

## Convivial space as a decolonial tool:

Inspired by a case study of the Indigenous-led land defense movement

[Aim, Data&Methods and Results]

In the past decade attention to the concept of “conviviality” is on the rise again, this time within the circle of multicultural or intercultural studies. The *Journal of Intercultural Studies* had a special issue on this concept in 2016, for instance. Having become widely known through Ivan Illich’s *Tools for Conviviality* ([1973] 1980), the word came into the circle after it was picked up again by Paul Gilroy in his *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004). Linked to the line of studies which have focused on everyday multicultural encounters in city life rather than on multiculturalism as political ideology (Wise and Velayutham eds. 2009), contemporary rise of interest in conviviality has its own problematic.

Inspired by my case study (participant observation and media analysis) of the Indigenous-led land defense movement on the West Coast of Canada, this paper critically intervenes in this vein of arguments. The intervention is twofold. First, my emphasis is on convivial “tools” rather than conviviality per se; that is, what makes it possible for different (sometimes oppositional) beings come together, not the mere fact of being together. As Les Back and Shamser Sinha (2016) make it clear, this emphasis reminds us that convivial world is not something given but a fruit of collective labor supported by tools which facilitate it. In my case, this tool is movement’s camp site as convivial space. Second, I do not limit it only to human interaction. When it is argued in multicultural or intercultural studies, conviviality is largely limited to interaction between human agents. In my case, however, emergent conviviality in the movement’s autonomous space is not only between humans (Indigenous and non-Indigenous people), but also between humans and other-than-humans (animals and plants, water) through acting on / acted by the land.

[Conclusion]

In contemporary capitalocene (Moore ed. 2016) or the high age of colonial extractivist capitalism which depends on new “frontier” land where Indigenous peoples have lived, there is rising tension not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples but also between people who benefit from extractivism and people who do not. This emergent tension cannot be adequately evaluated by traditional way of multicultural thinking which limits its scope to human interaction. By highlighting the convivial space of contemporary land defense movement, this paper argues that it has decolonial potentiality and urges us to take this potentiality seriously.

- Back, Les and Shamsir Sinha, 2016, "Multicultural Conviviality in the Midst of Racism's Ruins," *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37(5): 517-532.
- Gilroy, Paul, 2004, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?*, London: Routledge.
- Illich, Ivan, [1973] 1980, *Tools for Conviviality*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Moore, Jason W. ed., 2016, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, Oakland: PM Press.