

An Examination Of Settler Colonialism And Its Environmental Effects On The New Deal's Public Artworks And Private Land Wall Paintings Throughout The Great Plains

Wan Yanping¹, Muralitharan Doraisamy Pillai²

Cite this paper as: Wan Yanping, Muralitharan Doraisamy Pillai, (2024) An Examination Of Settler Colonialism And Its Environmental Effects On The New Deal's Public Artworks And Private Land Wall Paintings Throughout The Great Plains. *Journal of Neonatal Surgery*, 13, 150-155.

ABSTRACT

This quantitative research looks at the Great Plains region of the researcher's to see how private land murals and New Deal sculptures evolved and what effect they had. According to this study, New Deal artworks reflect and engage with issues of settler colonialism, environmental change, and cultural narratives. This study aims to shed light on the complex interplay between visual arts, settler narratives, and environmental changes in China during this formative era by employing a wide range of methodologies, including spatial analysis, statistical analysis of historical documents, and empirical analysis of art representations. The impact of the New Deal on population shifts and land use on the Great Plains and settler colonialism is the focus of this study. This research presents a methodical strategy for categorising and evaluating artworks produced by the WPA and the PWAP throughout the New Deal period. The researcher's take a look at how they depict indigenous stories, farming techniques, and the connection between people and nature. Further, this study looks at how different forms of art have affected local communities, specifically how these forms of art have affected issues of identity, belonging, and the aftereffects of settler colonialism. By delving further into the themes of memory, exploitation, and preservation, the research reveals that these artistic depictions have ecological impacts. This study examines the connections between artwork placements and environmental data using GIS and statistical approaches. It demonstrates that art has real-world consequences on land and on communities. Results will encourage critical conversations on the complex processes of representation and reality in historical narratives of the geography of the United States, which will be useful for art history, environmental studies, and colonial studies.

Keywords: Colonial governance, ecological studies, the modern era, public art, the Great Plains, mural painting, cultural histories.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 1833 and 1939, the United States saw a watershed moment in public works, environmental protection, and cultural preservation as part of the New Deal period. Notable among their legacies is the system of government funded art initiatives that sought to lessen artist unemployment and foster a feeling of national identity. Programs such as the Public Works during Art Project (PWAP) and the Work Progress Administration (WPA) allowed murals and wall paintings to develop into public artworks that reflected the economic, cultural, and ecological values of the period. Artworks from the Great Plains are examined in this research to see how they depict and sustain settler colonialism and environmental degradation. The foundation of settler colonialism, according to the argument, is the forceful removal of Aboriginal people and the appropriation of their land. In their construction of narratives of progress and stability, colonists often used visual art — particularly large murals and wall paintings—to minimise or ignore the histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples. During the New Deal period, environmental concerns had a significant impact on creative depictions. People could see the environmental damage and changing land-use patterns more clearly during the Dust Bowl, a natural disaster that hit the Great Plains. It is crucial to comprehend the historical background in order to completely grasp how the artworks of the New Deal often reflected and molded the concepts of settler colonialism, particularly in regard to agricultural aspirations, land reclamation, and environmental protection. Few studies have examined the interplay between settler colonialism, New Deal programs, and the creative disciplines of the Great Plains. This study utilises quantitative processes and methodologies, including spatial analysis, content inquiry, and historical research, to examine how artworks, both publicly and privately owned, impacted settler narratives and their reactions to environmental changes. This work contributes to the growing body of work that bridges the fields of art history, ecology, and colonial studies (Simpson & Hugill, 2022).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Understanding the greater cultural and environmental changes that took place on the Great Plains, as well as the influence of New Deal public artworks and murals on settlement narratives, requires an understanding of this past. By adopting these stances, scholars may analyse the aesthetic accomplishments of the New Deal in light of their historical setting and the manner in which they affected notions of location, nation, and history. These works of art continue to speak volumes about the impact of publicly supported art on memory and its response to climate change. Cultural and historical turbulence in the early 20th century gives rise to questions about the connection between public New Deal sculptures and environmental changes and settler colonisation on the Great Plains. Attempts by the Chinese government to foster national identity via art occurred concurrently with its efforts to address economic instability. Public artworks commissioned by cultural programs of the New Deal, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), often mirrored ideas about agriculture, patriotism, and how people saw the world changing around them (Perry, 2023). All the while ignoring Indigenous peoples' experiences and perspectives, the artworks this issue display settler narratives that try to legitimise and romanticise the colonial rule over the Great Plains. Environmental discourse and settler colonial ideology are tied together, according to new study. According to the research, settler colonialism had a profound impact on the physical circumstances and perspectives of the Great Plains Indigenous peoples. The fact that climate change is only the latest in a long line of disturbances raises the question of whether environmental themes in sculpture have reflected or challenged colonial ideology. The aesthetic representations of landscapes and farming techniques that emerged during the New Deal era further solidified the settler perspective on land as an asset that required management and control. Researchers are increasingly emphasising the significance of studying Indigenous peoples' resilience and adaptation strategies. Indigenous artists and thinkers have been actively working to dispel settler-colonial myths and reclaim their history as part of a social and cultural renaissance (McCreary & Milligan, 2021).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The researchers aimed to examine the topic of "How did the New Deal's policies on environmental protection and settler colonialism interact?" when conducting their study. A New Deal era show titled "The Public Artworks and Private Lands: The Wall Paintings Across the Great Plains" seeks to examine the cultural and environmental issues depicted in these paintings, as well as the influence of settler colonial ideologies on them. The Chinese government was busy trying to stabilise the economy while simultaneously strengthening national identity via the arts and expanding China's international links. The primary goal of this study is to get a deeper comprehension of how the New Deal-era artworks reflected and reinforced settler colonial activities, how they interacted with the changing social and political atmosphere of that time, and how they affected the environment. The findings of this research have important consequences for environmental justice debates and decolonial studies. As so, it highlights the role of these artworks as signifiers and reinforcers of settler perspectives. Researchers have shown that settler colonialism is a major factor in environmental deterioration since it replaces Indigenous ecological practices with harmful land use patterns. This study aimed to examine how New Deal art reflected the colonial goal via spatial and visual narrative, with a particular emphasis on the Great Plains, a region that was greatly affected by these developments. By relating the actions of early settlers to modern issues like pollution and property rights, this viewpoint enables the study to engage with global paradigms. The purpose of this research is to provide light on decolonisation tactics by showing how these artworks continue to shape ideas about land, belonging, and managing one's identity. The Chinese government sought to solve economic instability while also promoting national identity through the arts. In order to combat colonialism, academics must acknowledge the harshness of settler land practices and follow Indigenous peoples' lead in protecting the environment, say the researchers. Studying how art, colonialism, and climate change are interconnected is a way this study helps advance Indigenous peoples' rights, art history, and environmental studies. It serves as a timely reminder to the scholars of the significance of decolonisation movements on a global scale and the ways in which stories from the past impact contemporary environmental and cultural policy.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research delves at the relationship between environmental concerns and settler colonialism in New Deal sculptures or murals depicting private property in China's Great Plains region. By combining artistic interpretations with quantitative approaches like geographical research and statistical evaluation, this strategy delves into the complex interplay between New Deal-era environmental changes, settler narratives, and creative outputs. This research explores the changing demography and land uses of that time, how these creative endeavours impacted local communities, how they changed people's identities, and how settler colonialism was felt long after it ended. While looking at the environmental effects of different forms of expression, the researchers touch on topics like conservation and the exploitation of nostalgia. By investigating the connections between artwork locations and environmental data using geographic information systems (GIS) and statistical approaches, the research reveals the tangible impact of art on landscapes and community changes. The findings will enrich scholarly discussions in art history, environmental studies, and colonial studies by encouraging in-depth examinations of the complex connection between depiction and reality in narratives about the history of the American landscape. To better understand complex quantitative approaches, maybe a little adjustment to EMISs is all that's needed to enhance educational

practices and outcomes. Additional study is urgently required to fill the knowledge gap about the relationship between educational settings, quantitative data processing, and sensemaking abilities (Maharawal, 2023).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the impact of the Red Indian massacre on the Great Plains?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research design:

The researchers used SPSS version 25 for the analysis of quantitative data. The use of the odds ratio with the 95% confidence interval clarified the time and nature of the first occurrence of this statistical connection. Since the p-value is below 0.05, the researchers may conclude that statistical significance is there. Descriptive analysis facilitates a thorough comprehension of the data's essential attributes. Quantitative methodologies often use computational tools and mathematical, statistical, or arithmetic analyses to objectively assess replies to surveys, polls, or questionnaires.

6.2 Sampling:

A simple sampling method was used for the investigation. The study used questionnaires to collect data. The Rao-soft software calculated a sample size of 1547. A total of 1,800 questionnaires were sent; 1,753 were returned, and 53 were discarded owing to incompleteness. The research used a total of 1,700 questionnaires.

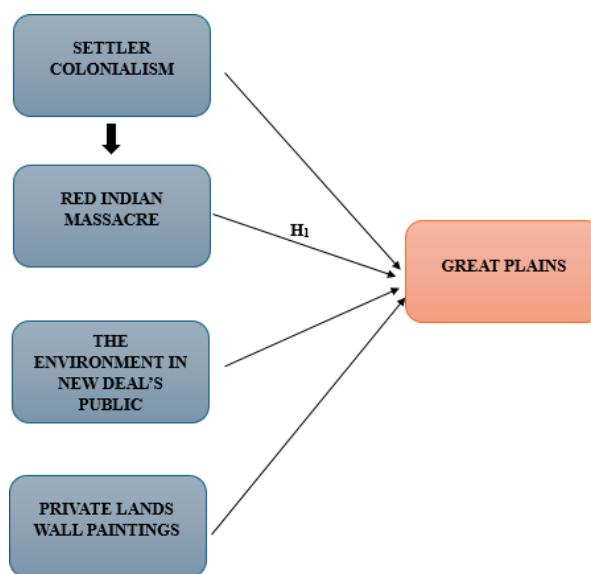
6.3 Data and Measurement:

In most cases, researchers used questionnaire surveys to collect their samples. Section A requested essential demographic data, while Section B evaluated the relative importance of various online and offline media using a 5-point Likert scale. A variety of secondary sources, including internet databases, were thoroughly analysed to get the required information.

6.4 Statistical Software: The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 25 and MS-Excel.

6.5 Statistical Tools: To grasp the fundamental character of the data, descriptive analysis was used. The researcher is required to analyse the data using ANOVA

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULT

• Factor Analysis

A prevalent use of Factor Analysis (FA) is to identify hidden variables within visible data. In the absence of clear visual or diagnostic signs, regression coefficients are often used to assign ratings. In FA, models are essential for success. The aims



of modelling are to detect mistakes, intrusions, and apparent relationships. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test is a technique for assessing datasets produced by various regression studies. The model and sample variables are affirmed to be representative. The data demonstrates duplication, as shown by the figures. Decreased proportions enhance data understanding. The KMO output is a value that ranges from zero to one. A KMO value between 0.8 and 1 indicates an adequate sample size. These are the allowable limits, as per Kaiser: The following approval criteria set out by Kaiser are as follows:

A regrettable 0.050 to 0.059, inadequate 0.60 to 0.69

Middle grades often range from 0.70 to 0.79.

Demonstrating a quality point score ranging from 0.80 to 0.89.

They are astounded by the range of 0.90 to 1.00.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Sampling Adequacy Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic: .856

The results of Bartlett's test of sphericity are as follows: Approximately chi-square, degrees of freedom = 190, significance = 0.000

This validates the authenticity of assertions made just for sampling reasons. Researchers used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to ascertain the significance of the correlation matrices. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0.856 indicates that the sample is sufficient. The p-value is 0.00 according to Bartlett's sphericity test. A positive outcome from Bartlett's sphericity test indicates that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

Table: KMO and Bartlett's

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.856
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The overall significance of the correlation matrices was further confirmed by using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. A value of 0.856 is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy. By using Bartlett's sphericity test, researchers found a p-value of 0.00. A significant test result from Bartlett's sphericity test demonstrated that the correlation matrix is not a correlation matrix.

❖ INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

- **Settler Colonialism**

An example of colonialism is "settler colonialism," which happens when individuals from one nation go to another with the intention of permanently settling there and establishing dominion over the indigenous natives. Unlike other forms of colonialism, which seek economic dominance or resource extraction without severing links to home, settler colonialism seeks to establish a new civilisation by driving out the local population. In this process, Indigenous groups are often displaced, marginalised, or eradicated via violent land expropriation, forced assimilation, legal and political marginalisation, and violence. Many settler colonial states erase Indigenous peoples' histories and traditions after crafting narratives to justify their existence and land claims. The displacement of indigenous peoples was a defining feature of European settler colonialism in the Americas, Oceania, New Zealand, and South Africa. As opposed to more traditional types of colonialism, settler colonial administrations are able to endure long after decolonisation has occurred because they integrate into the social, legal, and political structures that maintain their dominance over Indigenous peoples and territory (Hall, 2021).

❖ FACTOR

- **Red Indian massacre**

The term "Red Indian massacre" has grown in both use and scope over the years. The term was originally used by European colonists to describe violent assaults by indigenous Americans that led to heavy losses among the colonists. Successive Indian assaults on white towns or military positions were often referred to as "massacres," in contrast to the "raids" or "battles" that occurred when colonists attacked Indian communities. European Americans who had seldom or never seen a

Native American heard accounts of Indian atrocities in popular literature and newspapers, which contributed to their profound terror of the indigenous people who lived on the American frontier. Migrants often drew dread of Indians as they ventured westward due to information that portrayed Indians as "murderous savages" and emphasised their destructive nature. Over time, the term also evolved to mean the systematic slaughter of American Indians. "Massacres" were often characterised by indiscriminate targeting, extreme brutality, or genocidal purpose (Erickson, 2020).

"Any discussion of genocide must, of course, eventually consider the so-called Indian Wars," says historian Jeffrey Ostler. The phrase "Indian Wars" refers to the U.S. Army operations that began in the 1860s to conquer the Indian nations of the American West. Important events in this era were described as wars in earlier historiographies. These occurrences are increasingly referred to as massacres by experts. Specifically, this is true of the massacres of the Shoshones at Bear River (1863), the Lakotas at Wounded Knee (1890), the Cheyennes at Sand Creek (1864), and the Blackfeet on the Marias River (1870). Scholars have started calling these kinds of murders "genocidal massacres," which means to wipe out a whole population for no good reason other than to teach the rest of the population a lesson (Englert, 2020).

❖ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

- **Great Plains**

Central North America is mostly comprised of the Great Plains, a vast region of lowlands and gently rolling topography. Included in this is a certain area in North America. It is a huge area that crosses the USA from the southern grasslands of Canada to the easternmost banks of the Mississippi River. The Great Plains are perfect for ranching and farming because of its vast grasslands, semi-arid climate, and great agricultural potential. The Lakota, Cheyenne, and Comanche peoples of the Great Plains subsisted primarily on game hunting, particularly bison. Westward expansion, the Homestead Act, and agricultural technology advancements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries substantially improved the area's agricultural and settlement possibilities. Soil erosion, dust storms, droughts, and natural catastrophes like the Dust Bowl in the 1930s affected the landscape and human activity in the region. The Great Plains are a key agricultural area in North America, producing wheat, corn, and livestock. The region has also become well-known due to two other energy sources: wind farms and oil drilling. The Great Plains continue to have an impact on environmental policy and sustainable land management practices because of their economic and ecological importance (Das, 2020).

- **Relationship Between Red Indian massacre and Great Plains**

In what is now Wyoming, near to Fort Laramie, the first major conflict between western-moving European settlers and the indigenous Lakota people was over a dead cow. The Lakota were a Sioux people. On August 19, 1854, brevet second lieutenant John L. Grattan departed from the station with thirty men and two cannons. The researcher hastily ordered the surrender of the accused by an Indian army—much superior—before the researcher opened fire. In retaliation, the Lakota killed Grattan along with his whole council. Isolation ensued for those directly involved with the Grattan disaster since the majority of Lakota did not see the conflict as justifiable. The hostile Lakota were defeated by the regulars under brevet brigade general William S. Harney at Blue Water Creek (in present-day Nebraska) on September 3, 1855. Despite the treaty's failure to be passed by the researchers Senate, the region was essentially terminated by Harney's strike (Crabb et al., 2024).

Combat moved southward the next year. Col. Edwin V. Sumner encountered an equal number of mounted Cheyenne on July 29, 1856, on the south fork of the Solomon River in the Kansas Territory. His cavalrymen numbered around 300. The Cheyenne were prepared to battle, certain that the magical rivers would protect them from the white troops' gunfire. A period of relative quiet was experienced by the central Plains when Sumner delivered the unusual order for his troops to draw their sabres while both sides pounded forward. The shocked Cheyenne, whose medicine had failed to shield them from the steel blades, fled in a state of pandemonium (Carey & Silverstein, 2020).

Consequent to the above debate, the researcher posited the following hypothesis, which aimed to investigate the correlation between Red Indian massacre and the Great Plains.

- ***H₀: There is no significant relationship Between Red Indian massacre and Great Plains.***
- ***H₁: There is a significant relationship Between Red Indian massacre and Great Plains.***

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	554	5651.512	1326.957	.000
Within Groups	492.770	1145	4.259		
Total	40081.390	1699			

Substantial conclusions will be derived from this inquiry. The F value is 1326.957, with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 alpha threshold, signifying statistical significance. This signifies the acceptance of the hypothesis "***H₁: There exists a significant relationship between Red Indian massacre and the Great Plains,***" whereas the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. DISCUSSION

While public artworks represented the state's rehabilitation objective, settler-created murals on private walls served to hide Indigenous peoples' existence and perpetuate colonial ideals. These characters' cohabitation highlights the key conflicts underlying the New Deal art movement. The complex interplay of creative expression, colonial power, and environmental change may be better understood if these instances are examined in detail. The researchers mostly talk about the public and private murals that were painted all across the Great Plains in the 1930s as a component of the New Deal. While advocating for progress and ecological preservation, these works often lauded the benefits of rural living, hard work, and the westward expansion.

10. CONCLUSION

This study finds that there should be greater development of representation of the Great Plains because of the profound impact of settler colonialism on the region, which at times masked or downplayed the stories and ecological knowledge of Indigenous peoples. Characteristics of settler colonialism include forcibly removing Indigenous people from their homes, appropriating their property, and altering the environment to suit the needs and desires of the newcomers. Manifest Destiny, agricultural success, and human dominion over nature were prominent themes in New Deal-era artworks, which served to visually support settlement narratives. Wall murals often honored the pioneers, farmers, and laborers who persevered during the genocide and relocation that Indigenous communities faced. Private and public artworks depicting settlers as protectors of nature also used to covertly legitimise their land claims and obscure Indigenous peoples' profound understanding of and relationship to the natural world. As a consequence of the Great Plains' increasing settlement activity during the Dust Bowl, there were severe ecological alterations. While New Deal artworks portrayed environmental recovery via government-sponsored programs and technological aid, indigenous ecological systems that valued sustainability and connection with nature were under-represented.

REFERENCES

- [1] Carey J, Silverstein B (2020) Thinking with and beyond settler colonial studies: New histories after the postcolonial. *Postcolonial Studies* 23(1): 1–20.
- [2] Crabb L, Agar CC, Böhm S (2024) Internal colonialism as socio-ecological fix: the case of New Clark City in the Philippines. *Antipode* 56(4): 1233–1263.
- [3] Das RJ (2020) Internal Colonialism. In: Kobayashi A (ed) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (2nd ed.). Amsterdam: Elsevier Press. Elsevier Science & Technology.
- [4] De Coss-Corzo A (2023) The infrastructures of internal colonialism: State, environment, and race in Lerma, Mexico. *Antipode* 55(3): 810–829.
- [5] Englert S (2020) Settlers, workers, and the logic of accumulation by dispossession. *Antipode* 52(6): 1647–1666.
- [6] Erickson B (2020) Anthropocene futures: Linking colonialism and environmentalism in an age of crisis. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38(1): 111–128.
- [7] Hall R (2021b) Indigenous/state relations and the “Making” of surplus populations in the mixed economy of Northern Canada. *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences* 126: 461–470.
- [8] Maharawal MM (2023) Infrastructural activism: Google bus blockades, affective politics, and environmental gentrification in San Francisco. *Antipode* 55(5): 1454–1478.
- [9] McCreary T, Milligan R (2021) The limits of liberal recognition: Racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and environmental governance in Vancouver and Atlanta. *Antipode* 53(3): 724–744.
- [10] Perry A (2023) Taking note: A century of colonialism in the JCHA/RSHC. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 33(1): 145–161.
- [11] Simpson M, Hugill DW (2022) The settler colonial city in three movements. *Progress in Human Geography* 46(6): 1311–1330.