

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Comparative Political Theory

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## SETTLERS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

*Sovereignty and Indigenous Power  
in Early America*

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## Settlers in Indian Country

### *Sovereignty and Indigenous Power in Early America*

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**Abstract:** The aim of this Element is to foreground Native American conceptions of sovereignty and power in order to refine the place of settler colonialism in American colonial and early republican history. It argues that Indigenous concepts of sovereignty were rooted in complex metaphorical language, in historical understandings of alliance, and in mobility in a landscape of layered interconnections of power. Where some versions of the interpretive paradigm of settler colonialism emphasise the violent 'elimination of the native', this work shows that diplomatic transactions between the Iroquois Confederacy and British colonial and imperial agents reveal a hybrid language of alliance, sovereignty and territory. These languages and concepts of intercultural diplomacy provide contexts that suggest a more nuanced and dynamic relationship between colonialism and Indigenous power.

**Keywords:** law, treaties, sovereignty, colonialism, Iroquois, indigenous political thought

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