networks contain many transient activists, whether young 'activist tourists', or retirees who are only in town for part of the year. In either case, this transience challenges the capacity of white social justice activists on the ground to meaningfully work with directly affected communities and to form sincere relationships across the divisions of race, class, and language. For this reason, the work of ProNet is all the more significant because the group was founded on long-term connections between (mostly) white solidarity activists who are committed to remaining in Tucson for the long-term, and who have developed meaningful connections with Latin@ and Chican@ activists through that longevity. It is through these relationships that the core activists of ProNet understand how to fulfill the need for fundraising expressed by The Protection Networks, and it is the strength of these relationships that has enabled ProNet's work to continue in ways that are ethical and directly useful for The Protection Networks themselves.

Throughout my dissertation work, I encountered many stories similar to that discussed in "The Activist Polis", through which well-intentioned whites inadvertently caused offence to the directly affected communities they sought to help. Or, in other instances, there may not have been any direct offence, but rather damage was done through simple inattention and a lack of accountability— a general 'flakiness' pervasive throughout youth activism, perpetuated by the privilege of most young white activists to forget, to change their plans, or to spontaneously decide that they need to travel elsewhere, abandoning the struggles they claim to support. As I discussed in "The Activist Polis", one of the significant barriers to activist collaboration across differentials in social privilege lies with the fact that directly affected communities are constantly surrounded by the contexts of their oppression. Particularly for Native American and undocumented migrant activists— they don't get a break from their positionality or the everyday fear and trauma associated with the terms of their oppression. While most white social justice

activists can choose whether or not to pay attention to the struggle, and dictate the degree to which they are immersed within it, directly affected communities do not have this luxury.

In "Precious Work", I tease out some of the ways white social justice activists address these contradictions and come to terms with their own privileged positionality. As I discuss, many white activists *are* aware of the complexities of their status within white supremacy that contribute to offence and instances where white privilege manifests in troubling ways. Attention to the ways that white activists exist in a perpetual state of becoming anti-racist that can never fully be realized provides a sort of liberatory revelation. One can be flawed, imperfect, and destined to make mistakes, and yet simultaneously be progressing toward something better, contributing along the way to support the work of directly affected communities while maintaining mindfulness of the requisite of constant self-work and self-reflection.

While the core ethic driving this dissertation work has been the pursuit of an understanding of solidarity through grassroots political activism, two other aims are worth highlighting here. First, I contribute critiques of academic knowledge production, through the ways that particular voices are either emphasized or neglected in academic literature on systemic oppression. In particular, I am interested in pushing into closer dialogue streams of scholarship which often focus on similar themes, but which remain disparate conversations. In "The Activist Polis" I bring discussions of settler colonialism together with scholarship on white supremacy, in an effort to highlight the commonalities and ruptures between them. In "Precious Work", I connect Critical Whiteness Studies to public discourses about whiteness and white supremacy, particularly from the vantage point of activists of color. Through "Working within Difference", I seek to highlight the ways that work on solidarity, both from academic and activist perspectives, often take place within disparate circles whose paths do not always cross, despite the fact that they are talking about a shared struggle to understand and enact solidarity.

Second, my intellectual grounding lies first and foremost within political geography and I speak directly to border scholars' calls to theorize the complexities of the bordering nation-state. As many have argued (Coleman, 2007; Hiemstra, 2012; Johnson et al, 2011; Mountz, 2010), borders are much more than a boundary line. They manifest internally, externally, through devolution and evolution, and through invisibilities and mobilities. I have come to see the US/Mexico border as a sort of monstrous beast, a many-headed hydra that is constantly snapping and swirling about in unforeseen new directions. My interest lies in thinking about how we combat this monster. Ultimately, bordering perpetuates myriad oppressions on the ground and it is the work of grassroots political activists to fight these oppressions wherever and however they manifest. Solidarity is a crucial piece in all of this. We are not all equally impacted by bordering processes. It is only through an ethical practice of solidarity that various directly affected communities and privileged allies can stand together to combat this monster.

Appendix A: Method

"Social science", writes Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 5), "is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake". I was mindful of this sentiment throughout the course of my dissertation research. A number of contradictory things were 'at stake' as I worked through this project. First, was what I believed to be the significance of my research— examining the nature of conflict and collaboration within grassroots political activism, with the aim of highlighting the ways that differences in race and class are often at the forefront of interpersonal problems within activist networks. Second, of course, was the fact that I was personally invested in completing a PhD, and acquiring a certain position for myself in life based on that achievement. Finally, at stake were the relationships that I had with activists of different backgrounds throughout Arizona and my worry that my position as 'researcher' would jeopardize some of the relationships I had developed prior to beginning my PhD.

It was because of these things that I was very cautious about who I would interview and how I would communicate my research to people. In some cases, the activists I knew were white graduate students like me, and so my dual position as activist and scholar was easily translatable and I felt that my good intentions were understood. In other cases, activists I worked with were people I'd come to know through my engagement with anarchism in Arizona, and I knew long before starting my PhD that there was much mistrust of academia and suspicion of academic researchers. In still other situations, activists were people I came to know only after I began my doctoral research, and so I was very careful to be honest about my position as a researcher, but to prove my sincere commitment to the work that they were doing through my actions as a participant observer. As Doreen Massey argued, "being involved in ongoing political struggles means, each time, re-negotiating the nature of one's involvement and responsibility", and this

understanding certainly has shaped my long-term engagement on the ground (Massey, 2008: 495).

Ultimately, I conducted about 40 recorded interviews with activists based in Tucson, most of whom were white, though definitely not all. To a certain extent, the demography of my interviewees was deliberate. As others have shown, the problematic dynamics of research across racialized difference should not be taken lightly (Castleden et al, 2012; Coombes et al, 2014; Faria and Mollett, 2014; Gahman, 2015; McGinty et al, 2013; Shaw et al, 2006; Smith, 1999). As someone who is white, but who is also investigating the racialized dynamics of conflict, I was very keen not to replicate problematic legacies of social science research carried out by white people in and about communities of color. My own positionality led to a sort of self-selection where interviewees were concerned. Because I was working with so many other white activists involved in solidarity work, these were the networks I was able to draw from most easily. In addition, I was working with political activists and radicals and, as such, many people didn't want to be interviewed. In some cases, this was explicit, and in others it was something I intuited from particular people who I then decided not to pursue for an interview.

Participant observation formed the backbone of my research process. It was through my regular participation with activist projects that I was able to speak with people about their thoughts and experiences regarding the topics under scrutiny throughout this dissertation. Informal moments of collaboration and connection were invaluable and comprise the real heart of my time in the field. In large part, this is why I developed a rather slow moving and organic approach to my research. It seemed more important that I convey my sincerity as an activist ahead of the desire to amass any particular number of recorded interviews.

Below, is reproduced the text of "Re-living Tucson: geographic fieldwork as an activist-academic", published in *Arizona Anthropologist* (Mott, 2015). Through this piece, I reflect on

my complex positionality, and the process of participant observation as I experienced it. While this essay was written in 2014, and I remained in the field for about a year afterward, it does convey much of the tension I faced while occupying the dual positions of activist and researcher in a community I was a part of. Further, it speaks to the unpredictable flows that a doctoral dissertation must inevitably pass through as one moves from imagining the project to actually doing it, and the unanticipated changes that one encounters along the way.

Re-living Tucson: geographic fieldwork as an activist-academic

My dissertation research in the Arizona/Sonora borderlands spanned a period of about two and a half years, from January, 2013 through June, 2015. My project was originally developed while I was living in Kentucky, a distant land in all respects to southern Arizona, where my research on racial difference within activist networks in the borderlands was carried out. While I was based in Kentucky, from 2010-2012, amid the busy din of departmental social activities, lectures, classes, and teaching, the visions I had of my fieldwork were based on memories of my life in Tucson from 2005-2010. While I knew things would change during these two years I was away, I could not have known how much, nor how those changes would impact my own place in this city that had been my home. My relationship to activism in Tucson has shifted a great deal through my research, and while some of those shifts have been very positive, others were quite difficult.

The Personal is Political

As they say, distance makes the heart grow fonder and my research plan was developed against the backdrop of homesickness. I really missed Tucson during my years in Kentucky, and many of my ideas of how my research would progress were predicated upon my own positive

reflections on activism in Tucson and my sentiments regarding the relationships I held with people there prior to starting my PhD program. I felt very inspired by activists in Tucson, both through my own knowledge of things before I left for Kentucky, as well as through news reports and social media updates. I imagined my research to be a mode through which I might share some of the things that seemed to me very positive about activism in southern Arizona: people's dedication, attention to issues of social privilege and marginalization, and the general badassness that accompanies meaningful political action.

I was certainly nervous about aspects of my research. I worried about how people would view me upon my return as an activist-academic. Geographic research may not carry with it precisely the same fraught past as anthropology, but geographers definitely have our own baggage born of a history of complicity with colonialism and white supremacy. As a white academic interested in negotiations of race and privilege, I am constantly acutely aware of my own problematic positionality. As far as my activist friends were concerned, my position as any sort of academic was more important than any particular disciplinary training. After years spent hanging out with anarchists and other political radicals, I was well aware of people's views on academia. Within the circles that I had worked with most closely during my time living in Tucson, folks tended to view academia and academics as elitist, insular, and somewhat predatory. I worried that my friends would question my intentions, that they would feel wary around me, or that they would see me as some sort of spy.

Ultimately, I found that I was much more concerned with these things than anyone else was. It was more important to people that I participate in actions and projects underway, and that I simply be myself. I had initially envisioned developing a participatory project for my dissertation, through which I would have built my research around the needs of activists in southern Arizona. However, I came to realize that my work as an academic was neither very

interesting nor useful to the people I knew, particularly since they were aware that my research would most likely end up in expensive academic journals that they would not be able to access. It was far more important that I be involved as a friend and activist. My academic writing was not seen as a meaningful contribution, but neither was it seen as much of a problem. It was far more significant that I actually came through on my commitments to the activism I was involved in. People were interested in my academic writing because they knew it was something important to me, and to my progress toward my PhD, but I found that it wasn't necessarily something they were invested in beyond their concern for me as a friend and ally.

Predictably, my research did not go as I thought it would. I hadn't anticipated the effect of transience on the community I knew before. When I returned to Tucson, I found the landscape of activism had shifted dramatically. While I had been away, longstanding projects had died and new projects had been born. New activists moved to the area, while many of the folks I knew had left town. Some people who had been very active and dedicated in the past had stepped out of activism, due to burn-out, changes in their home-lives, or busier work and school lives. It was very disorienting to return to this altered Tucson and it was difficult for me to figure out how to plug back into the social networks that had felt so familiar before.

A Participant Observer

A critical historical moment that occurred between the time I left for Kentucky and when I returned to Tucson two and a half years later was the aftermath of the passage of SB 1070, Arizona's notorious racial profiling legislation. This law went into effect just days before I left for Kentucky and, while I was aware of how traumatizing that law was expected to be and of how upset people were that it had passed, I could not have anticipated the ways that it would change the landscape of activism throughout southern Arizona.

Race became a central topic in conversations among activists, both in terms of people's assessment of SB 1070 and its implementation, and in the context of activism itself. I returned to Tucson to find a more heightened awareness of whiteness and the ways that race manifests within circles of activists. In addition, migrant-led activism came to occupy a more central place in the overall landscape of activism in Tucson. For white activists, this meant bringing much more intention to how people choose to engage, often taking deliberately back-seat roles when working in solidarity with the people most affected by border policing and SB 1070.

I felt conflicted about how to re-engage in these local activist worlds when I first returned to Tucson. Migrant justice activism has been the focal point for activists in Tucson for the last decade or so, ever since border policing across the entirety of the US/Mexico border region began to funnel migrants through the hottest and most dangerous parts of the border- southern Arizona's Sonoran Desert. It had always seemed strange to me that people focused so intently on this work. Certainly, humanitarian aid projects like No More Deaths do very important, life-saving work, and most of the activists I interviewed initially came to Tucson to become involved with No More Deaths, providing food, water, and medical assistance to migrants crossing the desert. However, I often wondered why it was that people chose the projects that they did, especially for white activists who often talk about the importance of organizing one's own community. Presumably, for white activists, this means working with other white people in some capacity or another.

Beyond the sticky racial dynamics within southern Arizona's activist networks was my knowledge of other, often marginalized communities who had reached out to activists in Tucson in the past. Specifically, I and other anarchists had been involved in border opposition work with Tohono O'odham activists for many years. I was aware of the ways that emphasis within Tucson's activist scene on migrant justice often served to further marginalize the problems many

Tohono O'odham face with border policing and surveillance. Further, Tucson's activist emphasison migrant justice often mobilizes discourses emphasizing the indigeneity of many migrants, but remains problematically silent about the fact that Tucson itself is on O'odham land- an oversight that is hurtful and offensive to many Tohono O'odham. I felt a strong desire to orient myself toward activism in solidarity with Tohono O'odham activists. At the same time, I felt that the conversations about race, privilege, and solidarity happening in migrant justice circles in Tucson were things that I wanted to contribute to and learn from.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork, there were three primary projects I was involved in. All were very oriented towards social and racial justice, although each approached those topics from very different angles. The first was a project called O'odham Voice Against the Wall, which is primarily the mission of Rose, a Tohono O'odham elder and activist who works against the border and border patrol, and who works with traditional O'odham communities to preserve their cultural knowledge and ways of life.[26] I originally came to know Rose through Dry River, Tucson's anarchist infoshop and radical venue, a space I was involved with for several years before moving to Kentucky. My work with O'odham Voice Against the Wall is varied and has included everything from participating in actions to helping out with things around Rose's village. Of all the projects I've participated in, working with O'odham Voice Against the Wall has allowed me an understanding of aspects of border security that are often left out of national discourses and academic forums, specifically the profound ways that border security has impacted aspects of traditional O'odham culture and daily life.

The contrast between the situation in Tucson and the situation in Rose's village is

[26] Names given are pseudonyms.

striking. In Tucson one can choose to be aware of the border, or to simply carry on and disregard the fact that one resides in a war zone. Yes, in Tucson there is racial profiling of migrant communities. Yes, the effects of border policing are present in certain parts of the city and for particular non-white communities. In Tohono O'odham villages near the border, however, the presence of the border patrol is unavoidable. Rose's village is just a mile or so north of the border and her house is on the southern edge of the village, only about a quarter mile from the border. Border patrol trucks circulate constantly, helicopters are often overhead, surveillance towers are visible in the hills surrounding the village, and the people are constantly subject to the whims of border patrol officers. These things are a constant part of everyday life for people in O'odham villages near the border.

The second project I participated in was called the Tucson Solidarity Organizing Network (TSON) and, unfortunately, this project is an example of an activist endeavor that did not succeed, despite a very energetic beginning. TSON began in 2012 and had a strong presence in Tucson's activist community for its first year. The goal of the group was to be a place where white activists could both (1) develop their understandings and critiques of white supremacy and their socialization as white people, and (2) show up in solidarity for actions and projects led by people of color. Initially, TSON was a great success and contributed meaningfully within southern Arizona's activist networks. The group hosted workshops and other community events for local activists, carried out solidarity actions in the aftermath of Trayvon Martin's murder, and was active in opposition to Dennis DeConcini's role on both the University of Arizona board of trustees while he simultaneously served on the board of directors of the Corrections Corporation of America.

Unfortunately however, TSON was doomed to failure because of interpersonal problems within the group. It was a relatively small group to begin with and was primarily made up of

people who were in romantic relationships with one another. A few of these relationships ended and new ones were formed from within the group's membership. These personal entanglements ultimately proved fatal to the group, as many core members stepped aside due to the difficult emotions that emerged. By the time I joined TSON in 2013, the group had dwindled to about five or six regular members and despite our attempts to bring energy back into the project, TSON took an indefinite hiatus in the spring of 2014 and did not regroup.

The lessons learned from TSON were profound and I had a number of very productive conversations with members of the group. Perhaps the biggest lesson learned was from the ways the group handled conflict. TSON did not really tackle the relationship issues among its members because these things were thought external to the project itself by some members of the group. While this was the opinion that ultimately determined the path TSON took in dealing with these concerns, other members expressed dissenting opinions and wished that the group would have been more open about discussing these problems. Many discussed the ways that the personal is, indeed, political, and how they felt it was wrong to demarcate between these two realms. As a number of people expressed to me, the group's inability to work through the interpersonal problems was seen as symptomatic of the same alienating socio-political forces that the group was dedicated to combatting through their social justice work.

The third project I have been involved in is The Protection Network Action Fund (ProNet). The protection networks are a coalition of five migrant-led organizations in Tucson, all of whom function as a network of support for undocumented people. After SB 1070 went into effect in 2010, members of the protection networks found themselves and their communities under attack by local law enforcement. Alliances between the border patrol and the Tucson Police Department have meant that even a traffic stop could result in immediate detention and the start of deportation proceedings. Consequently, activists in the protection networks were

forced to shift the focus of their work to fundraising, so that their community members could be bonded out of custody and reunited with their families as quickly as possible.

The goal of ProNet is to fundraise so that there is money available to support undocumented migrant activists in the event that they are detained by law enforcement. It is a group of mostly white activists who are also all involved in racial justice work in other sectors of Tucson's activist community and who mostly work directly with migrant justice projects. The ProNet project has been very successful, both in terms of its fundraising ability and the capacity of its members to form and sustain long-term relationships that bridge barriers of race, class, language, and culture.

Conclusion

As my fieldwork progressed, I became more attentive to activists' personal experiences with race, through their own awareness of white supremacy. Many of the white activists I spoke with described some period of awakening to race and racism, typically in their teens or early twenties. For most, it was a slow process and it was only over time that they became aware of their own complicity in white supremacy and other systems of oppression. Many described a timeline that flowed from an initial awareness of white supremacy in a general sense, to increasing understanding of their own privileges as white people- an understanding that was often accompanied by a lot of guilt, discomfort, and uncertainty how to proceed in a positive way. I came to view this as a 'becoming' of sorts. The process of coming to terms with one's own whiteness as a racial justice activist who works against white supremacy is always ongoing. Despite the fact that many white activists wish to distance themselves from 'typical' white behaviors and attitudes- one cannot "unwhiten" oneself. The privileges and oppressions carried

out by whiteness continue on a large scale, regardless of one's personal relationship to the phenomena and interaction in small-scale settings.

Ultimately, my fieldwork was full of surprises and certainly did not go as I had anticipated. Some of those surprises were troubling, while others contributed positively to my overall understanding of the dynamics of social difference within activist communities. As I work through my dissertation, I hope to convey the complexity of these interpersonal struggles, while simultaneously highlighting the inspiring commitments to social and racial justice held by many of the activists I have come to know. There are important lessons on power and privilege there that could be instructive for contexts that extend far beyond southern Arizona's activist networks.

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Education

- MA University of Arizona, Near Eastern Studies, 2009
- BA University of Oregon, Religious Studies major, Anthropology Minor, 2004
- AA&S Yakima Valley Community College, General Arts and Sciences, 1998

Teaching Awards

University of Kentucky Society of Geographers Outstanding Geography Teacher Award, April 2016

University of Kentucky Provost's Outstanding Teaching Award, April 2013

University of Kentucky College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award, April 2013

Peer Reviewed Publications

Mott C (2016) The Activist Polis: Topologies of conflict in indigenous solidarity activism, *Antipode* 48(1). http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/anti.12167/abstract.

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Other Academic Publications

Mott C (2015) Re-living Tucson: geographic fieldwork as an activist-academic. *Arizona Anthropologist* 24(1): 33-41.

Mott C (2014) Review: *Quiet Rumors: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader*, by the Dark Star Collective. *Human Geography* 7(3): 119-121.

Mott C and Roberts S (2013) Difference Really Does Matter: A Response to Garrett and Hawkins, www.antipodefoundation.org. doi: http://radicalantipode.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/mott-and-roberts-reply.pdf.

University Teaching Positions

Instructor of Record

Fall, 2015	Qualitative Methods in Geography, University of Kentucky
Fall, 2012	Geography of US Cities, University of Kentucky
Spring, 2012	Introduction to Human Geography, University of Kentucky
Summer, 2007	History of the Middle East, University of Arizona

Teaching Assistant

Spring, 2016	Digital Mapping, University of Kentucky
Fall, 2011	Geography of US Cities, University of Kentucky
Spring, 2011	Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World, University of Kentucky
Fall, 2010	Global Environmental Conflicts, University of Kentucky
Spring, 2006	Middle Eastern Humanities, University of Arizona
Fall, 2005	History of the Middle East, University of Arizona

Awards and Honors

International Geographical Union travel award, to support attendance at the 2013 International Geographical Union meeting in Kyoto, Japan.

Association of American Geographers IGU travel award, to support attendance at the 2013 International Geographical Union meeting in Kyoto, Japan.

Barnhart-Withington Research Award, Summer 2013, to support attendance at the 2013 International Geographical Union meeting in Kyoto, Japan.

Political Geography Specialty Group Travel Award, 2013, to support attendance at the AAG annual meeting in Los Angeles, CA.

Barnhart-Withington Research Award, Summer 2012, to support dissertation research, University of Kentucky.

Barnhart-Withington Research Award, Summer 2011, to support preliminary dissertation research, University of Kentucky.

Academic Year FLAS (Foreign Language and Area Studies) Award, 2006-2007, to support studies of third year Arabic, University of Arizona.

Summer FLAS Award, 2006, to support intensive second year Arabic studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Departmental Honors, University of Oregon, 2004.

Americorps Education Award, 2000.

Americorps Education Award, 1999.