Idle No More – Indigenous Activism and Feminism

Sonja John[1]

The grassroots movement "Idle No More," although founded and carried by Indigenous women, does not identify as a women's nor as an indigenous organization but as a movement led by indigenous women. With a basic-democratic approach and intersectional alliances the women successfully generated broad support for their main concerns – protecting the environment and treaty relationships against patriarchal policies of the Canadian government. This movement demonstrates that Indigenous feminism and decolonization complement and foster each other. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: http://www.transformativestudies.org ©2015 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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INTRODUCTION

The grassroots movement Idle No More spread over the North American continent like a fire on the prairie. In October 2012 Sheelah McLean, Sylvia McAdam, Nina Wilson and Jessica Gordon, four women from the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, protested the federal omnibus budget bills C-45 and C-31, that would substantially diminish First Nations treaty, sovereignty and land rights. Idle No More locates itself within the framework of Indigenous renaissance, decoloniality and

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Indigenous[2] activism. Although founded and led by Indigenous women, this group does neither define itself as a women's movement nor as an Indigenous movement. "We are a movement led by Indigenous women" (Sylvia McAdam, June 14, 2013). Nonetheless, Idle No More members contemplate how feminist theory and praxis may have influenced the movement. Indeed, the movement applies strategies that have been theorized within Indigenous feminism for decades. Looking at Idle No More in particular, I will identify possible interleaving and commonalities as well as differences between feminist and Indigenous-decolonial concerns. Exemplified by the emancipative character of Idle No More I will show under which circumstances struggles under the flags of resource conflicts and decoloniality can complement Indigenous feminism. Therefore, in the following I will look at the activities and goals of the movement within the frameworks of Indigenous feminism as well as postcolonial feminism.

COMPLICATED SUBJECT POSITIONS

Indigenous women, including the Idle No More activists, speak from complicated subject positions; on the one hand they negotiate their individual rights in postindustrial nation states, on the other they demand their collective sovereignty rights as members of First Nations, exercising power over their Indigenous territories. The position of Indigenous women is further complicated and weakened by internal conflicts introduced into First Nations communities by the dominant society. Additionally, even the sentiments of Indigenous women towards feminisms are ambiguous; some do not see themselves included by feminists who are unwilling to understand Indigenous women in their full historical and contemporary contexts, while others view feminist positions as valid and feminist theory as helpful and adequate to articulate critique on unequal social, economic and political conditions (Green 2007, 20f.). However, Indigenous feminists are being accused of colonial attitudes in their own communities (see below).

In the context of competing positions in relation to feminisms Idle No More follows indirectly the call of Chandra Talpade Mohantys (2003): to decentralize the hegemony of Western feminism and to build autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally based

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[2] When possible I use the self-referential term of Indigenous nations. When trans-national contexts are concerned I use the terms Indigenous and First Nations that express the unique quality of these groups as first nations and also transports the connectedness with the land.

feminisms.[3] According to Mohanty, it is not the experience of being a female that unites women in the *Third World*, but lived experience of structural dominance and oppression. The "potential commonality" lies in resistant political reactions to sexist, racist, and imperialist structures (Mohanty, Russo, Torres 1991, 7). Idle No More, too, calls on people to partake in the formation of emancipative communities.

In regards to the characteristics of Idle No More I refer to their own statements which I interpret in front of the background of Indigenous-feminist epistemologies. Without explicit reference to feminist critique and analyses, Idle No More follows the suggestions of Verna St. Denis, to choose this intersectional approach to not only gain an understanding of the circumstances but also of the practices and justifications of those who are responsible for these circumstances (St. Denis 2007, 43). Although Indigenous women do not share one single, common culture, they share similar experiences of colonization that have changed Indigenous societies considerably.

The special relationship between Indigenous or First Nations and the Canadian government is founded on international treaties with the British Crown and finds recognition in federal law. The recognition of these treaty rights and the perpetuation of this special nation-to-nation relationship have always been at the heart of Indigenous political struggles and form the basic demands of Idle No More. They fight an omnibus budget bill that in its consequences undermines the nation-to-nation relationship in a colonial act in order to appropriate and expropriate Indigenous resources.

Since Idle No More resists current politics of the Canadian government, the context analysis of this paper addresses the situation in contemporary Canada. Under the conservative government – since 2006 led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper – the situation of First Nations has deteriorated to a degree that led Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence to declare a state of emergency for her reserve in October 2011. In December 2012, inspired by the actions of Idle No More, she began a six-week lasting hunger strike to pressure the Harper government to fulfill its share of treaty obligations (Van Dusen/Tomas 2013). The analysis could be broadened to include other settler states because the

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[3] However, Idle No More does not distance themselves from the "third world women" term, a term Mohanty criticizes for being a monolithic category that eradicates the perspective of Indigenous women; consequently, the needs of Indigenous women in their specific contexts remain invisible for those in the other three worlds who determine the agenda (Mohanty 2003, 17).

practices of colonization in other regions are similar in application and results.

This article is based on presentations by the Idle No More founders Sylvia McAdam and Sheela McLean as well as the organizers Alexandria Wilson and Erica Lee at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Annual Meeting on June 15, 2013. The women talked about the founding moment, their motivations, experiences with and expectations for the movement. In addition, I draw on a semi-structured interview with Sylvia McAdam (June 14, 2013) and reflections by movement members published in the book *The Winter We Danced* (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective 2014). For the analytic framework I draw on the archive of Indigenous and postcolonial feminist theory as well as the concept of the power matrix by Quijano (2000).

IDLE NO MORE:
THE FORMATION OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Idle No More formed to protest bill C-45 and bill C-31 at the end of the year 2012. This omnibus budget bill, introduced on October 18, 2012, would allow companies access to untapped resources by lifting regulations in those two areas hindering unlimited resource extraction: environmental protection and land and sovereignty rights of First Nations. A considerable amount of desired natural resources – predominantly oil – is located in Indigenous territories. Idle No More drew attention to the crucial points of the budget bill, especially to the proposed changes to the Indian Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act; these would substantially impact sovereignty rights of First Nations as well as environmental protection policies. Three Indigenous women Sylvia McAdam (Nehiyaw – in English Cree), Nina Wilson (Nakota and Nehiyaw) and Jessica Gordon (Pasqua), first discussed the bill in an internet chat room. When they decided to educate the public outside of the World Wide Web about this scheme, they drew in non-Indigenous political activist Sheelah McLean, well-known in Saskatoon for her anti-racist and anti-discrimination work. The women observed and indicated the violations of Indigenous land rights and the annulations of the principle of consent with First Nations. This principle prohibits the unilateral intervention of the settler state in Indigenous affairs "without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned" (UN 2007, 9). Anything but new, this key principle of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007

was also found in the Royal Proclamation from 1763 and was firmly established in Canadian law.

The twitter hashtagIdleNoMore rapidly gained momentum and weight. In December 2012, the movement succeeded in carrying the protest from the internet into the streets of dozens of North American cities. At the second National Day of Action in January 2013 the protests gained global scope with rounddance flashmobs in North American cities and supporting declarations of solidarity in front of numerous Canadian embassies on different continents. The goal of the movement is to, "give the voices of our people a forum," to direct attention to the continuous constraints of fundamental rights and to pressure the Canadian government through collective actions to uphold existing rights and respect treaties as well as protect environmental laws (Idle No More 2012).

Idle No More defends treaties, Indigenous sovereignty and water; it's that simple (Sylvia McAdam, June 14, 2013). Of course, it is not that simple. On different levels Idle No More faces unequal and unfavorable power relations. Although the law has been passed in the meantime, Idle No More continues to educate the public. The movement criticizes not only the amendments themselves but also the social and political contexts in which these changes occur.

I will look at the debates Idle No More intervenes in with the help of Anibal Quijano's (2000) concepts of coloniality.[4] According to Quijano the formation of the colonial power matrix depends on four dimensions: (1) control over authority; (2) appropriation of land; (3) control over gender and sexuality; and (4) control over subjectivity and knowledge. Further, Quijano stresses the effects of the interrelations of these spheres and how they limit access to education, knowledge and capital and how these, in turn, connect to racist discrimination. Along the four spheres defined by Quijano I will now introduce the goals of Idle No More.

CONTROL OVER AUTHORITY

The Indian Act, passed in 1876, marks the end of the epoch of bilateral treaty agreements between the British Crown and First Nations. This Canadian act regulates who receives the official status *Indian*, how Indigenous societies are to be politically structured and governed, and

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[4] Indigenous scholars generally describe the situation of external control experienced by First Nations as colonial or coloniality and not as postcolonial, while simultaneously valuing postcolonial theory for providing the language to articulate the conflicts (Wilson 2004, 69f.).

how the Canadian government administers their land and resources. The traditional leaders and elder councils were replaced by nominated c*hiefs*. These *Indian Act chiefs* take upon the role of administrator for the settler state. Canada established male dominated administrative structures within (formerly mainly matrilineal and matriarchal) Indigenous societies. Until a few decades ago, women were excluded from governmental positions. Even in 2007 only five percent among the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the umbrella organization of the *Indian Act Chiefs*, were women (Glenn/Greene 2007, 230). Idle No More criticizes the representation of the chiefs and advocates for a more basic-democratic organization of First Nations. In its work Idle No More stresses independence from and keeping a distance to the AFN; it does not intend to copy hierarchical structures within the grassroots movement. Idle No More also criticizes the Canadian state's failure to consult the AFN before introducing the law; this constitutes a violation of the principle of consent. However, Idle No More participants were even more appalled when they learned that some AFN chiefs met in consultations and gave their consent to Bill C-45 – without communicating the issue to the Indigenous communities concerned, the very communities they represent (Sylvia McAdam, June 14, 2013). This may indicate that some chiefs are more committed to the Canadian state then to their own communities.

Most First Nations do not have accountability procedures in place to report to their members; they only report to the Canadian government (McAdam, June 15, 2013). The endeavors of Idle No More to pluralize the access to power and to expose the omnibus budget bill as a continuation of colonization did not remain unnoticed by the settler state. In August 2013 the Canadian Security Intelligence Service declared that Idle No More was under observation. The activities of the movement were characterized as a threat to national security. Reports of the observation were passed on to the AFN. Ironically, the chiefs learned from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service of the needs and demands of the very people they officially represent (CBC 2013).

However, the AFN cannot be confined in a black-and-white dichotomy. Several chiefs and major opposition parties in Ottawa have co-signed a joint declaration demanding "a fundamental change in the relationship of First Nations and the Crown" (Christoff 2013). In pre-Idle No More-times this alliance and this outcome was unthinkable.

In the face of asymmetrical power relations Idle No More also turned to the international arena. In addition to digital and analogous networking the movement appealed to the United Nations (UN). Since

Canada signed the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples belatedly in 2010[5], First Nations in the country had the opportunity to call upon the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, at that time James Anaya.[6] Representing Idle No More, Sylvia McAdam addressed the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May 2013. Thereupon, James Anaya announced he would observe the situation of First Nations in Canada. On October 14, 2013 an official hearing with James Anaya took place to which Idle No More sent delegates. Their input will be included in the official report. As an immediate statement Anaya declared: "As a general rule, resource extraction should not occur on lands subject to Aboriginal claims without adequate consultations and a free, prior and informed consent of the Aboriginal peoples concerned" (Anaya 2013).

The consultation of the UN makes clear that Idle No More seeks to address and discuss Indigenous issues not only on the national but also on the international level. This is primarily because these issues are of international scope due to their treaty background, and secondly because the national government is not fulfilling its obligations.

In order to illustrate political pitfalls, Idle No More points out the problematic changes to the Indian Act and the establishing of an androcentric system of control in Indigenous societies. Foreign control over authority has allowed for the continued dispossession of Indigenous land, resources, and rights.

APPROPRIATION OF LAND

Idle No More argues that the settler state uses bill C-45 to continue its colonial conquering expedition. Through the Indian Act the Canadian government claimed the position of proconsul of Indigenous resources having the authority to freely dispose of them – previously possible only under the condition of obtaining the explicit consent of the respective First Nations. With the changes to the Indian Act under bill C-45 (paragraphs 37, 39 and 40) the disposal of Indigenous land is considerably more easily achieved (Parliament of Canada 2012a). These amendments can be seen in a historic continuum; the founding and rise of settler states like the USA and Canada are based on Indigenous

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[5] When the Declaration was ratified in 2007 only four countries voted against it: Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia.
[6] James Anaya served in this position from May 2008 to May 2014. In February 2014 James Anaya was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by a Norwegian Member of Parliament (Schilling 2014).

dispossession, dislocation and at times extinction. Bill C-45 follows elimination politics (from warfare to assimilation) that intend to separate the Indigenous population of the Americas from their land. Idle No More intervenes in these concrete resource wars with its rejection of the underlying capitalist exploitation logic as well as the white supremacist attitude of manifest destiny.

> We have never surrendered our land, our water or our resources; they were stolen from us. ... Decolonization means restitution to First Nations what rightfully belongs to them. Justice means restitution. Justice means that my people not only survive but that they are able to flourish (McAdam, June 14, 2013).

In Native American Studies the term survivance is used to express the resistant aspect of Indigenous survival despite the overarching conditions (Vizenor 2008, 19). The Muscogee-Creek historian Donald Fixico views Native Americans as considerably underestimated underdog champions: "The rest of society should look towards Indian Country and acknowledge the resilience of Native people and the rebuilding of their nations" (Fixico 2013, 226). Idle No More takes part in this self-determined Native rebuilding.

Another of Idle No More's major concern constitutes the consequences of the amendments of the Navigable Waters Protection Act through bill C-45. Point 316 stipulates the renaming of the Navigable Waters Protection Act as the Navigation Protection Act. Water is no longer in the title, and water is no longer protected. Now this act no longer federally protects all water ways, but only those 3 oceans, 97 lakes and parts of 62 rivers listed (Parliament of Canada 2012b). The remaining water ways – 99,7% of Canadian fresh water reserves – are no longer protected because development affecting these waters no longer requires environmental impact assessments (Ecojustice 2012). Environmental protection organizations, particularly the protest movement against Tar Sands Oil, fracking and the Keystone XL Pipeline, were among the first toexpress support for and solidarity with Idle No More (Sheela McLean, June 15, 2013). These bills were introduced to Parliament with the promise of economic development. Hence, the omnibus budget bill C-45 was renamed the "Jobs and Growth Act".

The concept of land is the most fundamental aspect of Indigeneity. Land is a barometer of intact communities, a marker of Native identity, the focal point of land-based creation stories and sacral practices, as well

as a resource for cultural and socioeconomic stability. When Sylvia McAdam went into the woods to build a hunting cabin on treaty land and encouraged other Natives to do the same, she challenged the legitimacy of the Indian Act, the very foundation of the administration of First Nations' land, resources and self-government. Idle No More criticizes settler colonialism and resource extraction; however, it does not agitate against settlers but rather against continued colonialism and unleashed capitalism. The movement turns towards settlers because everybody depends on clean water and, as Idle No More stresses, only through combined efforts is change possible.

CONTROL OVER GENDER AND SEXUALITY

In their analysis of contemporary internal political conflicts in First Nations communities the Idle No More women point to the double form of discrimination based on race and gender. They argue that only through the exclusion of women from political roles was the introduction of the omnibus budget bill possible. The term *femicide* is used in the context of Indigenous women when referring to the *missing women* (Troian 2013) and also when referring to the systematic separation of Native women from their home communities and from leadership roles. Andrea Smith (2005) explained how colonization of First Nations became possible through gender-based violence and the forceful imposition of European gender roles upon Indigenous societies. Indigenous feminists stress that in the process of colonization Indigenous cultures internalized gender based discrimination that now continues to oppress women (St. Denis 2007, 45). Andrea Smith argues that decolonization and sovereignty are impossible to recuperate as long as Indigenous societies hold on to patriarchal gender systems introduced by agents of the settler state (Smith 2007, 100). Devon Abbott Mihesuah has a similar view on this: "Misogyny, colorism, ethnocentrism, and physical abuse are sad realities among Native people, and, unless Natives do something about these problems, no one else will" (Mihesuah 2003, xiv).

An example of double discrimination along the categories of gender and race is the case of Jeanette Corbiere Lavall. In 1970 Corbiere Lavall called upon the courts because she saw herself discriminated by Paragraph 12 (1) (b), which spelled out that she would lose her tribal membership – and consequently her status as an Indigenous woman and the contiguous (land-) rights – if she were to marry her non-Native partner. She lost the lawsuit. In a discussion of the Lavell-decision author Kathleen Jamieson formulates:

> One thing is clear – that to be born poor, an Indian and a female is
> to be a member of the most disadvantaged minority in Canada
> today, a citizen minus. It is to be victimized and utterly powerless
> and to be by government decree without legal recourse of any kind
> (Jamieson 1980, 92).

When educating the public about contemporary Indigenous existence
in Canada, Idle No More also draws upon the debates held by Indigenous
feminists who highlight the harmful consequences of the colonial Indian
Act to tribal (USA) respective band (Canada) membership and the status
of Native women. Without formal Indian status Natives lose the right of
band membership and consequently the right to live on reserves. Before
1985, two-thirds of Indigenous people in Canada had lost their status and
their land (Lawrence 2003, 6). In 1985 the Canadian government
changed the membership criteria of the Indian Act and *permitted* First
Nations to draft their own membership rules. Many of the First Nations
voted to keep the externally introduced, yet in the meantime familiarized,
discriminatory rules.[7]

The marginal subject position of Native women finds its equivalence
in the movement. In the 1960s and 1970s many women were active in
the Red Power movement but subordinated themselves under men. The
fish-in movement of 1964 in the US-state of Washington was initiated by
Native women (Hightower Langston 2003, 117). Many women carried
out the occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969 as well as the occupation of
the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC in 1972, and the
occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973 through the American Indian
Movement (AIM). During that time women stayed in the background
and did not articulate gender cleavage. Lorelei DeCora Means explains:

> We are American Indian women, in that order. We are oppressed,
> first and foremost, as American Indians, as peoples colonized by the
> United States of America, not as women (Lorelei DeCora Means,
> cited in Jaimes/Halsey 1992, 314).

As is true for many *women of color,* Indigenous women are confronted
with the expectation that they should be loyal to their own people first,
not to their gender. When they criticize oppression within their own

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[7] The Mi'kmaq lawyer Pamela D. Palmater (2011) argues for the introduction of more
inclusive instead of exclusive membership rules; rather than measuring blood-quantum,
cultural determinants should have more weight.

communities, they tend to face accusations of betrayal and colonialism. Fan Blaney of the Aboriginal Women's Action Network of Canada states: "Patriarchy is so ingrained in our communities that it is now seen as a 'traditional trait'" (Blaney 2003, 158).

Hence, Blaney sees the main task of Indigenous feminism as addressing the internalized oppression of women within their home communities; otherwise this part of the colonial legacy would further politically weaken Indigenous societies. Bonita Lawrence and Kim Anderson (2005, 3) warn that band leaders should not reduce this debate to women's issues or misrepresent it as a threat to Native self-determination. Instead, they declare, attacks against Indigenous women – physically as well as politically – constitute attacks against Indigenous sovereignty. Throughout Indian Country women are referred to as the backbone of the nation. Marie Anna Jaimes Guerrero argues that every feminism, that does not address the questions of land rights, sovereignty or government politics that systematically aim at destroying Native cultural practices, or that define the participation of Native women as non-feminist, is "limited in vision and exclusionary in practice" (Guerrero 2012 [1997], 101). This short insight into Indigenous feminism shows that "Native women's engagement with feminist politics is much more complex than generally depicted" (Smith 2007, 97).

Idle No More does not view women as an independent, separate group that has to fight against men. Instead, it views women as part of a collective that exists to achieve better conditions for everybody. Its members fight not only for women's rights but for group rights "together with all solidary people inside and outside of Canada" (McAdam, June 14, 2013). With this approach Idle No More expresses its intersectional understanding of the conditions of oppression that are interlinked and can only be dealt with satisfactorily if reduced to individual issues.

There is an obvious strong presence of women in the movement. Sylvia McAdam reckons that the call to *defend the children* spoke more to women than to men. In a consultation with the elders' council – the traditional leadership that exists parallel the Indian Act chiefs – about the consequences of the controversial bill C-45 the elders declared the traditional Nehiyaw law *Notawamissouin*, meaning protection of children in a broader sense:

> *Notawamissouin* means to defend for the children. And not just Indigenous children – all children. But it extends beyond that. You also have to defend for the animal children, the tree nation, the winged nation, the earth nation, all their children. And this law is

sacred. It's peaceful, it's prayerful, and it's profound because it's not only that you are defending for this generation in our time but all the seven generations ahead (McAdam, June 14, 2013).

CONTROL OVER SUBJECTIVITY AND KNOWLEDGE

The movement focuses on educating the public about the ecological consequences of bill C-45 and about the negative effects this law has on Indigenous self-determination, information that should have been spread by the federal government or the band leadership. It seems neither of these actants had the intention to inform the public:

> Even with our resounding 'No, you do not have our consent' they still put it through on December 14th. And it's unprecedented in the history of their Canadian Parliament that a bill that huge, a 450-page omnibus bill, to go through their Parliament in such a short time. It was introduced in the middle of October and became law on December14th which is unheard of it. There was no proper debate, no proper consultation, no free prior and informed consent, nothing (McAdam June 14, 2013).

Idle No More educates the public on the local level through teach-ins and on the international level through digital networking, talks at conferences and presentations at the United Nations.

The movement also addresses interlinked issues of inequality in Canada. The workshop "Idle? Know More!", held in summer 2013, dealt with the construction of the *Other* in the dominant society over the markers race, class, gender and sexuality. The workshop addressed the question how these practices of inequality and colonial oppression are being justified today (SAFE 2013). Idle No More sparked discussions on the issues raised that led to various conferences, talks, and lectures, many of which were live streamed over the internet. Thus, an internet chat room discussion of four women has evolved into a global revolutionary education movement - a movement that is founded on the principles of non-hierarchy, broad participation, and inclusion.

Idle No More does not only want to voice opposition; its members want to be part of a collective that is non-oppressive. Sheelah McLean expresses the openness of the movement when she invites people to become pro-active:

> You ask us: 'What can you do?' We ask you: 'What do you think needs to be done?' 'How can we help you to reach your goals?' (Sheelah McLean, June 15, 2013).

Keeping with the grassroots principle McLean stresses that every voice has the same value. People should not wait until things get done for them but should get together and find solutions. With the claim to self-presentation Idle No More postulates, they aim to "undo a form of patriarchy" (IBID.).

Indirectly Idle No More follows Audre Lorde's call to address racist laws by channeling rage constructively to bring about change. Rage and dissatisfaction voiced by the female elements are characterized as the roots of change and development in many Indigenous creation stories (i.e. Walker1983, 208ff.). In addition, the way Idle No More connects the personal with the political can be read as feminist; Idle No More uses the legal sphere when challenging the omnibus budget bill and thus uses the master's tools to dismantle the master's house, to reference Audre Lorde (1984, 110) once more. The lawyer Sylvia McAdam is not only politically active, she is also personally affected by the developments of increasing resource extraction on Indigenous land without respecting treaty laws; her father's land is subject to massive logging he did not consent to, although the land should be protected from intrusion under Treaty 6. While acting locally and building hunting cabins on treaty land McAdam also uses her legal tools to articulate resistance against the unconstitutional bills and to transport this knowledge. As is true for large parts of the postcolonial world, the existing educational system introduced "class apartheid" (Spivak 2008, 32) into Indigenous societies in which the chances for upward mobility through education are unevenly distributed. Idle No More aims to democratize access to knowledge and to prioritize Indigenous knowledge.

EDUCATING, NOT ACCUSING

The movement Idle No More was formed to protest an omnibus budget bill. It drew attention to the consequences of bill C-45 and bill C-31 – both the end of treaty relations between Canada and Indigenous nations and the harmful ecological consequences the bills held for the continent. Protest by Indigenous groups against laws detrimentally affecting their lives and group rights is not new. What is new is the quality and the approach of this mass movement. While the Red Power movement of past decades defined itself by conflict and used Native

identity to keep the movement exclusive, Idle No More stresses commonalities and invites everybody to join.

Idle No More shows that Indigenous feminism – as political strategy and political project – can be strengthened through alliances built by engagement, participation and support by Native men and non-Natives working together. The emancipative character of Idle No More shows that feminist agendas and Indigenous struggles for decolonization do not have to contradict each other. Idle No More separates feminist rhetoric from the – in Indigenous contexts – frequently voiced allegation of acting colonial. Although they do share the Indigenous-feminist analysis of sexist and patriarchal power relations, the movement does not identify itself as feminist per se. Idle No More problematizes the shift in power structures in Native communities not by accusing but by educating. By applying this participative and inclusive approach the emancipative character of Idle No More in the field of resource struggles and decoloniality can complement Indigenous feminism. By setting the anti-colonial struggle as central, Idle No More questions the legitimacy of (patriarchal) nation states. Such a political project imagines for colonized – and non-colonized – societies a more desirable, more just, and more sustainably oriented world beyond nation states.

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