Oil Sands Entanglements:
Indigenous Media and Movements from the Front Lines of Canadian Industrial Development

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ABSTRACT

Oil Sands Entanglements: Indigenous Media and Movements from the Front Lines of Canadian Industrial Development

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This thesis explores how First Nations and Métis peoples in northern Alberta and northern British Columbia create and negotiate media in connection to industrial bitumen development and oil pipeline proposals. It follows previous communication studies of Indigenous media making and media representations, and adds to the growing fields of the environmental humanities and petroculture studies. The term *oil sands entanglements* is offered as a conceptual framework for situating Indigenous and non-Indigenous engagements with oil and understanding how communities are affectively and economically tied to ongoing development.

With a focus on media practice over content, this thesis is an alternative media study that undertakes media analysis, ethnographic study, interviews, social media mapping and archival research. It is organized into two parts: the 2014 Tar Sands Healing Walk and the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal. The thesis concludes by elaborating oil sands entanglements as multi-directional, located in many places, and imbued with settler-colonial and extractivist politics. It closes with a brief discussion of emergent Indigenous networks that take oil pipelines as a starting-point for advocating fossil fuel divestment and resisting further development. This effort, and other avenues toward *dis*entanglement, demand further media study, particularly as processes of communication. They also exemplify the potentially activist ethic of oil sands entanglement: as a framework, it is not meant to merely survey or map out connections, but to account for what oil and oil sands *do* in communities, and how this can foster change.

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To Emily and Wesley: Ours are lives deeply entangled in oil. I wish for you both a just disentanglement.

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Glossary

ACFN	Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
EAA	Environmental Assessment Agency
JRP	Environmental Assessment Agency-National Energy Board Joint Review Panel
NEB	National Energy Board
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
VLCC	Very large crude carrier, or “supertanker”

Introduction

To start, it is important to take a moment to acknowledge where you are and how you got there, why you do what you do, how you hope it may be of use to members of the communities with whom you have had the privilege of meeting, and what others who follow might take away as well.

I planned, researched and wrote the vast majority of this thesis in an apartment on Boulevard St. Laurent in Montreal's Plateau. The island of Montreal is "the traditional and unceded territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk), a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst nations" (Canadian Association of University Teachers, n.d.). On my mother Dianne's side of the family, Audettes first began settling in this area in the 1600s. My father John left Italy and crossed the ocean with his parents and his brothers, settling in Montreal in 1957. My brother Michael and I grew up in the southeastern interior of British Columbia, in a small town called Creston, part of the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Ktunaxa Nation.

I came to Concordia in 2012 knowing I would write a thesis about Canada's oil sands. I began with the question of how First Nations and Métis peoples in northern Alberta, specifically, negotiated media. I wanted to better grasp and relay the nuances of how different communities continually responded to ongoing industrial development. And I wanted to resist the notion that all Indigenous communities, or all Indigenous peoples, would always respond in the same ways to different development proposals and changing circumstances. I had been a reporter at *The Edmonton Journal* for about seven years, covering crime, then politics, and then the environment. The oil sands were always there, threaded through the population boom, the economy, the media. They were threaded through growing concerns about unusual cancers among Indigenous communities downstream from development, and increasingly prominent in a national conversation about what it takes to realize Canadian dreams for the future.

Over time, I was asked many questions that helped my thinking and this thesis to expand from northern Alberta, to interrogate a range of Indigenous media practices that exceed questions of representation in journalistic coverage or industry-generated material or ENGO campaigns, to think past politics as usual. Specifically, this has meant engaging in alternative media study: finding ways to unpack how members of First Nations and Métis communities structure and participate in message amplification that moves outside what is available through traditional,

institutional or legacy media. Drawing on works by a range of media scholars, including but not limited to Kirsten Kozolanka, Patricia Mazepa and David Skinner (2012), alternative media may be defined by a horizontal rather than top-down structure, openness to participation, and messages that counter or are different from those readily available from so-called mainstream media. Attending to these elements requires attending to processes of mediation. I have long held Roger Silverstone's 1999 work, *Why Study the Media?* close, alongside his 2007 book, *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis.* They are guideposts, or my compass, not only for study, but for the location of media and communications in a globalized world where, as Silverstone (2007) wrote, media have the potential to hold us together and to keep us apart. Coming to these books first as a practicing journalist, I found this absence of predetermination particularly appealing: regardless of intent or even mindfulness on the part of the maker, too many elements go into the making, use, and interpretation of media to know for sure how they will live in the world.

In *Why Study the Media?* Silverstone writes:

> …it is because the media are central to our everyday lives that we must study them. Study them as social and cultural as well as political and economic dimensions of the modern world. Study them in their ubiquity and complexity. Study them as contributors to our variable capacity to make sense of the world, to make and share its meanings. (Silverstone, 1999, p. 2)

Media are spaces of encounter, whether you are encountering a distant "other" on a screen, or you are participating in media-making. Silverstone (1999) describes media as having the capacity to, "inform, reflect, express experience, our experience, on a daily basis" (p. 78), and to study them requires, "thinking about media not as a series of institutions or products or technologies, or not only these things, but that it must involve thinking about media as a process, as a process of mediation. Media is done. We do it. And it is done to us" (p. 78).

So how do we go about studying media as a process? How do we analyze necessarily subjective, in-flux experiences? We can look at texts, and borrowing again from Silverstone (1999), how people "play," "perform," "consume" media, how they live with it. Reception studies add interviews to our arsenal, or asking people to keep diaries of their experiences. But media processes exceed what happens in our homes, or in our everyday lives as we think of them. Harold Innis (2008 [1951]) showed us how to map media systems, alongside systems of trade and transportation, all of which tend to overlap and feed each other and tell us something of the kinds of time- or space-biased societies we may be building (cf. Acland, 1999; Berland,

1999; Buxton, 2013; Buxton & Acland, 1999). Innis's tracing of fish and fur, of railways and centre-periphery trade also inform my analysis of the routes that oil would or could take, and the cultural and economic implications of these routes. Arjun Appadurai (1990) treated the "mediascape" as a dimension of globalization, alongside the ethnoscape, the technoscape, the financescape, and the ideoscape. To look at media is to look at "image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality" (Appadurai, 1990, p. 299) that cannot be easily disentangled, to investigate avenues toward understanding and misunderstanding each other.

Firmly in the vein of alternative media study, Nick Couldry (2001) once interviewed and followed the media-making of the "Umbrella Man," a single protestor who made it his mission to wear all of his claims on his person and in front of cameras at every media event he could access. Couldry wrote:

> I am interested in the paradoxes of a landscape of media representation that marks some people in advance as politically insignificant: how do people resist being positioned in that way? How are public selves formed, and maintained, in the large, partly obscured space where people outside media institutions and public organizations attempt to influence current events? (p. 134)

These are mobilizing questions, and questions that prompt intervention. These are the questions that motivate me; put another way, how do people work around the institutional and media limitations that are set before them?

Today, my thesis begins in one of northern Alberta's oil sands regions, Fort McMurray. It begins with the Tar Sands Healing Walk and the message making of people from northern Alberta and elsewhere who refused to be positioned as politically insignificant. My thesis then extends west, following the story of the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, which was ultimately canceled by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government in 2016. This is a story that includes Freedom Train 2012 and the efforts of the Yinka Dene Alliance to capture media attention across the country, to stop the pipeline. This is also the story of testimonies and prayers entered into the record during the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings, which took place across British Columbia and Alberta. Throughout, I also attempt to pull back, to engage with the possibility and implications of far-reaching *oil sands entanglements*. I discuss the roots of my use of this term and concept in the chapters immediately following, but I want to flag this point: oil sands entanglements invite us to think about how people are wrapped up in oil sands development, and how oil contributes to structuring our everyday lives. It invites us to consider how bitumen extraction in the oil sands works differently from, and has different environmental

and economic impacts than other kinds of oil extraction. Resource entanglements are different under different circumstances; they are realized, but not determined in relationship to the nature of the resources that are being extracted and the people who are affected.

The oil sands are buried deep in the earth. Their industrial extraction and refining have a massive impact on Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, the landscape of northern Alberta, and the quotidian lives of those humans and non-humans who live nearest. Additionally, the oil sands and their entanglements follow international routes of trade and labour. Their reach takes in people, communities, environments and economies that are far flung. Oil sands entanglements are different than other resource entanglements, and that is entirely the point: I am not ranking entanglements, but to trace any resource (whether it is uranium, coal, water or bitumen) would yield different critical results. Here, then, are calls to action, drawn from my own research and from my reading Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's (2015) work: critically investigate nuances and connections, ask how entanglements work, find out what they produce. This is a critical exercise: to look at how entanglement works, is to *ask how disentanglement can be imagined*.

In the week before my thesis defence and final submission, I read Patrick McCurdy's (2018) piece in a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Communication* dedicated to energy. In the article, called "From the natural to the manmade environment: The shifting advertising practices of Canada's oil sands industry," McCurdy shares and analyzes an image titled "Ultrasound" that was part of an advertising campaign by the energy company Cenovus. McCurdy describes the print image as:

> …set in what appears to be a baby's nursery. It shows a beautiful, smiling, and visibly pregnant woman standing and touching her stomach with her right hand while gazing down at a man (presumably her partner). The man is crouched lower — perhaps on bended knee — looking up lovingly at the woman while holding a picture from a 3D-sonogram of an unborn child level with the woman's protruding belly. The advertisement's headline reads, '125 years ago, it illuminated a room. Today, it illuminates a life.' Meanwhile, the campaign's tagline is: 'Oil is more than just a source of fuel.'[1] (McCurdy, 2018, p. 44).

There is also an overwhelming projection of light in the image: there is a window behind the couple, what appears to be the white bars of a crib stand against a light blue wall, the woman wears a white shirt, and the man wears light blue. McCurdy argues such ads are meant to remind

[1] McCurdy cites Cenovus's "More than fuel" campaign (2011).

the audience of oil's fundamental role in our everyday lives, a tactic that is different from trying to defend the oil sands on environmental terms (p. 45).

Conceptualizing oil sands entanglements is like holding up a messy, distorted, surprising mirror to such straightforward, clean and sunny industry messaging. Thinking through oil sands entanglements is not a means of making lists, noting we all rely on oil for many things, or describing what we might already know or sense. It is not to allow the brushing off of oily problems as too big or too all-encompassing to respond to. The work of tracing and clarifying entanglements is not the work of fixing them in place or ignoring their further contexts, putting aside settler colonialism, gender, economics and politics. Rather, it is the work of finding footholds for asking how people and communities might connect, and what new connections can mean for approaching shared challenges. This is why entanglements are not wholly determined by resources: investigating them is a useful approach for considering opportunities for change.

In many ways, this thesis represents an effort to zero in on the places where oil sands entanglements surface and can be traced, for example by spending time at the Tar Sands Healing Walk, mapping the healing walk hashtag on Twitter, analyzing Freedom Train as media and looking at what people wanted to say on the hearing record, and trying to look forward, at what entanglement enables in terms of imagining disentanglement. This is a media-centred effort to make entanglements visible and tangible, for the most part at a specific conjuncture: when Stephen Harper was prime minister of Canada, before the 2016 wildfires in Fort McMurray and the decline in oil prices that marked an economic slowdown, at a moment when as many as five major interprovincial or international pipelines were on Canada's to-do list.

To get at these narratives, I analyzed news media texts. I attempted to unravel the lineage of some existing entanglements, through archival research and analysis of hearing testimonies. I spoke to people who create and negotiate media, and walked with people intent on experiencing or re-experiencing the tar sands. In keeping with the theme of entanglement, 15 short chapters follow, each a snapshot, or a piece of a larger picture. I worked to respect the fluidity of entanglements, to look closely at how different media worked and how different people used media, with some hope that communities might read this and find inspiration in an array of tactics that counter the status quo.

And there are lessons here, for those who follow, although I must acknowledge again that the nature of entanglements precludes assuming they will always produce the same outcomes.

For community members, for example, there are social media tactics discussed here that can work particularly well, from sharing images and videos to engaging more prominent users. There are also tactics for being heard in processes designed to shut down or minimize dissenting voices. And, there are ways to use legacy media practices to best advantage — especially if you map the economics and geographies that determine and change those practices.

For journalists, there are lessons here for listening differently. Look out the corner of your eye for added context, for the things that are not immediately in front of you.

And for researchers, there is one roadmap here for turning over a problem again and again, for coming at a research question many ways. And I do mean a road map: one you have to unfold, spread out, trace with your finger, and then make the best decisions you can while you're on your way.

Chapter 1: Oil sands entanglements

This thesis examines how First Nations and Métis peoples in northern Alberta and northern British Columbia use their voices, take actions, and harness media to express their interests and make claims in connection to oil sands development and proposed pipelines. There are growing bodies of scholarly work dedicated to the politics and media of the oil sands, Indigenous resurgence, and Indigenous media production. How First Nations and Métis communities have created and negotiated media in response to the oil sands has been largely under-explored, and constitutes my original contribution to knowledge. To investigate these processes, I focus on sites of media production, including the Tar Sands Healing Walk, the Northern Gateway pipeline hearings, and protests. My analysis thus hinges on alternative media scholarship that has attended to how social movements work as communications media (Bailey, Cammaerts, & Carpentier, 2008, pp. 108-109; see also Melucci, 1996, pp. 36-37), and the extent to which definitions of alternative media ought to be "stretched . . . to embrace graffiti, murals, street theater, popular music, dance, dress, and other media of communication" (Downing, 2008, p. 44; see also Audette-Longo, 2016). The process-oriented questions of alternative media scholars such as Chris Atton (2002, 2008), Couldry (2004) and Kozolanka, Mazepa and Skinner (2012) animate my research: how and why are stories told? What so-called mainstream media and journalism practices are being interrupted? How is messaging in response to oil sands and oil sands expansion organized? How do geographies, institutions, and the oil sands themselves shape media responses?

Further, I ask *how* an array of media platforms and practices are used by Indigenous peoples to translate experiences of *oil sands entanglement*, and to persuade others to make or advocate change. I propose the concept of oil sands entanglement as a framework for analyzing the interplay of media making and message framing that First Nations and Métis peoples undertake when explaining what it is like to live alongside bitumen extraction or how they position themselves in response to new industrial developments like pipelines. As I will show, the concept also allows mediated Indigenous positions to be analyzed as part of a broader ecosystem of settler-colonial politics, international energy demand, health concerns, and environmental advocacy. I argue this based on field work and interviews with Indigenous media makers and organizers, and analysis of media materials and transcripts from pipeline hearings. Nonetheless, I wish to express some caution; there is a marked difference between the oil sands

entanglement experienced by someone who gives oil a passing thought while at the gas station and the acute oil sands entanglement experienced by someone whose community is surrounded by the leases of international oil companies, and whose family has benefited from unique employment opportunities *even as* access to trap lines, hunting, fishing, land, traditional medicines and safe drinking water has been lost or threatened. Image 1 hints at this acute oil sands entanglement (see Appendix 1). The map shows the province of Alberta's three major oil sands reserves and the major waterways that are connected to the Athabasca oil sands.[2] North of Fort McMurray, the communities of Fort MacKay[3] and Fort Chipewyan are, respectfully, situated at the heart of and downstream from Athabasca oil sands development.

In researching the oil sands, climate change and environmental justice, I have come to detest the analogy of canaries in a coal mine when discussing communities at the front lines of global warming, land loss, and industrial development. The suggestion that "other" people's experiences or suffering warn the rest of "us" about the dangers that lay ahead has become a cliché. Worse, it seems consistently to fail to fully capture "our" imagination, shift policy, or activate significant changes in how people use oil and energy. Yet, to begin to conceptualize oil sands entanglements and how they influence media practices, it is useful to begin with highly visible examples of how the oil sands work through communities. And so we have to query the purpose of thinking through entanglement from the very beginning. To borrow loosely from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (1999) assessment of the risks of commemorating or further rooting the workings of colonialism when postcolonial studies are done badly (p. 1), I hold that

[2] Though both "oil sands" and "tar sands" refer to the deeply buried bitumen found in Northern Alberta, they do not share the same connotation. A more complete history of the oil sands follows in Chapter 2, however the terms I use throughout this thesis — and why they are in conflict — need to be noted. It is also important to remember that, technically, bitumen is not oil, nor is it tar: "it is a heavy hydrocarbon (the heaviest form of petroleum) that, at room temperature, does not flow freely and is viscous like molasses" (Katz-Rosene, 2017, p. 403). The term "oil sands" can be traced to the 1930s; Ryan M. Katz-Rosene argues it was put to use as a "pro-development narrative seeking to convince skeptics that bitumen saturating the sandstone in Alberta's Athabasca region ought to be extracted and chemically altered into (synthetic crude oil)" (p. 402). As criticisms of bituminous oil changed — from whether it was feasible to extract or use as oil, to whether its extraction was irreparably damaging the environment — the use of the term oil sands changed and expanded, too, Katz-Rosene adds. In the early 1990s, federal and provincial government and industry officials began drafting a plan to make Alberta's bitumen a more "economically attractive resource," which included better branding the product as "oil sands" instead of "tar sands" (Woynillowicz, Severson-Baker, & Raynolds, 2005, p. 3).

Today, the term "oil sands" is used by government officials inside and outside Alberta, as well as members of Canadian media organizations and the business community. "Tar sands" is the term most commonly used by opponents to bitumen extraction (Paskey, Steward, & Williams, 2013, p. vi) and international media.

[3] Fort MacKay refers to the town, located about 60 kilometres north of Fort McMurray (Fort McKay First Nation, 2017, para. 1). Fort McKay is the correct spelling for both Fort McKay First Nation and Fort McKay Métis.

the promise of thinking through oil sands entanglement is not description, but beginning to think through *dis*entanglement. It is easy, after all, to find descriptions of oil sands entanglement — though not named — in popular texts, industry messaging and political rhetoric that aims to justify further development as beneficial to all Canadians. A critical assessment of the implications of oil sands entanglement that begins with field work in the tar sands and is situated within the environmental humanities, petroculture studies, and communication studies — aims to engage alternatives to the status quo.

By way of introduction and conceptualizing a framework for further study, this chapter begins the work of imagining something other than entrenched entanglement. In this chapter: I highlight how I arrived at the concept through fieldwork and engagement with popular and scholarly resources; I argue oil sands entanglement is a unique contribution to petroculture studies; and I show how the concept can be put to work in further analysis. I conclude with a brief description of the chapters that follow, and how they are connected.

1.1 'Our lives are entangled in this, and it's a mess'

I began conceptualizing oil sands entanglement following an interview in 2014 with Tar Sands Healing Walk co-organizer and then-Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation spokesperson Eriel Deranger. Deranger described how Indigenous communities downstream from the oil sands, and people who live and work in the region, are implicated in and by the bitumen extraction industry. We were sitting in a teepee at Indian Beach, south of Fort McMurray, the day before the fifth and final Tar Sands Healing Walk. This interview, part of my thesis research, was regularly interrupted by the bleeps of a hand-held two-way radio as other event organizers tried to reach her. Deranger's role was as a spokesperson for the event, sending out press releases, writing editorials, "doing the pitch calls" to newsrooms, and helping to manage on-site reporters and photographers (personal communication, June 27, 2014). Her role included explaining a more nuanced position on the oil sands to the outside world than straight opposition:

> […] we don't come at it with […] a really strong like kind of Greenpeacey environmental NGO message. It's not like, 'We need to shut it down, we need to shut it down now.' It's more like, 'We need to sit down and we need to figure this shit out.' Because our lives are entangled in this, and it's a mess. […] That's the message that I feel like we've been trying to get across, is that, it's messed up here, the regulatory systems, people's rights, the waterways, the animals. And, the economics of this whole thing has made us all hostage, feel as though we're hostages. But we're not, and we have voices and we're

> allowed to use them, and so let's use them. (personal communication, June 27, 2014)

Deranger's words invite us to visualize oil sands entanglement as people who are tangled-up in, tethered to, and unable to escape from, a network of oil sands extraction and trade. Oil sands entanglement is not solely the domain of First Nations and Métis peoples, though Deranger's description immediately begins to illuminate the ways in which oil sands politics, economics, and logics can twist through daily life with varying results.

The oil sands, as a site of industrial extraction, have not always been in place, yet our entanglement in them today *is* very much a part of our everyday lives. Some of us belong to communities that are facing down bitumen extraction or pipeline projects, others (or our family members) work in or adjacent to the industry. Outside these immediate relations, or acute entanglements, we are also implicated in domestic and international oil development and exchange when we purchase airplane tickets, fuel our vehicles, or drink water from plastic bottles. We are entangled when our university infrastructures are partially funded by (and named for) oil or pipeline companies. Or, when we buy magazines and attend cultural events sponsored by the same companies or representative industry groups like the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. My inclination, as I tick off these implications, is to try to orient the reader toward a sense of responsibility, or even guilt, as an affective starting point for accounting for oil interactions. Can that guilt — or at the very least, discomfort with the status quo — be mobilized to push governments to better protect the environment, and/or abandon continued financial support for further development? It seems unlikely; in a pedagogical setting, Jennifer Wenzel (2014) takes a different, more welcoming approach:

> I often talk about my love of flying in order to encourage students to think honestly and capaciously about oil, not only as an unfortunate necessity for so many aspects of everyday life, but also as a source of pleasure, even desire. "Loving oil" is Stephanie LeMenager's term for this dynamic: a deep attachment not to the substance itself but rather to all of the things that oil makes possible.[4] In these days of high gas prices and climate change anxiety, it's all too easy to "hate" oil or, more precisely, the oil companies who feed our societal addiction; to that end, I often speak about my love of flying — and the guilt that feels like oil dripping from my hands every time I get off a plane — to keep the class from disavowing too easily their own small part in modernity's troubled love affair with oil. (Wenzel, 2014, para. 3)

[4] Wenzel cites Le Menager's (2011) "Petro-Melancholia: The BP Blowout and the Arts of Grief," *Qui Parle* 19 (2): 25-55.

I suspect this openness holds out more promise than starting with an inventory of guilt when it comes to mobilizing change. At the very least it may encourage even climate science cynics or oil industry enthusiasts to more openly engage with how they — we — consistently contribute to and benefit from entanglements.

As productive as it is to root out our everyday engagements with oil, we must also insist on understanding the political implications of living — as we do in Canada — in a state that does not just use oil, but which has pinned much of its development narrative on the promise of extracting and exporting bitumen. In the aftermath of the 2016 wildfires that ripped through parts of Fort McMurray, *Globe and Mail* newspaper columnist Gary Mason laid out many Canadians' recognized and unrecognized affective links to the region succinctly:

> Just consider for a moment the enormous wealth that the oil sands have generated over the years, a fortune that has been shared with the country, shared, through the federal government, with provinces that needed assistance. Fort McMurray has helped tens of thousands of us pay off student loans, build nest eggs for first homes, launch countless backpacking treks around the world. It's been a second home to workers from Newfoundland and Labrador in particular […] Throughout its existence it's been a city that has been used by many and loved by few. (Mason, 2016)

In Mason's description, Fort McMurray is both something of a scorned lover ("used by many and loved by few") and one of the most important national and personal economic engines in the country. As the city burned, he thus situated Fort McMurray's greatest promise — for those who do not call it home — in its ability to accrue wealth, whether at the government level or for those of us paying off personal debts or saving money. The revenues generated by very large energy companies are noticeably absent from Mason's rather romantic appraisal of Fort McMurray's (and the oil sands') place in everyday Canadians' lives. Deranger's words, meanwhile — in bringing forward the "mess"-iness of the oil sands — invite us to take a still-closer look at the affective qualities of entanglement, beyond the relationships of co-living, co-responsibility, and co-reliance that the term suggests. Her description of entanglement is grounded in the unique experiences of people indigenous to the region, and this is an entanglement that takes in relationships of refusal and settler colonial violence. As a concept, oil sands entanglement may resonate with people who are far away, or visitors who share water systems, links via proposed pipelines, or a more global sense of the impacts of climate change. But, not all entanglements are quite the same, or as acute, as feeling like hostages.

1.2 Petroculture studies

This said, in contemplating the full scope of oily entanglements, the hostage analogy is a sticky one — particularly in conversation with the emerging field of petroculture studies. The term petroculture implies and emphasizes the extent to which "postindustrial society is an oil society," shaped by the workings, values, politics, and challenges of extracting, moving and using fossil fuels (Petrocultures Research Group, 2016, pp. 9-10; see also Szeman, 2017a). To conceptually embrace the idea that ours is a petroculture is to flip a switch in how we understand our everyday lives: oil doesn't enable the ephemera of modernity, ours *is* an "*oil* modernity" powered by an "*oil* capitalism" (Szeman, 2013, p. 147, emphasis in original text). On seeing oil as the thing that shapes our lives rather than a thing that fits into how we live (Szeman, 2013, p. 146), it becomes difficult both to *un*-see and to envision escape. As Imre Szeman put it in the Afterword to a collection of terms that is dedicated to examining how fossil fuels work through contemporary society: "The impact and import of fossil fuels in modernity have long been invisible … But once we finally have energy on the brain, we cannot help but recognize that it was there all along, hidden in plain sight…" (Szeman, 2017b, p. 389).

The value of viewing the world — and our place in it — in this way is not clear-cut. To contemplate fossil fuels as molding society risks eliding differences among communities and omitting other powerful forces, including the roles of gender, spirituality, and colonialism (in all its manifestations). It also risks skipping over different histories that have enabled oil to be felt differently depending on where and how one lives. Petroculture studies to date have mapped detailed and diverse histories of energy and routes toward transitioning away from oil (see, for examples, Barrett & Worden, 2014; Pinkus, 2016; Szeman, Wenzel, & Yaeger, 2017). However, not all cultures and communities are shaped in the same way by fossil fuels, nor do all share the same histories. To date, the bulk of petroculture studies tend to focus on industrialized economies and cultures. Yes, virtually everyone is affected by how extraction of oil or coal is scaled across the planet, but not everyone enjoys the same benefits or experiences the same threats. In a study occupied with sites of Indigenous-led media creation and negotiation, questions of colonialism, gender, spirituality, co-existing industrial and non-industrial economies, and shared but different histories all demand particular attention. Here lays the potential contribution of oil sands entanglement to petroculture studies, specifically: tracing out oil sands entanglements means engaging with all of the implicated and enabling forces at play in

our daily lives with oil and, as discussed earlier, always keeping in mind that entanglement can be more or less acute under different circumstances.

Writing about Indigenous and non-Indigenous entanglements in Australia and Canada, Françoise Dussart and Sylvie Poirier (2017) argue "entanglement forces us to engage with the multiplicity and the variability of connections, with the inevitability of the correlations, the uncertainty of their outcomes, and the unintended consequences" (p. 11). For Dussart and Poirier, entanglements allow for consistent re-shaping and re-working of Indigenous knowledges and practices in relationship to the non-Indigenous people, governments and institutions with which they live (p. 4):

> Under unequal relations of power and mostly stressful encounters — colonization, sedentarization, dispossession, and arduous processes of land rights recognition — Indigenous involvements with and knowledge about the land have been reshaped through time and space and have now become entangled with mainstream societies as well as among Indigenous groups. (Dussart & Poirier, 2017, p. 3)

The promise of bringing oil sands entanglement and petroculture studies in conversation is the former's embrace of fluidity and the latter's dedication to a change-making agenda, arguably most at home alongside Marxist studies. Exemplified by narratives of transition offered by the Petrocultures Research Group in their (2016) book *After Oil*, this agenda produces exciting if daunting possibilities. We know that: oil is a non-renewable and finite resource; its continued extraction and use is hurting the environment and endangering humans and non-humans; if ours is an oil capitalism, then thinking past oil provides an opportunity to think past capitalism, too. The research group lays out this transition narrative, drawing from the work of environmental and Marxist activists:

> Industrial capitalism has been powered since its beginning by fossil fuels; you can't change the problem of energy without changing the system. Yet it's difficult (impossible?) to imagine a life other than that produced through capitalist means. The impasse, then, is the immense appeal of our oil-based lives and the weight of the physical and social infrastructures produced over the life of oil. And let's not forget, too, the massive power of corporations — who are inclined to preserve the status quo — over individuals. (Petrocultures Research Group, 2016, p. 35)

On balance, starting with the premise that oil culture is oil capitalism holds out great potential for seeing things differently and stretching into other areas: how can power be shifted and moved in

different contexts? Further, what do oil sands entanglements lend to contemplating power's fluidity?

1.3 Entanglement as an approach to further study

In her (2015) book, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins,* Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing introduces entanglement as both a mode of understanding how species interact and as a research methodology that is akin to assemblage. The former, she notes, "once seemed the stuff of fables [and] are now materials for serious discussion among biologists and ecologists, who show how life requires the interplay of many kinds of beings" (p. vii). Tsing's exploration of "interspecies entanglements" centres on the matsutake mushroom, but it goes beyond strictly ecological or non-human interactions between the mushrooms and their environments.[5] I find her work so interesting because it provides a single species as a clear starting-point for making visible the relationships between human actions and impacts on unexpected environments, as well as relationships between tastes, trade, travel, markets and work. As an investigation of these relationships, grounded in the environmental humanities and a Marxist reading of how markets and labour work, Tsing uncovers a web of entanglements that links forests and people otherwise separated by oceans. Her writing mimics these webs, with chapters that, "tangle with and interrupt each other" (p. viii), and are focused on the assemblages she has encountered:

> The concept of *assemblage* is useful. Ecologists turned to assemblages to get around the sometimes fixed and bounded connotations of ecological 'community.' The question of how the varied species in a species assemblage influence each other — if at all — is never settled: some thwart (or eat) each other; others work together to make life possible; still others just happen to find themselves in the same place. Assemblages are open-ended gatherings. They allow us to ask about communal effects without assuming them. They show us potential histories in the making. For my purposes, however, I need something other than organisms as the elements that gather. I need to see life ways — non-living ways of being as well — come together. Non-human ways of being, like human ones, shift historically. […] Assemblages don't just gather life ways; they make them. Thinking through assemblages urges us to ask: How do gatherings sometimes become 'happenings,' that is, greater than the sum of their parts? (Tsing, 2015, pp. 22-23)

Tsing notes her use of assemblage is different from Michel Foucault's, wherein discursive formations "expand across space and conquer place; they are not constituted through

[5] In an interview with Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin (2012), Karen Barad also uses "entanglement" to question the "dualisms that places nature on one side and culture on the other" (p. 50).

indeterminacy" or as a network of "chain associations that structures further associations" (p. 292). Rather, she writes, her use pulls apart cause-and-effect relations. Her insistence that interspecies interaction "is never settled" — illustrated, above, by the interplay of some eating others, while still others co-habitate amicably — perhaps best shows her departure from Foucault's work, as it insists on the relativity of power relations, where Foucault examines how power settles and works in discourse, and what this power enables. I am not suggesting Foucault's approach was to lock down power, rendering it frozen or unchangeable via discursive analysis; he was actually quite clear on this account:

> What is important to me is to show that there are not on the one hand inert discourses, which are already more than half dead, and on the other hand, an all-powerful subject which manipulates them, overturns them, renews them; but that discoursing subjects form a part of the discursive field — they have their place within it (and their possibilities of displacements) and their function (and their possibilities of functional mutation). (Foucault, 1991, p. 58)

Rather, although Foucault argued discourse is a "space of differentiated subject-positions and subject-formations" (p. 58), there perhaps is not as much room in his analysis for thinking through power as always entangled, always relative, and always on the move, as Tsing suggests in her conceptualization of assemblage. Her examination of assemblages is anchored in understanding that the very nature of entangled relations can provide a useful starting-point for researching "life ways" and the sometimes unexpected results of "gatherings" (pp. 22-23). This is also useful as a means of understanding "history without progress," or that power and the impacts of relationships (whether interspecies, or for our purposes, between communities) have the potential to be "multidirectional" (p. 23). This approach helps us find multiple avenues for understanding interactions, rather than determining how those interactions will be executed. This has implications for unpacking connections in a globalized world, disentangling not just discursive connections, but felt connections, and networked actions and reactions.

Taking Tsing's lead, I will start at a single point to disentangle interconnections and reliances: a map of planned, canceled, and realized oil-carrying pipelines that span North America (Image 2, Appendix 1). In the early 2010s, maps of specific proposed pipelines, like the Enbridge Northern Gateway or the Keystone XL, became common-place graphics on evening news programs or in the pages of newspapers. A single line would cut east-west across northern Alberta and northern British Columbia, or jut southeastward from the Canadian Prairies through the United States, respectively. These maps serve an explanatory purpose. They show the viewer

or reader a fairly crow's-eye view of potential projects, often against a "neutral" backdrop marked by the names of provinces or states, or nearby towns, cities, major highways, railroad tracks, recognized major parks, or lakes. Such maps rarely include markings for rivers, valleys, forests, or mountains, let alone the outlines of First Nations reserves, traditional Indigenous territories, or farmland. Image 2, adapted from a National Energy Board map, is an exception for its inclusion of some of the landscape's defining features (although, aside from the identification of cities or towns, where people live, or the places they and animals move through, are not accounted for). When used by industry groups like the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, such maps often hold Alberta's oil sands as a hub for connections that span North America. These are explanatory, but they also serve an industry's graphic wish list for mobilizing Alberta's oil and, in the case of pipelines like the Enbridge Northern Gateway, making bitumen available at a higher price on international, non-United States, markets. Depending on one's viewpoint, these maps locate the tar sands as a source of wealth to be shared (or at least, to borrow from 1980s-era political rhetoric, for wealth to trickle down).

Looked at another way, however, these maps can also illustrate potential connections between communities, a material construction of entanglement that renders visible industry's efforts while inviting consideration of other kinds of possibilities. The Enbridge Northern Gateway, had it been realized, drew a line from Hardisty (a small prairie town about 200 kilometres southeast of Edmonton, Alberta that is already connected via pipeline to Fort McMurray), to Kitimat, a small town on the coast of British Columbia. If it is ever built, TransCanada's Keystone XL would link bitumen extraction in Fort McMurray to refineries at the Gulf of Mexico through farms in Nebraska. The proposals nonetheless open the door for us to imagine the potential economic and environmental futures of different — formerly unrelated — communities as linked, or mapped together. These projects promised employment, as people would be needed to build the pipeline infrastructure. They promised shared experiences of seeing farmland and forest unearthed, and traplines or access to hunting, fishing and leisure activities interrupted while work was being done. They also — and this is key — held out the potential for far-flung communities with little else in common to share concerns about the dangers of spilled bituminous oil. These mapped-together interests and concerns illustrate the messy impacts of entanglement. But this linking-together in the abstract (via a new line drawn across a recognizable map) is also, potentially, empowering.

The first part of this thesis, in attending to the Tar Sands Healing Walk as a gathering place, asks how oil sands entanglements that already knit close-by and far-flung communities together economically can also bring together resistance. Though not strictly ecological in focus, my elaboration of oil sands entanglement borrows from Tsing's discussion of entanglements or alliance-building *in spite of* someone else's best laid plans: "Sometimes common entanglements emerge not from human plans but despite them. It is not even the undoing of plans, but rather the unaccounted for in their doing that offers possibilities for elusive moments of living in common" (Tsing, 2015, p. 267).

Of course, finding out how potential empowerment is mobilized is not as straightforward as studying lines mapped across a continent, just as oil sands entanglements do not begin or end with these maps. As Samuel Avery (2013) writes in his book about the Keystone XL,

> All the little pictures add up to a very big picture, a huge picture — the picture of how we will live or not live through the twenty-first century. But the little pictures do not add up by themselves; they do not merge automatically into a big picture. (p. 8)

I argue the media sites dealt with in this thesis, including the Tar Sands Healing Walk, the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline hearings, and the cross-country protest Freedom Train, worked to render the big picture visible, by providing spaces both "on the ground" and online for building and maintaining networks of entanglement that could be transformed into networks of support, resistance, and "cultural persistence."

"Cultural persistence" is a term drawn from Lorna Roth's (2005) work on how Indigenous peoples in northern Canada developed mass communications systems through the late 20th century, and a key concept throughout this thesis. Roth's discussion of "cultural persistence," elaborated in conversation with Indigenous media scholar Gail Valaskakis, provides a point from which to conceptualize approaches that exceed resistance. Where resistance assumes a direct answer or response to a problem posed by external powers or institutions, cultural persistence provides avenues for a multiplicity of approaches to an issue or issues, developed by and in correspondence to a community's own interests and practices. In her account of how Inuit and First Nations peoples negotiated and created their own television broadcast networks and communities in Canada, Roth (2005) describes "cultural persistence," as "not just a reaction *against* the unpopular or distasteful," but as a long-term, "strategic recognition that all cultures *count* and *matter* in the general scheme of things" (p. 17). Roth

writes that she came to this term over the course of many discussions with Valaskakis, as they worked to build on, or around, notions of "cultural resistance" (p. 17). Resistance suggests a targeted response, a reaction based on an available repertoire of actions, an available answer to an asked question. Cultural persistence returns the focus of actions to a community or culture and its needs, making space for different ways of doing things, asking questions, and imagining non-reactionary possibilities for engagement and success. In the case of Indigenous communication in Canada's North, "cultural persistence" corresponded not to resisting or avoiding southern non-Indigenous television stations, satellites, or other communications systems in order to safeguard Indigenous cultures. Rather, "cultural persistence" meant finding the right community solutions to: (1) tap into a global system of communications; and (2) strengthen and amplify the cultural productions of Inuit and First Nations peoples. This included, as Roth discusses, building the capacity for community-based programming and finding technological work-arounds to ensure communities could share media with each other rather than always being cast as the recipients of southern Canadian programming. "Cultural persistence," in this vein, can continue to be seen in the work of rural Indigenous communities to build up their own Internet infrastructures which are realized despite the absence of external or non-Indigenous institutional support and thus operate based on a different set of community and cultural values than if the Internet were provided by the large companies common in Canadian urban centres.[6]

From the sprawled-out political and cultural linkages that come into play by considering oil sands entanglements and their implications, a different kind of mobilization by First Nations and Métis peoples emerges in response to the oil sands and in the form of the Tar Sands Healing Walk. I use the term "cultural persistence" to conceptualize how Indigenous communities have taken action, created media, negotiated media access, and sparked cross-cultural communication and alliance-building via the Tar Sands Healing Walk in order to further new narratives of life atop the oil sands. To fully theorize "cultural persistence," I will both elaborate Roth's use of the term and suggest how it can be a useful addition to social movement theory in the first part of my thesis.

[6] For an example of this line of continuing research, see Rob McMahon (2014), who elaborates the concept of the "First Mile" as an example of cultural persistence. He examines how Indigenous communities approach problems of digital divides and connection with self-determination, based on their expectations of what an Internet service designed for their own needs ought to look like. See also Roth & Audette-Longo (forthcoming) for a further discussion of cultural persistence and changing communications infrastructures in Indigenous communities in Canada's North.

1.4 Organization of chapters

This chapter more fully introduced and began to trouble the concept of oil sands entanglement; the next chapter more thoroughly explains what the oil sands are and how they impact local communities. Chapter 3 situates this thesis in connection to the broader field of Indigenous media studies in Canada, and elaborates Roth's (2005) concept of "cultural persistence." Together, the first three chapters of this thesis lay the groundwork for understanding how oil is extracted in northern Alberta and why it matters, and how Indigenous demands and interests — as they relate to the oil sands — have been covered by legacy media.

Following these introductory chapters, my thesis is divided into two parts. In Part One, I discuss how and why the Tar Sands Healing Walk came to be, and I describe the local, national and international politics and cultures that have informed the event. Though I attend to the history of the Healing Walk, these chapters are not structured around a strict chronology of the event. Rather, Chapters 4 and 5 introduce the event's landscape and a discussion of my ethnographic method and the challenges of knowing the tar sands by smell and sight. Chapter 6 builds on the problems of oil sands entanglement by examining the emergence of the Tar Sands Healing Walk. Chapter 7 explores how organizers negotiated external, or mainstream, media coverage. In the same chapter I also attend to text-based material produced and circulated by organizers for participants and media coverage of the event; I argue that the Healing Walk represents *collective action that exceeds demand*. By this, I mean the expressed demands of the Healing Walk — for example, to heal or pray rather than to shut down the tar sands — exceeded the capacity of any outside government institution or industry group to respond. This excess of demand showcased both the tar sands and a form of anti-colonial resistance. However, the capacity to measure the walk's success by any traditional method — for example, some form of acknowledgement or appeasement — is impossible. Drawing upon social movement theory as it intersects with communication studies, my argument and examination of what it means to exceed demand in a collective action context marks a contribution to both fields that is heavily influenced by my reading of Indigenous resurgence theory, particularly that penned by Leanne Simpson (2011), Jeff Corntassel (2012), Taiaiake Alfred (2009[2005]; 2009), and Glenn Coulthard (2014a). Chapter 8 turns to how the Healing Walk was mediatized by participants. While organizers contested descriptions of the event as a protest, many people who attended from outside the region were activists or linked to climate activist networks who took the

opportunity to see the tailings ponds for themselves. What this opportunity afforded within these activists' networks will be examined through an analysis of social media: specifically, how the hashtag #healingwalk was used on Twitter before and after the 2014 event. Chapter 9 will conclude this section by looking forward, both at collaborative cross-cultural events taking place in the oil sands region since the Tar Sands Healing Walk, and by suggesting links between the Healing Walk and organized resistance to the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline.

I begin Part Two and Chapter 10 with a discussion of futurity and why we must still attend to a pipeline that has, ultimately, been rejected. In Chapter 11, I map out the Northern Gateway project and briefly discuss the opposition and support the proposal generated. In Chapter 12 I offer an in-depth examination of selected print media coverage of the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings in order to better understand how the pipeline, its opponents, and Indigenous responses were represented. This chapter works as a backdrop to Chapters 13 and 14, wherein I discuss alternative avenues taken by Indigenous peoples to create and negotiate media in connection to the proposed pipeline. In Chapter 13, I share elements of community hearing transcripts to show how discourses of prayer, futurity, colonial refusal, and Indigenous resurgence were put to work by individuals who spoke back to the pipeline proposal. Chapter 14 follows Freedom Train 2012, a cross-country protest mobilized by members of the Yinka Dene Alliance, a group of First Nations communities from northern British Columbia who opposed the pipeline.

I conclude this thesis in Chapter 15, by considering how an organization of Indigenous peoples, the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion, oppose bitumen-carrying pipelines and further illuminate oil sands entanglements as they range across Canada and the United States. This anti-pipeline movement is also a fossil fuel divestment campaign, which offers an avenue for disentanglement that demands further examination.

Chapter 2: The oil sands

In 2017, Canada celebrated 50 years of industrial oil sands development. Such an anniversary prompts reflection: How did "we" get here? What challenges were overcome? What was gained, and what was lost? Who has benefited, and who has not? Looking back also begs questions of the future — is this sustainable? What will happen next? What is the real legacy of this massive development, for local communities and for the world? Variations of these questions were raised through 2017; at least one industry representative suggested 50 marked only the quarter-life of oil sands production in northern Alberta (CBC News, 2017). When I interviewed Alberta Energy Minister Margaret McCuaig-Boyd for the news site *National Observer* in 2017, she married the past and future — and economic and environmental pledges — with a sweeping promise:

> Fifty years ago this year, we're celebrating the innovation that allowed us to take the oil out of the sand. And I fully expect 50 years from now we'll talk about how we're taking the carbon out of the barrel. And for myself, to be honest, I have no time to talk to people about shutting down hydrocarbons in Alberta. We can do both and we are doing both. (quoted in T. Audette-Longo, Alberta's energy minister wants you to support pipelines and climate action, 2017)[7]

Canada's oil sands were designated as "proven reserves" in 2002 (Szeman, 2013, p. 156); today they represent the third largest proven oil reserve in the world (Alberta Energy, n.d. a). There are three oil sands regions in northern Alberta (see Image 1, Appendix 1): Fort McMurray; Cold Lake; and Grande Prairie. Outside Fort McMurray, bituminous oil rests relatively close to the earth's surface, fewer than 75 metres below ground (Oil Sands Magazine, n.d.; Alberta Energy Regulator, n.d.). In the Cold Lake area bitumen lays 300-600 metres below the surface, while outside Grande Prairie it's found 300-770 metres below ground (Oil Sands Magazine, 2016). To put these depths in some perspective, an Olympic swimming pool is 50 metres in length, while Mount Royal in Montreal stands about 230 metres tall and Toronto's CN Tower reaches roughly 450 metres into the sky. Through much of the latter half of the 20th century, government and industry money, determination, and ever-evolving technological know-how were poured into tapping heavy oil in the Athabasca Region. Given the relatively shallow depth of these deposits, companies began by digging into the ground, removing peat moss, forest, bogs,

[7] The minister is quoted in a published news story. Throughout this thesis, direct quotes from media interviews are cited by noting the author of the article, broadcast story or documentary, and the speaker is explicitly referenced as being quoted.

and grassland to create open-pit mines.[8] Alternative processes for extraction, like injecting water, steam or chemicals into the earth to push bitumen back up were developed later.[9]

Alberta's industrial oil sands extraction began in 1967 with the opening of the Great Canadian Oil Sands Facility (now Suncor), immediately north of Fort McMurray. Despite its name, the project was helmed by the United States company Sun Oil and received massive support from the Canadian and Albertan governments so that it could tap into the hard-to-get, deeply buried oil. For more than a decade, industrial oil sands development was a single-company exploit. By the early 1980s there were two active companies, Suncor and Syncrude. The latter was also heavily financed by governments, including Canada's, Alberta's and Ontario's (Malcolm, 1982). This brief history of stops, starts, and heavy government subsidies sheds light on the extent to which the scale of oil sands development that we know today — and the extension of oil sands entanglement — is a 21st century phenomenon with 20th century roots.

The Ottawa and Alberta governments were so deep in the oil sands business at this time that they offered to finance half of the third, failed Alsands project (Malcolm, 1982). This offer may seem bizarre to the contemporary reader more accustomed to "neoliberal regime(s)" wherein governments seem prone to "a single-minded promotion of private-sector-controlled development" (Fast, 2014, p. 35). Or this set-up may not seem bizarre at all, given the intense pressure in recent years on Alberta's new NDP Premier Rachel Notley and Canada's new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to vociferously support the building of massive oil pipeline projects. Regardless, heavy government investment in oil sands development from the time of the Second World War through the 1980s aligned with what Travis Fast (2014) has described as Canada's "postwar hegemonic accumulation strategy," wherein a mix of public and private investment was considered politically acceptable to get major infrastructure projects off the ground (p. 35). This level of taxpayers' support and incentive-offering for private companies to develop the oil sands was precedent-setting. Governments foot the bill not only for the first companies that dug down for oil, they financed decades of research that made it possible to extract more oil sands for less money using increasingly sophisticated technology. It goes without saying that continued growth

[8] For detailed descriptions of open-pit mining, see Oil Sands Magazine, n.d.

[9] For further descriptions of alternative mining processes, see: Alberta Energy, n.d. b; Cenovus Energy, n.d. In 2002, Cenovus was the first company in Alberta to successfully harness steam-assisted gravity drainage to push oil up from the Cold Lake deposit (Alberta Energy, n.d. c)

and multiplying extraction sites have displaced boreal forests and the animals that depend on them. Wet tailings ponds, which hold toxic chemicals, sand, water, and other byproducts of extraction, have grown in size even as those who research and work in industry continue to struggle to find ways to minimize the environmental impacts of wet tailings. In 2014, the oil sands contributed nearly 10 per cent of Canada's overall greenhouse gas emissions (Natural Resources Canada, 2016). Industry supporters and even the Government of Canada have been quick to note that Canada as a whole contributes a sliver of the carbon dioxide and other gases that trap heat in our atmosphere, making the world a hotter and more impossible place to live; coal, after all, is a worse evil than the oil sands (Natural Resources Canada, 2016). This said, Canada's oil sands are the fastest-growing source of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, with output expected to more than double in the next two decades (Fekete, 2016).

Through the 2000s, oil prices climbed steeply, international investment poured in, and swathes of the Wood Buffalo region were leased to oil companies. By 2014, oil was worth more than $100 US per barrel. And then, a glut in the market — thanks to an influx of unconventional oil like that found in the oil sands or that which is "fracked" in the United States — brought on a hard price decline that was largely engineered by OPEC. The price of oil per barrel fell to about $30 US per barrel. At that price, traditional or "easy" oil of the sort Jed Clampett might happen upon remains profitable. Bituminous oil that requires non-traditional methods of extraction and refining becomes a questionable commercial endeavour; in Alberta, this has meant operational slow-downs, job losses and reduced government royalties. Today the price of oil has leveled out at $50 US per barrel.

Much of my thesis deals with mediated Indigenous responses to oil at its peak price, when proponents could argue bituminous oil was a primary driver of Canada's economy. This is no longer the case, yet oil sands extraction continues and is expected to accelerate in the years ahead, past the point of Canada reaching peak oil use domestically in 2019 (see T. Audette-Longo, 2017b, 2017c). This continued growth will likely put more rhetorical pressure on Canadians and their governments to approve and actively support the construction of bitumen-carrying pipelines. These pipelines — massive infrastructure proposals loudly backed by industry groups and the Alberta government — promise to carry bituminous oil across provincial and national borders to access international markets. They also shoulder the weight of a great deal of nation-building rhetoric.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will discuss the narratives that have attached themselves to oil sands pipelines and describe the failed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project. These sections foreground my analysis of sites of resistance to the pipeline proposal in the second half of my thesis, but it is also necessary to understand the nuts and bolts of the pipelines and nation-building rhetoric to ground a discussion of how media have handled Indigenous responses to pipelines and oil sands in Chapter 3 and analysis of the Tar Sands Healing Walk in the first half of this thesis. First, however, I will further flesh out the story of Canada's oil sands in relationship to Indigenous communities at Fort MacKay and Fort Chipewyan. Today, communities in Fort MacKay are best known for working closely with the oil sands while those in Fort Chipewyan are known for vociferously opposing further development. As noted earlier, Fort MacKay is immediately north of Fort McMurray, in the heart of the oil sands and surrounded by oil sands leases. Fort Chipewyan is more than 200 kilometres north of Fort McMurray, on Lake Athabasca, which is fed by the Athabasca River.

2.1 The oil sands and Indigenous communities

Despite the best efforts of industry groups, environmental organizations, would-be non-Indigenous allies, or non-Indigenous media organizations, it is not so easy to boil down Indigenous communities' responses to "pro" or "anti" tar sands development. In northern Alberta, among First Nations and Métis communities closest to the oil sands, there are consistent but fluid tensions between the promise of economic development and maintaining land-based cultural practices and safe drinking water. Further, how these tensions are mediated — or shared outside communities — can change over time. Nowhere is this more evident than when we consider how demands from the Fort McKay First Nation are mediated today, and how they were mediated closer to the beginning of oil sands development. I draw out this partial history of one community on the front lines of the tar sands because it exposes problems of land loss and community health that persist today. The challenges faced by First Nations and Métis communities in northern Alberta — and the solutions they find — are not universal. However, looking closely at Fort McKay's recent history also highlights the ways in which the oil sands entanglements we know today could have worked differently.

In 2016, Fort McKay First Nation planned to celebrate three decades of working with industry. That work began with a single janitorial contract and grew into a group of companies that support the oil sands. Fort McKay First Nation is one of the richest First Nations in Canada.

Today it is led by Chief Jim Boucher. Rose Mueller, the director of communications for the Fort McKay First Nation, explained in an interview that the community's initial economic growth and industry engagement was based on negotiations and discussions premised on the fact that,

> 'Hey, this is our land, you guys are on it, let's see what we can do to work together,' … (the community) started pushing industry back to employ and hire more aboriginal people, community members, and our businesses. So for the community, when there were opportunities, they created companies and, um, where the funds go back to the community, so the community is able to build, like we have our own medical centre in the community, we have a doctor […] we're building a new school. So there's just opportunities. (Mueller, personal communication, February 26, 2016)

In the mid-1980s, then-Fort McKay First Nation Chief Dorothy McDonald was among the early proponents of working with industry, Mueller points out. However, archival material housed at Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa and the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton — namely microfilm of regional newspapers and correspondence kept by former NDP leader Grant Notley — illustrates a critical tension in how McDonald approached the impacts of oil sands development on her community in the early 1980s. These materials showcase McDonald's advocacy of community-centred decision-making. In a piece for the *Canadian Journal of Communication*, I write at length about a blockade McDonald and others organized outside Fort MacKay in 1983 to prevent logging trucks from passing through the community and to highlight serious problems the community was experiencing with oil sands companies (Audette-Longo, 2018). These serious problems included, in 1982, the discovery that an unreported spill at the Suncor plant had resulted in "an above acceptable amount of toxic waste … leaking into the Athabasca (River) from the troubled oil sands plant," resulting in downstream Fort McKay residents drinking contaminated water (Fort McMurray Today, 1982; see also Thorne, 1982). McDonald,

> said about 31 people in her community have suffered various ailments after drinking the water, including stomach upsets, diarrhea, and headaches.
> She said Wednesday that some people were beginning to suffer other symptoms such as swollen cheeks and throats.
> Chief McDonald demanded the resignation of Environment Minister Jack Cookson and asked that the federal government take over the investigation into the pollution violations.
> 'The minister said he doesn't know what chemicals have been spilled, she said. 'He said he doesn't know if there could be any health effects. Does he know anything at all?' (Struzik, 1982)

By May of 1982, the fishing season on Lake Athabasca had been shut down for the year due to the "foul taste" of fish caught "near mouth of the Athabasca River" (DeCory, 1982). The provincial government's associate wildlife minister, Bud Miller, hesitated to link the pollution problem to the Suncor spill, however, pending further study (DeCory, 1982). This pattern of institutional uncertainty — expressed publicly — about whether the oil sands cause local environmental and health problems persists today. Through the latter half of the 2000s, scientists and physicians in northern Alberta repeatedly raised alarms regarding unusually high incidence of rare bile duct cancer among residents in Fort Chipewyan and the appearance of deformed fish and other wildlife in the region (Slowey & Stefanick, 2015, pp. 202-204). Just as consistently, provincial and federal government organizations have expressed doubt about these findings.

But in February, 1982, McDonald leveraged the attention garnered by news of the Suncor spill to hold a press conference in Edmonton that highlighted what she described as a "graveyard … full of people who succumbed to the stresses placed on them by instant resource development" in the oil sands, or Wood Buffalo, region (quoted in Nelson, 1982). As *The Fort McMurray Today* reported at the time, she and community members distributed media kits and proposed "parallel development," a framework that encompassed:

- Protection of the traditional lifestyle of hunters and trappers with an expanded land base separate from resource development and under band control.
- Establishment of an economic development base for the community which will free them from dependency on the Department of Indian Affairs.
- Opening of better employment and training opportunities for those Fort MacKay residents who wish to enter the work force. (Nelson, 1982, p. 1)

McDonald's proposal explicitly took up discourses of choice, freedom, independence, and control and protection of traditional lands and community practices. This proposal challenged discourses that normalize industry-led realization of the full potential of the oil sands as key for national, provincial, and local economic development. What she claimed for her community resonates with a similarly anti-colonial "transformative vision" Glen Coulthard has described among Indigenous peoples responding to proposed pipeline development in Canada's North in the 1970s (2014b, p. 150). McDonald's terms also foreshadowed contemporary discourses of Indigenous resurgence and self-determination.

Of course, parallel development is not really what Fort McKay First Nation got. In its 1999 progress report on environment, health and safety, and social responsibility — held by the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton — Suncor Energy described relationships with Indigenous communities that included: awarding millions of dollars in contracts; providing topsoil for a gardening project in Fort MacKay (the report included an image of an Indigenous woman working in a garden); offering more employment opportunities; engaging in "quarterly consultations with community elders;" and "sponsoring a study to determine the potential effects of increased oil sands development on the health of the Fort McKay community" (Suncor Energy, 1999, p. 28). As Tracy L. Friedel (2008) has argued, "the inclusion of Native bodies in the context of energy development" material is often tantamount to "greenwashing" (p. 241). Her analysis of materials produced later, by Syncrude, Shell and Nexen showed that oil companies tend to emphasize partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities as a way of showing how they care for the environment:

> The presence of Indigenous knowledge holders in corporate public relations materials can be understood as a referent, conjuring up images of 'the ecological Indian,' a colonial construct representing Indigenous people as one-sided beings whose only contribution can be factually based knowledge regarding natural environments. Corporations are not interested in knowledge that is non-fragmented and reflective of other world views, philosophies and ways of knowing; rather, it is the popular image of the Indian as environmental steward that is evoked. (Friedel, 2008, pp. 241-242)

Today Fort MacKay is surrounded by land that has been leased to oil companies; when I asked Mueller in 2016 how she would describe Fort McKay to someone who has never heard of it, she said:

> I just often explain, you know, we are located in northern Alberta, right literally in the heart of the oil sands. You can stand in the middle of the town at a certain point, and you can smell, hear, taste, and feel the industry, you know, depending on the weather and what's going on, varying effects by industry, as well as with the environment. (personal communication, February 26, 2016)

She added Fort McKay has "gone to court with the big guys" to prevent development of nearby sacred lands (see Brion Energy Corporation, 2014; Cryderman, 2013). Mueller anchors the importance of holding off some degree of development to how future generations will engage with the land: "We want to keep it for our kids, and we have cabins there and accessions, because you can't fish or anything like that around Fort McKay anymore. I mean, you could, but you don't know what you'd find" (personal communication, February 26, 2016).

Fort McKay First Nation's working track record with the oil sands industry is well-known today. In recent years, Boucher has expressed public support not just for tar sands development, but pipeline construction (Tasker, 2016a). This has made him something of a model for pro-industry groups, as illustrated by social media memes (Image 3, Appendix 1). To some, these successes make Fort McKay a "tar sands sell-out"; as the U.K.-based *Guardian* writes, "While oil made some people here rich, it is also poisoning the waters of the Athabasca River" (Goldenberg, 2015). As the person who fields media requests on behalf of the First Nation, Mueller said the nuances of Fort McKay's unique circumstances can be missed:

> Because we're in the middle of the oil sands, media is often a fine line, it's like a balancing act with which side it sometimes goes. And a lot of it pertains to the environment, are we selling out to industry for money and harming the environment? So that's, we've been, scrutinized for that as well. 'Sleeping with the devil,' I think, was one quote that we have [encountered], and it's kind of, yeesh, those are tough, those are tough to take. Because they're not really listening, and they don't understand what the community is going through, and you know, how chief and council have really brought this community to the forefront of a rather, you know, poorer community. (personal communication, February 26, 2016)

If, today, Fort McKay First Nation is viewed as firmly on the side of the oil sands, members of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) are widely considered to be at the forefront of Indigenous resistance to continued expansion of extraction efforts in the region.[10] They are also the best-known hosts to a parade of famous people who have made the tar sands — and their negative impacts on carbon emissions, land, animals, and people — an international cause célèbre.[11] Fort Chipewyan is home to both the Mikisew Cree and the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations, as well as Métis and non-Indigenous communities. Gabrielle Slowey and Lorna Stefanick (2015) write that industrial development was accompanied by neoliberal globalization, investment opportunities, community impact and benefit agreements, and "enthusiasm … for the new economic opportunities that oil provided" for First Nations near development (p. 195).

[10] See LeBillon & Carter (2012) for a discussion of resistance to bitumen development as it relates to security, criminalization, and environmentalism. Part of their discussion takes in the extent to which Indigenous peoples in northern Alberta — those belonging to the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation in Fort Chipewyan in particular — and Indigenous communities along potential pipeline routes "have been a source of long-standing [...] resistance" (p. 174). To understand the ACFN's ongoing work, see its regularly updated blog, http://acfnchallenge.wordpress.com/, which details efforts through litigation, government hearings, and public engagement to block new land lease approvals and prevent new projects.

[11] Prominent visitors have included Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio, Canadian singer Neil Young, and Canadian Hollywood director James Cameron.

> As the pace of development accelerated, however, the concerns of local communities over environmental degradation amplified. Although hypergrowth since 2005 has fueled wealth generation within local Aboriginal communities, it has also created alarm over the effects of pollution on both humans and ecosystem health. The result has been deep divisions among an already diverse community; accusations that the government is failing in its fiduciary duty to consult communities with respect to bitumen sands development; and public relations campaigns by industry, governments, and leaders that seek to win the hearts and minds of the international public concerned with human rights and environmental integrity. (Slowey & Stefanick, 2015, pp. 195-196)

By the mid-2000s, bitumen in Alberta was considered viable oil and oil prices were rocketing upward. Indigenous communities at Fort Chipewyan were drinking bottled water for their own safety, more people were growing worried about the safety of eating local fish or meat, and more land was being lost to development even as industry spoke more often about rehabilitating lost land. And, as I show in the next section, a new federal Conservative government under Stephen Harper was keen to capitalize on oil sands growth to highlight Canada's place in the world as an emerging energy superpower.

2.2 Canada, the oil sands, and aspiring to be a superpower

Harper's earliest international speeches as prime minister of Canada offered insight into his energy- and resource-oriented roadmap for Canada's future. Representing a Calgary riding, Harper politically came of age as a member of the Reform movement. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, the movement was a battle cry from Canada's West to its (Quebec and Ontario) Centre: "The west wants in" on decision-making and resource management. In 2001, Harper was the first signatory to the so-called "firewall letter" which proposed avenues for strengthening Alberta's position in Canada and minimizing its entanglements in the federal policing, health and interprovincial equalization systems (Harper, et al., 2001). A week after former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau died in 2000, Harper wrote an appraisal of the politician's legacy for the *National Post* that cataloged perceived failures, including the National Energy Program, which nationalized both oil prices and oil revenues:

> I witnessed first-hand the movement of an economy from historic boom to deep recession in a matter of months. A radical, interventionist blueprint of economic nationalism, the NEP caused the oil industry to flee, businesses to close and the real estate market to crash. The lives of honest, hard-working Albertans were upended and I came to know many of those who lost their jobs and their homes. (Harper, 2000; see also Wherry, 2008)

These elements of Harper's biography merit recounting because they offer small hints as to how the prime minister positioned both his energy agenda and his support for western Canadian interests as different from those of previous (Liberal and Progressive Conservative) governments. Harper's government championed both Alberta's oil sands and international trade pacts that could better mobilize Canada's energy products. This rhetoric does not necessarily separate Harper from other national leaders. For example, in 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told an international audience in Houston, "no country would find 173 billion barrels of oil in the ground and just leave them there" (macleans.ca, 2017). However, Harper's support for oil sands extraction, international export, and pipelines tended to be far more consistent and unequivocal.

Soon after becoming prime minister in 2006, Harper painted a rather romantic image of the oil sands for those gathered at the Canada-UK Chamber of Commerce in London:

> […] an ocean of oil-soaked sand lies under the muskeg of northern Alberta […] The oil sands are the second largest oil deposit in the world, bigger than Iraq, Iran or Russia; exceeded only by Saudi Arabia. Digging the bitumen out of the ground, squeezing out the oil and converting it into synthetic crude is a monumental challenge. […] it is an enterprise of epic proportions, akin to the building of the pyramids or China's Great Wall. Only bigger. […] And let's be clear. We are a stable, reliable producer in a volatile, unpredictable world. We believe in the free exchange of energy products based on competitive market principles, not self-serving political strategies. That's why policymakers in Washington — not to mention investors in Houston and New York — now talk about Canada and continental energy supply in the same breath. (Government of Canada, 2006)

Harper's speech was part appeal to potential and ongoing investors, and part an outline of his new government's plan to build Canada up as, "a global energy powerhouse — the emerging 'energy superpower'" of the time (Government of Canada, 2006) — and a friendly one at that.[12] The following year, Harper touted Canada's place in the world as an "emerging energy superpower" while speaking to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Summit while also claiming the country would take a leadership role in fighting climate change (Galloway, 2007). As part of his promise to lead by example on climate change, innovation, and renewable energy, Harper described Canada's energy landscape to those gathered in Sydney, Australia:

[12] Later, *Sun* pundit Ezra Levant would argue Canada could offer the world "ethical oil" given its human rights record and democratic stability (see Levant, 2011).

> Energy is one of the key drivers of the Canadian economy, and it increasingly defines our place in the world. We're already the number one supplier of oil, natural gas, hydro-electricity and uranium to the United States. And we're one of the world's leading producers of several strategically important metals and minerals. Because we're a politically stable country with a transparent regulatory system and a commitment to open markets, we are recognized as a major contributor to global energy security. Canada is an emerging energy superpower. But our real challenge and our real responsibility is to become a clean energy superpower. (Harper, 2007)

Ultimately, the Harper government's record as a "clean energy superpower" would prove elusive. Even at the time of Harper's APEC speech, *Globe and Mail* writer Gloria Galloway noted Harper had been a climate change agnostic just five years earlier, when he "dismissed the science that linked emissions to climate change as tentative and contradictory" (2007). By 2011, Harper's government had withdrawn from the international Kyoto Protocol, thereby stepping away from Canada's legal responsibility to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions — not only had Canada not reduced emissions to six per cent below 1990 levels (thanks to a series of governments, not just Harper's), emissions were estimated to be 30 per cent over the internationally agreed-to target (Curry & McCarthy, 2011). By the time Harper was voted out of office in 2015, his record on climate change was widely criticized;[13] in an analysis piece, CBC reporter Terry Milewski described the outgoing prime minister as having, "succeed[ed …] in doing as little as possible about climate change while doing as much as possible about free trade" (Milewski, 2015).

Along this line — the apparent privileging of the economy over the environment, despite rhetoric which sometimes emphasized a balance between the two — it makes sense that Harper often talked about Canada being an energy superpower. In a 2012 speech to business people in Guangzhou, China, he made clear Canada was home to a cross-section of energy resources needed in Asia — again by asserting Canada's own status:

> "Canada is not just a great trading nation; we are an emerging energy superpower. […] and, you know, we want to sell our energy to people who want to buy our energy, it's that simple. Currently, 99 per cent of Canada's energy exports go to one country — the United States. And it is increasingly clear that Canada's commercial interests are best served through diversification of our energy markets. To this end, our government is committed to ensuring that Canada has the infrastructure necessary to move our energy resources to those diversified markets." (CBC News, 2012a)

[13] See also: Klein & Barlow, 2015.

This speech stands out for its timing: as Harper appealed to the people who might "want to buy our energy," the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline hearings were underway at home. This pool of potential buyers in China was precisely who energy producers in Canada would need to connect with if the Northern Gateway pipeline were built.

In this vein, as Laura Way (2011) has shown, Harper's superpower rhetoric was somewhat ill-suited as a roadmap for Canada's future; rather, it could be better understood as a "super sales pitch." She writes:

> Being an energy exporter, even a large one, is not enough. […] To be an energy superpower, a country must not only have enough control over its abundant natural resources to be a price setter but also be willing and able to use this power to extend its influence beyond a regional market to a global one. (Way, 2011, p. 78)

Way concluded Harper's rhetoric was better understood as marketing that in turn found its way into the pages of Canada's leading newspapers, even if the term "energy superpower" was rarely included in stories published by the *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, and *Toronto Star* (p. 91). Way's analysis provides a counterpoint both to Harper's international speeches, and offers a way of understanding links between Harper government members' rhetoric on energy and infrastructure futures, and international trade and marketing. Put another way, grand images of Canada's potential future as a leader in energy development can be understood as having two audiences: a domestic audience that needs to be persuaded to support such initiatives based on promising futures, and an international audience that needs to be persuaded to buy in. Appealing to these two audiences signifies being open for business. Though the term "energy superpower" gestures toward a new chapter in Canada's trajectory, the reality both replicates Canada's place in the world as an exporter of raw material and has no real relationship to exerting power or exercising influence.

2.3 The Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal

The Enbridge Northern Gateway proposal nonetheless aligned with a national goal of making more Canadian oil available to international buyers. It was also presented as a real solution for Canadian oil producers seeking more markets and better access to higher oil prices — the capacity for companies to sell oil at higher rates can in turn allow governments to collect more royalty revenues. As debates over the Enbridge Northern Gateway and the more prominent Keystone XL pipelines heightened, however, questions about mobilizing Alberta's oil came to the fore: putting aside terminal points, was more pipeline capacity needed? Would more

pipelines speed up bitumen extraction, thus increasing the rate of oil sands greenhouse gas emissions and other negative environmental impacts? Would failing to build pipeline capacity force producers to find other, possibly less safe, modes of transporting oil?

Canada's bituminous oil is land-locked, and making the oil sands profitable presents at least three major challenges: (1) as described above, oil sands are difficult and expensive to extract; (2) bitumen — thick and tarry — must be mixed with chemical diluents to make it possible to run through pipelines, and upgraded and refined before it becomes something like the gasoline you might use in your car; and (3), oil sands regions are tucked away in relatively remote corners of northern Alberta, a Prairie province without a water port.

If you accept the premise that Alberta's bituminous oil must be mobilized, or moved to market, there are three ways to do so: by truck; by rail; and by pipeline. The last — pipeline — is generally presented as the safest option.[14] Hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil, bound primarily for United States refineries, move through Canada's current pipeline system everyday already (National Energy Board, 2006, pp. 29-30). By 2006, pipeline companies Enbridge and Kinder Morgan were reporting that they had reached the capacity of what they could possibly carry (National Energy Board, 2006, pp. 30-31). As the Canada West Foundation explained in a report entitled *Pipe or Perish*, pipeline capacity — if not expanded by building more pipelines —

[14] My last major project as an environment reporter for the *Edmonton Journal* was a two-part feature on Alberta's pipeline system, which I began with this pithy observation: "Pipelines leak. Trains derail. Tanker trucks crash" (Audette, 2012a). Months of investigation yielded little in the way of definitive risk assessments for oil pipelines compared to other modes of moving oil, despite assurances from several levels of government and industry officials that pipelines were the safest transportation mode and only getting safer (Audette, 2012a).

Comparing the relative safety of each transportation mode was difficult enough in 2012. In 2013, when a derailed train carrying North Dakota crude collided with and destroyed the Québec town of Lac-Mégantic, the arithmetic of loss and safety proved impossible to calculate. In his Northern Gateway travelogue, Arno Kopecky reflected on this impossibility and its ramifications for political debate:

> Overall, it appears that pipelines do have a better safety record, though the difference is slight in the extreme — each industry boasts a safe-delivery rate of more than 99 per cent. Still, on a continent that moves over twenty million barrels of oil each day […] even a 0.001 per cent greater chance of an accident is well worth factoring in. Just ask the residents of Lac-Mégantic. So if our primary goal in transporting energy is to avoid blowing up small towns, then yes, it might be wise to start replacing oil-bearing trains with pipelines. (Kopecky, 2013, p. 250)

However, Kopecky expanded on the problem of calculating loss, safety, and environmental impacts with a caution against accepting the status quo: "The point, then — or rather, the question — has to do with growth itself. Namely: at what point do the costs of growing our economy outweigh the benefits?" (Kopecky, 2013, p. 252)

"effectively place[s] a ceiling on crude oil production in western Canada" (Holden, 2013, p. 22), in turn curtailing a number of forecasted economic benefits.[15]

Such forecasts offer a second point of contention, however: Is it necessarily a bad thing for infrastructure limits to provide an external cap on the speed with which Alberta's bituminous oil is extracted? This question is not explicitly dealt with in this thesis, though competing concepts of sustainability — and competing ideas and beliefs about how humans live with and of places — are taken up later, when I discuss what First Nations peoples presented during the Northern Gateway pipeline hearings. Further, the question of whether infrastructure limits can and should curb oil sands growth runs implicitly through my analysis of media coverage and movements which amplify and mediate opposition and persistence in the face of oil sands development.

Querying the need to slow development can be characterized as both politically radical *and* conservative. During the 2015 federal election in Canada, a Toronto-based NDP candidate was widely criticized for her suggestion that, "a lot of oil sands oil may have to stay in the ground" to meet climate change targets (The Canadian Press, 2015), even though this comment fell well short of calling for a halt to oil production. In contrast, before his death, former Alberta premier and "father of modern Alberta" (Greenspon, 2013) Peter Lougheed expressed his reservations regarding building up pipeline infrastructure to ship unprocessed bitumen (CBC News, 2011). He spoke of the need to slow oil sands development because of the negative consequences of not doing so for those who lived in Alberta (Nikiforuk, 2012). Today, however, the question of stopping, pausing, or slowing are all quickly dismissed by those in power, as exemplified by the quote I shared at the start of this chapter from Alberta's current NDP energy minister.

By 2013 — even as oil prices were on a downswing because of a flooded market, making Alberta's oil less profitable — four domestic oil sands pipelines were proposed to stretch out from Alberta to British Columbia or eastern Canada. The Enbridge Northern Gateway was projected to connect Hardisty, Alta. to Kitimat, B.C.; the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain would expand a pipeline connecting Alberta to British Columbia's Lower Mainland; the TransCanada

[15] Drawing data from the Canadian Energy Research Institute, the Canada West Foundation report focused on the potential benefits of building the TransCanada Keystone XL and Enbridge Northern Gateway pipelines, and expanding the Kinder Morgan TransMountain pipeline (Holden, 2013, p. 22). Realizing all three pipelines would, "unlock $1.3 trillion in economic output for Canada; 7.6 million person-years of employment, and $281 billion in tax revenue" (Holden, 2013, p. 23).

Energy East would run through the Prairies to Quebec City and on to Saint John, New Brunswick; and the Enbridge Line 9 Reversal would bring bituminous oil to Montreal. Internationally, the Keystone XL — a new link in a pipeline system through the U.S. Midwest — would increase the amount of bituminous oil being carried to refineries in the Gulf of Mexico. These proposals were all met with positive support from Harper's federal government. While the Keystone XL was subject to U.S. government approval, the domestic interprovincial pipelines faced national hearings to weigh their economic benefits and environmental impacts.[16] Although the nature and content of opposition and responses were not uniform, each pipeline proposal pit Indigenous peoples, environmentalists, and non-Indigenous community members against Canadian and Albertan government and industry rhetoric of needing to get domestic oil to international markets.

This said, at the time of writing, none of these projects have actually been realized. The Enbridge Northern Gateway project was conditionally approved by the joint Environmental Assessment Agency-National Energy Board review panel and Stephen Harper's federal government, but the Federal Court of Appeal overturned the approvals based on failures to appropriately consult with First Nations (Proctor, 2016). Later Justin Trudeau's government canceled the project altogether. The proposed TransCanada Energy East pipeline was never approved; its initial hearings were mired in scandal and TransCanada cancelled the project altogether in 2017, in part due to new requirements that a pipeline's downstream carbon emissions be weighed as part of an evaluation of its environmental impact (Bennett, 2017; De Souza, 2017 TransCanada 2017, Oct. 5). The Enbridge Line 9 reversal, Kinder Morgan's TransMountain expansion and the Keystone XL have been approved but remain unbuilt.

Regardless of their outcomes, these pipeline proposals have made oil sands entanglements more evident than ever before, as I argue at length in both Parts 1 and 2 of my thesis. First, however, in the following chapter I will briefly discuss traditions of Indigenous media studies and review existing literature — of which there is little — that assesses media coverage of First Nations and Métis communities in connection to Alberta's oil sands and proposed bitumen pipeline projects.

[16] The Keystone XL pipeline proposal looked all but dead by the time former U.S. president Barack Obama left office; incoming President Donald Trump immediately resuscitated the project in 2017.

Chapter 3: Indigenous media studies

Canada is home to a strong tradition in Indigenous media studies, which can be further grouped as studies of communication infrastructure development and studies of media representations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Though greatly influenced by both groups, my work in this thesis does not fall neatly into either category. I focus instead on the media practices of people who are not producing news coverage or fictional products; they are producing material that is meant to amplify their experiences and positions to advocate change in connection to the oil sands. As I show throughout this thesis, they use a range of available media platforms to do this work. It is important to touch on traditions of Indigenous media studies, however because they inform the questions that I ask of media practices and they speak to the existing institutional and infrastructural limits and challenges that shape how First Nations and Métis peoples may choose to tell their stories about living alongside the tar sands or proposed pipelines.

Studies of Indigenous communications infrastructure development have, in the past, been anchored to communications for development traditions; in a forthcoming publication, Lorna Roth offers a thorough description of the emergence of this field of study and its leading Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere by the mid-1990s (Roth & Audette-Longo, forthcoming). In keeping with re-evaluations of the "dominant paradigm" in development studies (Mansell, 1982; Everett, 1976), such works have often been based on building long relationships with Indigenous communities who are in the process of identifying and meeting their own communications infrastructure needs, from building telephone networks to television networks. This tradition continues today in works oriented toward studying and building up Internet access and infrastructures in remote Indigenous communities.

Studies of how Indigenous peoples have been misrepresented in mainstream Canadian media and marginalized from its production continue to flesh out entrenched stereotypes of Indigenous Other-ness (cf. Anderson & Robertson, 2011; Hafsteinsson & Bredin, 2010; Harding, 2006; Roth, 2005; L. Simpson, 2014; Valaskakis, 1994). Most studies tend to focus on print coverage of Indigenous peoples, although Brad Clark's (2014) comparative analysis of television news in Canada showed broadcast and print coverage practices align: overall, Indigenous peoples are absent from newscasts as reporters or hosts (p. 43) and there is not just a tendency

toward negative coverage of Indigenous issues "but a dearth of context and Aboriginal perspectives" altogether (p. 57). A cross-section of researchers have also shown that misrepresentations of Indigenous issues are particularly pronounced in times of conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, at which point event-specific details tend to be glossed over and the possibility of violence is repeatedly raised (cf. Alfred & Lowe, 2005; Fleras, 2011; Lambertus, 2004; Miller, 2005; Roth, Nelson, & David, 1995; Wilkes, Corrigall-Brown, & Myers, 2010).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report on residential schools, in 2015, highlighted the continuing failure of newsrooms to represent Indigenous peoples. Commissioners noted "media coverage of Aboriginal issues remains problematic" while online media platforms afford the circulation of "inflammatory and racist" commentary (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 294). To combat these issues, the commission offered a series of media-focused calls to action, including the allocation of more federal government dollars to both the Aboriginal People's Television Network and the CBC (so that the latter could further diversify its coverage and its hires), and recommended post-secondary journalism programs incorporate a more fulsome education on Indigenous matters for students who will move into media careers (2015, pp. 292-297).

The question of how First Nations and Métis peoples whose communities are closest to the oil sands, or to proposed sites of related oil sands infrastructures, create and negotiate media is particularly important in the context of settler colonialism and the long-term practices of media organizations (not) covering Indigenous issues. Jen Preston (2017) describes settler colonialism as "structures of land theft and Indigenous erasure" that maintain the status quo; though in Canada these structures stem from British and French colonial practices, settler colonialism is contemporary and its outlines evolve in tandem with the logics of the day (p. 2). Where neocolonialism gestures to "the largely economic rather than the largely territorial enterprise of imperialism" (Spivak, 1999, p. 3) that one might imagine in line with the extraction of resources, or building of call centres or factories, in other countries, settler colonialism encompasses the day-to-day work (and obscuring) of colonialism. Fleshing out how settler colonialism winds through the discourses, policies and practices that enable oil sands extraction in Canada, Preston (2017) writes, "It becomes difficult to imagine a contemporary settler colonial context that is not dependent upon both settler common sense *and* normalized neoliberal logic" (p. 11). Key to the

momentum of both settler colonialism and neoliberalism is actively *not noticing* how they work. Through practices of under-representing (and under-hiring) Indigenous people, flattening diverse stories into recognizable narrative tropes, and over-representing conflict between and among communities, non-Indigenous media have done some of the work of normalizing settler colonialism.

When it comes to news media coverage of the oil sands and Indigenous issues, however, there is, overall, relatively little academic literature.

3.1 News coverage of First Nations and Métis peoples in connection to the oil sands

To find discussions about how First Nations and Métis peoples are covered in news media stories about the oil sands or pipelines is, more often than not, an exercise in reading broader studies about oil sands communications and picking out references to news coverage of Indigenous issues. For example, when Shane Gunster and Paul Saurette (2014) analyzed a year of *Calgary Herald* coverage of the oil sands (between May 2010 and May 2011), they found that the benefits of development to "all" Canadians were consistently championed while a multi-billion dollar industry was rendered "David" to international environmental organizations' "Goliath" (p. 344). They wrote,

> stories about the suffering of First Nation communities were the exception rather than the rule, attracting little sustained attention or empathy from the *Herald*. Instead, emotions of outrage and sympathy were largely reserved for the real victims of this (environmental) narrative: the oil industry and its many beneficiaries. (Gunster & Saurette, 2014, p. 343)

Their findings relate to those of Janice Paskey, Gillian Steward and Amanda Williams (2013), whose incredibly detailed study of four decades of Alberta government, industry, media, academic, and non-government documents shows that the voices of First Nations and other residents of Fort McMurray are largely missing from media coverage of the oil sands. In an analysis of six years of newspaper coverage of the Enbridge Northern Gateway proposal, Nichole Dusyk, John Axsen and Kia Dullemond (2018) note First Nations were framed as among a range of risks to the pipeline; communities were framed as both potentially benefiting from the project's economic impacts and potentially endangering the project because of their constitutionally protected territorial rights (p. 16).

One outlier in this rather small sample of published literature is Marcelina Piotrowski's (2013) discursive analysis of six news articles published in 2012, at the height of national debate on the Northern Gateway proposal. Piotrowski argues the "oil pipeline debates" privileged

Indigenous voices, effectively making the debate more remote to non-Indigenous Canadians (p. 630). I will discuss Piotrowski's findings further in tandem with my own content and discourse analysis of news coverage of the pipeline in the second half of this thesis, but for now I will note that when I analyzed English-language print news coverage of the pipeline at three key moments in 2012, 2013, and 2016, I found that, overall, Indigenous voices were not particularly privileged, especially in comparison to the voices of other sources such as federal or provincial politicians. The exception to this rule was coverage of the first day of community hearings for the pipeline in 2012, which took place in Kitamaat Village, B.C., home to the Haisla First Nation.

As a whole, however, my thesis is less occupied with analysis of media coverage, and more focused on questions of media practice and negotiation. I ask how communities work to build momentum to press for change when their stories and their bodies have so often been marginalized in and from mainstream media coverage. First Nations and Métis peoples who oppose oil sands development are not alone; as I will show in the following chapters, they are joined by allies and environmental activists from around the world. Indigenous peoples are also not uniformly opposed to oil sands development; as in the example of Fort McKay First Nation, in Chapter 2, some communities have come to work quite closely with industry in northern Alberta. Others have signed on to share in the wealth that could be generated by building pipelines to carry more oil to more refineries and markets. The nuances of these positions present a challenge not only to journalists who are often tasked with explaining, contextualizing and distilling difficult stories for broad audiences, but to Indigenous media makers who aim to amplify their own messages about the impacts of the tar sands on their daily lives. This challenge, as I will show throughout, demands our attention especially when their stories explicitly counter accepted narratives of shared national, provincial, and personal economic benefits of oil development in Canada.

Part One: The Tar Sands Healing Walk

Chapter 4: Setting the Scene

A long, unpaved drive links Indian Beach Campground, a lakeside Fort McMurray First Nation campsite, to Highway 881, south of Fort McMurray. It is a beach in a very Canadian sense of the word: low trees and grass run right up to the lakeshore, and the water itself invites swimming. On arriving from outside the region, one could be forgiven for being able to transpose the site to others in the northern Prairies, or even parts of central Canada or the Maritimes — in other words, to understand and remember it as similar to lake-hugging beaches elsewhere in the country. This is a useful exercise insofar as it gives one a sense of belonging in a region better known for its difference from the rest of Canada. Preparing to encounter the sites of bitumen extraction just outside Fort McMurray, this beach is also something of a respite: in the midst of the oil sands, this is a place with pine trees and wild rose bushes, even if drinking water still needs to be brought in for those camping here. In the summer of 2016, this beach was a literal haven for people fleeing the wildfires that engulfed and destroyed parts of the city of Fort McMurray, when the Fort McMurray First Nation opened the campsite to those who fled south from the city.

In 2014, this campground was where Tar Sands Healing Walk participants camped, ate, and took part in workshops. It lies just off a secondary highway that connects Anzac to the much more traveled (and famously dangerous) north-south Highway 63, which in turn connects the Wood Buffalo Region to the rest of Alberta. Loads of equipment and people seem always to be on the move, as buses and large trucks shuttle to and from the many industrial oil sites that pepper the area. The beach drive is exposed on one side — a field has been tilled to make way for rows of parked vehicles — and shaded by trees and bushes on the other. On June 28, 2014, people from as close by as local First Nations reserves, Métis settlements, Jasper, and Edmonton, and as far away as Vancouver, Maine, and Utah, stood on the shady side of the drive, waiting for a handful of yellow school buses. The buses would take them about forty minutes north, past "Fort Mac," more or less to Syncrude's doorstep, to participate in the fifth and final Tar Sands Healing Walk. One of Canada's oldest and largest bituminous oil producers, Syncrude Canada Ltd.'s operations are something of a symbolic and historic centerpiece for Canada's oil sands. Syncrude has been surface-mining bituminous oil since the late 1970s (Syncrude, n.d.), and northeastern Alberta's oil industry has grown in tandem with the company's fortunes. A short

drive from Fort McMurray, Syncrude's Mildred Lake upgrading facility and settling basins (or tailings ponds) are easy to access and to see from Highway 63.

The scale of bitumen extraction, even at the Mildred Lake facility, can be ascertained by images shared in recent years, some of which I will discuss in the following chapter. However, images taken from the sky or a bird's eye view can also render the region unbelievable, quite possibly beautiful, or too big a problem for one to imagine finding solutions to the path of waste that has accompanied huge development. The Tar Sands Healing Walk moves the gaze of cameras and onlookers from the sheer scale of development to human, on-the-ground impacts. If the oil sands are the site of entanglement with which this thesis is occupied, then the Tar Sands Healing Walk is a meeting-point for allied interests in remembering what came before, and imagining alternative futures. The Tar Sands Healing Walk — a day-long, 14-kilometre circle that begins and ends at Crane Lake Park, off Highway 63 — brought hundreds of people to Fort McMurray every summer, starting in 2010 and ending in 2014. It was described by organizers as, "a gathering focused on healing the environment and the people who are suffering from tar sands expansion" (Tar Sands Healing Walk, 2014a). Those participants who visited came to witness the oil sands: a material source of non-renewable fossil fuel energy; a source of fear for human and non-human health and sustainability; and a symbolic source of local, national, and international desires for economic development. Many also came to *show* the tar sands, to share the images and reflections they gathered with networks and audiences outside the Healing Walk. The Keepers of the Athabasca[17] hosted the Healing Walk with local Indigenous communities who provided a campground, food for an evening feast, clean drinking water, and who shared stories of life atop the tar sands. The challenges organizers experienced in publicizing the event, how they communicated to participants, and their own reflections on what the Healing Walk represents, ground the discussion chapters of this part of my thesis, and mark an avenue toward understanding how First Nations and Métis peoples have created and negotiated media in connection to the oil sands.

The overarching emphasis of this part of my thesis is on how the Healing Walk worked as a meeting-place for a cross-section of local, national, and international interests, and how competing concerns and interests were shared in media. This meeting-place is a window onto

[17] The Keepers of the Athabasca are "First Nations, Métis, Inuit, environmental groups, and Watershed citizens working together for the protection of water, land and air, and thus for all living things today and tomorrow in the Athabasca River Watershed" (Keepers of the Athabasca, n.d.).

how oil sands entanglements work, and reach out past northern Alberta. I will show how the Healing Walk operated differently from protests or sit-ins that otherwise attempt to assert climate change activism on a national and international scale. I argue the Healing Walk asserted the spectacle of oil sands infrastructure, allowing us to characterize the Healing Walk as a social movement and as a site of media production, but it also pushes us to re-examine a range of cultural meanings put to work in both social movement and communication theories. In addition to further conceptualizing oil sands entanglement throughout these chapters, I will further discuss Lorna Roth's (2005) concept of "cultural persistence." In the following section I look closely at how cultural persistence usefully frames Indigenous-led movements, like the Healing Walk, that exceed protest and politics as we've known them.

4.1 Cultural persistence, and thinking past protests

Healing Walk organizers did not forward a direct demand to any government or industry. Making a demand public in order to win the support of a broader base of citizens, who will in turn persuade an institution to make change, is often a key or defining element of a protest or social movement (see Lipsky, 1968). The demand's perceived merit, or the ability of a protest movement to persuade many, is often also what allows the movement's strength to be weighed.[18] As I will elaborate in greater detail in Chapter 7, a call to, "Stop the destruction, start the healing" — the banner call that led the Healing Walk — exceeds a directed demand. "Stop the destruction" is a vast order, potentially aimed at both external and internal forces; "start the healing" suggests an invitation to a community (or many communities) to turn their attention inward. To "heal," in turn, carries physical, mental, and spiritual connotations for people and for a scarred landscape and environment. "Cultural persistence" is a useful concept for unpacking such a call precisely because it takes in the potential not just to respond to external forces, but to imagine ways of doing things — including social movements — differently.

Conceptualizing "cultural persistence" as a contribution to social movement theory is particularly important in an Indigenous Canadian context. Following Kiera L. Ladner (2008), Leanne Simpson (2011) notes social movement theory is largely absent from works by Indigenous scholars writing about Indigenous resurgence movements:

[18] Consider, for example, popular criticisms of the Occupy movement, its multiple aims, and its absence of a centralized leadership structure or a single over-arching call, particularly when the 2011 movement was contrasted to the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s, which were considered successful.

> Social movement theory is, for the most part, inadequate in explaining the forces that generate and propel Indigenous resistance and resurgence because it is rooted in western knowledge and a western worldview, ignoring Indigenous political culture and theory. Social movement theory also ignores the historical context of Indigenous resistance — spanning over 400 years for some Indigenous nations — by disregarding differences in political organization, governance and political cultures between Canadian and Indigenous societies. At their core, Indigenous political movements contest the very foundation of the Canadian state in its current expression, while most theories of group politics and social movements take the state for granted. […] We have been resisting colonial imposition for four centuries. I think our communities know something about organizing, mobilizing and strategizing. I think our communities know quite a lot about *living* through the most grievous of circumstances. (L. Simpson, 2011, p. 16)

To contextualize Ladner's and Simpson's critiques, let us look to Michael Lipsky's (1968) work on social movements, which emphasized "protest as a political resource," and as a tool for "relatively powerless groups" to sway others (p. 1146). To use this framework, social movement theory would cast Indigenous peoples as outsiders or marginalized people working to sway a broader (non-Indigenous) public and government. In a settler-colonial setting, wherein Indigenous governments and communities are by and large pursuing self-government and a return of control over land, resources, and cultural identity, goals and strategies of advocating change exceed singular demands of Canadian governments, industries, or — as Simpson hints, in identifying centuries of colonialism — short-term timelines.

Motivated by decolonization, Indigenous resurgence movements can be understood as non-governmental, grassroots-mobilized, practice-based approaches. Perhaps the best known example, recently, would be Idle No More, which attended first to resistance to far-reaching federal legislation that was perceived to have negative impacts on the environment and Indigenous rights, and then grew to be a cross-country grassroots movement through the winter of 2012-13.[19] In a description that brings to mind the guiding words of the Tar Sands Healing Walk ("Stop the destruction, start the healing"), Simpson writes resurgence is a turning-away "from trying to transform the colonial outside [to] a flourishment of the Indigenous inside," or,

[19] In *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement* (a collection dedicated to how Idle No More brought people together and its impacts), see in particular Glen Coulthard's contextualization of its history (2014c). See, too, his writing on Indigenous resurgence alongside an exploration of what can be learned from Idle No More (2014a, pp. 151-179)

"re-establish[ing] the processes by which we live who we are within the current context we find ourselves" (2011, p. 17).[20]

As Ladner (2008) argues, decisions to eschew a social movement/political opportunity approach of persuading a wider public to, in turn, persuade a government to make changes show how decolonization determines modes of mobilization as well as demands put forward and who is imagined as the appropriate audience for those demands. For example, insisting on nation-to-nation relations and "the use of international domains to resolve domestic issues" (p. 245) signals the extent to which, "Indigenous movements contest the very foundation of the Canadian state as a colonial construction while most theories of group politics and social movements take the state for granted" (p. 228). In other words, as Ladner writes,

> Indigenous peoples are still mobilizing in defence of their nations, seeking to have their rights (political, economic, and territorial) as nations recognized and respected, and establishing a relationship between nations based upon mutual respect and mutual benefit. At the end of the day, the dog with the rope around its neck will still want to deal with the issue of the rope, no matter how many cookies it is thrown. (p. 247)

There are a number of recent Indigenous movements which can be understood as forms of protest and refusal, and which — borrowing Ladner's metaphor — explicitly or implicitly fight the matter of the rope's constraint in addition to the immediate issues at-hand:

- At the time of writing, outside Kamloops in the interior of British Columbia, Tiny House Warriors are putting homes in the way of the proposed Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline. "We are using these tiny houses to go and stop the destruction, so we can begin to heal, and Mother Earth can begin to heal from the genocide that's been done on our land and our people," Mayuk Manuel told CBC in the fall of 2017 (CBC Unreserved, 2017). On their accompanying website, the warriors say they are "going big by going small," and describe their work against the pipeline company is a matter of responsibility:

  > We, the Secwepemc, have never ceded, surrendered, or given up our sovereign title and rights over the land, waters and resources within Secwepemcul'ecw. We have lived on our land since time immemorial and have never been conquered by war. We collectively hold title and governance regarding Secwepemcul'ecw and the collective consent of the Secwepemc is required for any access to our lands, waters and resources. (Tiny House Warriors, n.d.)

[20] Simpson notes she draws her definition from Taiaiake Alfred's works (2009, 2009 [2005]).

- In August, 2017, a group of people from the Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw First Nation on British Columbia's west coast began occupying a fish farm. They call the farms, located on traditional First Nations territory, illegal because, "rightful community representatives never agreed to the farms and have deferred every government referral that has sought consultation on the matter in the past" (Gilpin, 2017). This justification not only contests industry practices, but presents a challenge to Canadian governments' rights to allow or not allow economic development on traditional First Nations territories.
- Also at the time of writing, Wet'suwet'en Peoples continue to live at the Unis'tot'en Camp in northern British Columbia, maintaining an active and traditional presence on the land to prevent proposed natural gas and bitumen pipelines (Unis'tot'en Camp, n.d.). In media coverage (for example, Al Jazeera, 2014) and in media produced by camp members, the very jurisdiction of Canadian governments over the land is undermined, emphasizing not only refusal of the pipelines by local First Nations, but refusal to have their lands used or passed through without their necessary consent. In this way, the Unis'tot'en Camp cannot be understood as "a protest or demonstration" (Unis'tot'en Camp, n.d.). Rather, it is a dismissal of settler colonial laws in favour of local Indigenous ones, as the camp members write on their website:

  > Our clan is occupying and using our traditional territory as it has for centuries. Our free prior and informed consent protocol is in place at the entrance of [our] territory as an expression of our jurisdiction and our inherent right to both give and refuse consent. Our homestead is a peaceful expression of our connection to our territory. It is also an example of the continuous use and occupation of our territory of our territory [sic] by our clan. Our traditional structures of governance continue to dictate the proper use of and access to our lands and water.
  >
  > Today all of our Wet'suwet'en territory, including Unist'ot'en [sic] territory, is unceded Aboriginal territory. Our traditional indigenous legal systems remain intact and continue to govern our people and our lands. We recognize the authority of these systems. (Unis'tot'en Camp, n.d.)

- In 2012-13, as the Idle No More movement rose up across Canada, Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence embarked on a six-week hunger strike to draw attention to what she had called, in the past, the "Third World" condition of her northern Ontario First Nation reserve (quoted in Taylor-Vaisey, 2013). In carrying out her hunger strike on Victoria Island, located on the Ottawa River within sight of Parliament Hill, Spence ensured the spectacle of her strike could be covered by national news media — using social

movement theory, we might understand her strike as an example of "the logic of bearing witness," an action which,

> […] is not designed to convince the public or decision-makers that the protestors constitute a majority or a threat. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate a strong commitment to an objective deemed vital for humanity's future. […] In actions of this kind, activists are willing to run personal risks to demonstrate their convictions and reinforce the moral message being conveyed by their protest. (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 178)

However, Spence's hunger strike exceeded both the initial claims she made to the press (specifically, for federal action to remedy housing and other problems at Attawapiskat) and the protest logic described above. The point of her hunger strike grew to encompass a list of treaty-focused demands for change and nation-to-nation dialogue beyond the scope of her community alone (CBC News, 2013). Many of these claims can be understood as decolonizing in motive. Mainstream media outlets seemed confused by Spence's claims, particularly as she called for an unprecedented meeting between the prime minister, the Governor General, and First Nations leadership — a move to involve the Queen's representative in Canada which can be read as undermining the state's authority to negotiate directly with Indigenous peoples. *Maclean's* magazine, for example, argued Spence proved an "elusive target" for then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government (Taylor-Vaisey, 2013).

- In the early 1990s, Cree and Inuit protesters opposed to James Bay hydroelectric dam projects in northern Quebec built a canoe and steered it southeast from Ottawa, to Montreal, and ultimately down the Hudson River to New York City (Niezen, 2009, p. 86). This journey received "snowballing media coverage," and drew thousands of people to Times Square on Earth Day in 1992, where Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come addressed gathered listeners and news media, and drew international attention to the negative effects of the proposed project (Niezen 2009, p. 86). This international movement can be understood as realizing a protest "logic of numbers," simply, "draw[ing] the attention of elected representatives to the fact that, at least on certain issues, the majority in the country is not the same as the majority" in government (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 171). The cross-border movement by Cree and Inuit peoples, and their insistence upon gaining an international stage for their claims in relationship to proposed dams, exceeds appealing to the governments of Quebec and Canada, or to their

citizens. On one hand, this appeal can be read as gaining international support to move both domestic and international governments; on the other hand, in keeping with Ladner's and Simpson's analyses, making an international appeal gives voice to Cree and Inuit governments, beyond the authority of the Canadian state.

There are other avenues and movements in the last thirty years which can also be used to further explore and illustrate Ladner's and Simpson's discussions of how social movement theory fails to account for the fullness of decolonization movements, too. In her (2014) book, *Mohawk Interruptus*, for example, Audra Simpson sheds light on a series of forms of colonial refusal, such as refusing to move through the world with Canadian passports. In *Red Skin White Masks,* Glen Coulthard (2014a) argues the politics of recognition — the kind elaborated through social movement theories of collective action — have failed Indigenous peoples. Academic discussions of Indigenous resurgence and grassroots movements point to key problems with strictly conceptualizing an event like the Tar Sands Healing Walk, or any of the events described above, as protests defined through social movement theory — particularly social movement theory as it was advanced in Western democracies in the 1960s, at the height of civil rights and anti-war movements in the United States. Holding Ladner's and Simpson's analyses alongside Michael Lipsky's (1968), the gulf between Indigenous resurgence literature and social movement theory in the so-called West becomes even more evident.

Lipsky's framework further sets out the following as imaginable successes for a movement: persuading "strong third parties" to weigh in on behalf of less-strong protesters (p. 1149); "symbolic satisfactions," or apparent change-making, but not so far as "resource allocation or policy innovations which would constitute tangible responses to protest activity" (p. 1155), and "token material satisfactions" which respond to the immediate protest call but not more general or systemic problems (p. 1155). In broad terms, for Lipsky and for others who followed and continued to elaborate the field of social movement theory, clear demands carry clear calls to action that can be measured against whether or not those actions are realized on a fairly small, or immediate, scale. The prospect for real change is muddied by the workings of institutional politics, and openings for realizing successful protests are largely defined by a series

of "opportunity structures."[21] Critics have since highlighted the problems of measuring the success of a protest or collective action by the extent to which a demand is actually realized, however.

It follows, particularly when we think through Indigenous resurgence fully realized as a response to colonialism, and many protests as at least partly motivated by the spirit of decolonization, that resurgence necessarily questions or undermines the state's (and its citizenry's) right to ultimately arbitrate Indigenous demands. Leanne Simpson draws on Taiaiake Alfred's works when she writes the goal of resurgence should not be to change the workings of the colonial state, but, to live and engage in "*Indigenous* processes" that circumvent the state (p. 17, her italics):

> We need to do this on our own terms, without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or the opinions of Canadians. In essence, we need to not just figure out who we are; we need to re-establish the processes by which we live who we are within the current context we find ourselves. We do not need funding for this. We do not need a friendly political climate to do this. We do not need opportunity to do this. We need our Elders, our languages, and our lands, along with vision, intent, commitment, community and ultimately, action. We must move ourselves beyond resistance and survival, to flourishment and *mino bimaadiziwin*.[22] (L. Simpson, 2011, p. 17)

Yet, I am unwilling to completely put aside the value of thinking through movements like the Tar Sands Healing Walk alongside social movement theory. Admittedly, I am approaching this question from the perspective of a non-Indigenous Canadian and a media researcher. I am interested in both the cross-cultural alliances made through actions such as the Healing Walk, and how these actions are mediated to, or shared with, publics not necessarily or immediately sympathetic or interested in a message such as, "Stop the destruction, start the healing." Even among participants and allies, the story of the Healing Walk is mediated and re-mediated as participants share their experiences; we can see how the narrative becomes more fluid when we look at how participants used the #healingwalk hashtag online, as I will discuss more fully in Chapter 8.

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[21] As Bart Cammaerts (2012) points out, the notion of the "political opportunity structure" — the factors that present opportunities for action and that can be seen by activists as determining potential success — is prominent in social movement theory (p. 118).

[22] Simpson translates the Anishinaabeg concept "mino bimaadiziwin" as, "The art of living the good life" (L. Simpson, 2011, p. 26). See further discussion in Chapter 13, and Naomi Klein's (2013) interview with Simpson.

Manuel Castells (1983) argues that an outcome-based framework for weighing the success of a protest or movement is too narrow, and excludes protests which may move outside "some kind of basement in a hierarchical and architectural vision of political institutions" (p. 294). Rather, he argues for imagining collective action as separate from, and "not necessarily limited to, or bound by, the rules of the game and the institutionalization of dominant values and norms" (p. 294). There is room in this criticism, as an example, to push at the borders of social movement theory, particularly in its relationship to communication studies and the expression of ideas in the public sphere. It is important here, too, to remember the above discussion of entanglement and that the Tar Sands Healing Walk did not operate in a vacuum. Participants outside the circle of organizers could share their experiences with others who were not there, while journalists might narrate the event for distant and nearby audiences. In this way, the story of the Healing Walk stood to shift, and to be understood using the very social movement theories some who write of Indigenous resurgence would dismiss.

In this chapter, and moving forward through this section and much of this thesis, I ask how "cultural persistence" can be used to broaden and expand social movement concepts. Leanne Simpson's (2011) emphasis on *living — despite* "the most grievous of circumstances" (p. 16) or *through* "re-investing in [Indigenous] ways of being" (p. 17) — aligns with Lorna Roth's highlighting of alternatives and additions to resistance. Ideas of recapturing and reimagining Indigenous ways of being and living, and mobilizing knowledge as resurgence, helps us conceptualize how communities living alongside the oil sands find ways to do so that may not fit what institutions want or what outsiders calling for resistance expect. Often we see demands of government, industry, and other institutions, pitched (and understood) in precise, actionable forms: for examples from the field of North American fossil fuel activism, Greenpeace's oft-repeated slogan, "Stop the tar sands";[23] the Council of Canadians' "No pipelines, no tankers";[24] or, the social media hashtag, #NOKXL, taken up by Nebraska farmers and a cross-section of activists and environmental groups protesting the proposed Keystone XL pipeline from Alberta through the United States to the Gulf of Mexico. All these calls appeal directly and succinctly to industries and governments to take action right now, to stop tar sands development, to safeguard waterways, and to say no to bitumen-carrying pipelines. A call such as, "Stop the destruction,

[23] See: http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/climate-change/stop-the-tar-sands/
[24] See: http://canadians.org/pipelines

start the healing," when understood as rooted in Indigenous resurgence literature as discussed above, is anchored in the wants, needs, memories, and goals of communities, not in response to industries and external governments. I argue "cultural persistence" gives us a conceptual entry-point for understanding how the Healing Walk can be a site of resurgence, social movement, and a bridge between communities, even as it works in excess of all these things, as I will discuss in the following chapters.

In what follows, the concepts of oil sands entanglement and "cultural persistence" will be further elaborated in an exploration of the media strategies of organizers of the Tar Sands Healing Walk, as Eriel Deranger and Jesse Cardinal described them in interviews and as they can be observed by analyzing media content produced by organizers and participants. Both Deranger and Cardinal focused on the walk as an answer to a range of communities' needs and interests, rooted in local histories, which would not be possible had they assumed straightforward narratives of resistance to, or stopping, the tar sands.

Chapter 5: Experiencing the tailings ponds

On June 28, 2014, as many as 400 people arrived at Syncrude's operations and tailings ponds. Some beat drums, many took pictures of the event as it unfolded, and all walked under the banner, "Stop the Destruction, Start the Healing." I have already begun to unpack the importance of this message as a means of exceeding protest, but in Chapter 7 I will further discuss the rhetorical importance of this banner and its meaning for community members. In this chapter, however, I grapple with what it means to experience the tar sands first as a researcher and second as someone from outside invited in. Part of the promise of the Tar Sands Healing Walk is almost voyeuristic, or even touristic: participants are invited to see the tar sands first-hand, without mediation. Of course, the other side of that promise is an invitation to really engage with people, to listen to them and to have them mediate the region in their own words (person-to-person), before returning home to share the experience. Relaying the experience is, in some ways, part of an unspoken deal: participants are asked to, "consider uploading your photos and tweets to #healingwalk on Twitter," and to "follow up" with "footage and videos as well" (Tar Sands Healing Walk, 2014, *Program*) and, as co-organizer Jesse Cardinal describes in a later chapter, communicating what has been experienced to a wider audience can be a form of contributing to making change.[25]

In 2014, I walked with participants, taking notes and pictures, and talking to activists who had come in from Calgary, Edmonton, or Vancouver; young people whose relatives worked for the oil industry; older people who had long been dedicated to environmentalism; people who engaged in prayer, including those who took off their shoes and walked bare-foot on the hot highway pavement. I walked for a long while with someone I knew when I was a journalist, and sat down with an anti-pipeline activist from northern British Columbia during a break in the 14-kilometre circle. Some of the people I met — like me — had never been to the tailings ponds before, while others had made a point of returning to the region to show solidarity with local Indigenous communities. Along the way, it was the local people who explained to new walkers what they were actually seeing; for me the most memorable of these explanations was the briefest, a nod to the tailings ponds as we first saw them and I realized what they were.

[25] Elsewhere, Shirley Roburn (2017) discusses the potential for building up "storytelling infrastructure" through sharing, exchanging and relaying media experiences.

The invitation held out to walk alongside the oddly pristine lakes (toxic tailings ponds), to pray, to spiritually heal the land, and to make the tar sands proximate or tangible, also makes the oil sands wildly intangible and unimaginable. The land alongside the still tailings ponds, specifically, looks almost like a beach: expansive, sandy, wind-swept. As I hinted in the previous chapter, they stand in opposition to northern Alberta's boreal forest and wetlands. To say they are a "strange sight" is too small, too uncertain, even too distant. It is not specific or scientific, nor is it emotive or provocative when these ponds are at the heart of an ongoing debate about the economic and environmental future of this region, and the impacts of this future on local communities and other parts of the world.

This chapter takes up the methodological problems of experiencing the tar sands, with a specific focus on sight and smell. The sounds of the area are touched on in different ways in my discussion of the Healing Walk, but they are not analyzed in this chapter as a methodological problem. Rather, sounds in the tar sands during the Healing Walk are noted throughout for their relationship to failures, ceremony, and uncertainty: cannons make pop-boom sounds to scare wildlife away from the tailings ponds; drum groups give the walk its heart beat; and truck and bus drivers who honk their horns as they drive past walkers leave mixed feelings of anxiety and solidarity-building in their wake. One sound is also noticeably absent from the Healing Walk: that of an overriding chant. This absence will be explored in other ways in Chapter 7, in tandem with my discussion of how the Healing Walk exceeded protest.

Waiting for the yellow school buses that would bring Tar Sands Healing Walk participants to Crane Lake Park, white medical face masks were on offer, primarily for children or older people, or people who suffer from heart or respiratory illnesses. Perhaps one of the most haunting and popular images distributed in tandem with promoting the Tar Sands Healing Walk is that of two small children wearing white face masks. In this image, which appeared on the event`s program and website, the children sit in the foreground, and plumes can be seen rising from the Syncrude upgrader behind them. The children appear to be Indigenous, and they are not looking directly at the camera, nor are their gazes rehearsed or posed. The viewer is drawn to a number of questions and some conclusions, too: What do the tar sands smell like? If it is not safe for these children to breathe freely, without the aid of medical masks, what does this mean for the people who live in communities closest to bitumen development? Given the centering of children, what does this mean for the future?

5.1 What do we smell when we smell the tar sands?

ACFN Chief Allan Adam contributed welcoming remarks at the start of the 2014 Healing Walk, including: "People say it's the smell of money in this area. So enjoy what you smell" (field notes, 2014). I wrote these words down, and reflecting on the notes, I can't say what it actually smelled like that day. At times I thought I smelled something like plastic in the air, at times I didn't really smell anything unusual. Save for times when forest fire smoke has blown through and hung over my own community, I have no real experience in thinking analytically about the quality of the air I breathe. Is the air in Montreal qualitatively different from that in Ottawa? Or that in Edmonton, or in Fort McMurray? There is a scientific answer, of course — people are committed to measuring air quality, and issuing warnings as necessary. But where particles in the air might be measurable, *smells* are hardly objective. In 2015, I asked journalist Mike De Souza about what he smelled during the Tar Sands Healing Walk. De Souza was working for Reuters news service at the time; he had also worked for Postmedia in Ottawa when I worked for *The Edmonton Journal* (we both wrote about the environment, energy, and politics for the same chain of newspapers). At the time of this writing, he is the Ottawa-based managing editor for the online environmental news site *National Observer*; I am a contract editor and reporter for the site. De Souza drew on a science-centered vocabulary to describe his interaction with the smell:

> Well, some heavy air, I would say, you know, there's a certain tar like smell. You know, I can tell that, too, when I went in July [2015] to see the site of the [Nexxen pipeline] spill, you can smell the tar from the bitumen, or the tar-like smell of the bitumen. Yeah, it's just not pure, clean, forest air. […] That would be the difference. I mean, there's a certain level of almost smog, kind of, the VOCs[26] that you can feel when you're breathing I think, that you're just not breathing pure air. […] I think the weather might be a bit of a factor too, if it's a hot day, or very sunny, and, or if it's raining, that might be different, but the days I've been up there it's always been sunny days, and so I think that might make it worse than a rainy day. (personal communication, Nov. 1, 2015)

De Souza moves between his subjective experience (a comparison to the absence of "pure, clean, forest air") and a second-person, or more objective, analysis of smell's relationship to air quality ("a certain level of … the VOCs that you can feel when you're breathing"). The subjective, I would argue, is more difficult to explain or communicate with clarity because of how much it

[26] VOC is an acronym for volatile organic compounds, which Environment Canada describes as a key part in making both smog and air pollution (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2016).

asks of the person trying to share, in terms of their other positions and experiences, to arrive at a clear explanation of what they smell.

Anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2015) writes, "Smell draws us into the entangled threads of memory and possibility" (p. 45). Memory and possibility are both elusive and subjective; sharing them with others requires, to begin with, shared experiences. I can bring to mind the smell of my grandmother's hand lotion, which in turn conjures memories of fresh summer days, being small and following her around her garden, and now sitting with her in her living room as we talk. I can no better describe this smell than I can the smell of air. Tsing continues this line of questioning:

> Smell is elusive. Its effects surprise us. We don't know how to put much about smell into words, even when our reactions are strong and certain. Humans breathe and smell in the same intake of air, and describing smell seems almost as difficult as describing air. But smell, unlike air, is a sign of the presence of another, to which we are already responding. Response always takes us somewhere new; we are not quite ourselves any more — or at least the selves we were, but rather ourselves in encounter with another. Encounters are, by their nature, indeterminate; we are unpredictably transformed. Might smell, in its confusing mix of elusiveness and certainty, be a useful guide to the indeterminacy of encounter? (Tsing, 2015, p. 46)

We can read Tsing's words as an anthropological question — hers is an anthropological project, after all, of tracing culture, labour, trade, and consumption in connection to the global movement of matsutake mushrooms. To elaborate the meaning of anthropological, following Stephen J. Collier and Aihwa Ong (2005), it is a question of understanding, "the constitution of the social and biological existence of human beings as an object of knowledge, technical intervention, politics, and ethical discussion" (p. 6). How are we situated in relationship to smell? What are we carrying into the encounter? How might this engagement change us, as well? This brings to mind Peter Kulchyski's (2005) elaboration of the ethnographic research problem of being both "here" and "there" (p. 27). In an introduction to his work, Kulchyski draws upon Clifford Geertz's handling of how "being there," or in the field, necessitates an acknowledgement by the researcher that she is still *of* "here;" any representation she offers is still sifted through her own experiences, vocabulary, and understanding (p. 27). Even my sense of smell has a position from which it operates. Understanding this is key to unlocking some of the subjectivity of other encounters, too. If it is so difficult to articulate something so personal as breathing and sensing, obviously it is useful to be mindful of one's position in approaching description and analysis of

other elements of this project, too. Being in place, to walk around the tailings ponds, did not change the experiences I took in with me, nor did the experience allow me to be, somehow, an objective observer; I am still informed by stories I have listened to, read, and written, and by having lived in both far-away and close-by cities that benefit from what is produced in northern Alberta.

Following Trinh T. Minh-ha's (1989) criticism of the practice of anthropological presence/invisibility to suggest authority to tell the stories of others, subjectivity and uncertainty give us tools to work with as well, as they provide openings to listen. Describing how the tar sands smell is an approach used by those who live there, or have been there, to represent the region. Being open to *not knowing for sure* allows for critical reflection across experiences and understandings. As I wrote in Chapter 2, when I interviewed Rose Mueller, a spokesperson for the Fort McKay First Nation, she made particular note of being able to, "smell, hear, taste, and feel the industry" in Fort MacKay (personal communication, February 26, 2016). Mueller renders the smell of the tar sands both alien (it is noticeable as an effect of industry, something that does not necessarily belong) and everyday (it is ever-present in the daily lives of those whose community is completely surrounded by development).

Borrowing again from Tsing and her work on the matsutake mushroom, using smell to illustrate, or think through, subjective encounters also sheds light upon human-to-human and human-to-environment entanglements: smell "assembles many ways of being in an affect-laden knot that packs its own punch. Emerging from encounter, it shows us history-in-the-making. Smell it" (Tsing, 2015, p. 52). The nature of oil sands entanglements, thought or understood through the senses, is illustrated in this excerpt from an article co-authored by Aidee Velasco Arenas, Chockien Kua, Christine Leclerc, and Rita Wong in 2011:

> This walk faced the enormity of the land stolen from Indigenous peoples that is now destroyed, lifeless, and empty save for ugly scarecrows called 'bit-u-men' to keep out the birds from its poisoned soil. Horrid continuous booms from sound cannons scare the birds from landing in the enormous reservoirs of toxic waste. We marched beside the machinery of destruction, the surreal gigantic Tonka trucks, cranes and pipes. The air pollution, a putrid stench, gave a headache to many of the people who participated in the healing walk. (Keepers of the Athabasca Newsletter, 2011, p. 15)

In this piece, which followed the second annual Tar Sands Healing Walk, the writers mobilize smell ("a putrid stench") alongside sight and sound. Velasco Arenas et al. employ an assuredly political tone to describe what they smelled — particularly in comparison to ACFN Chief

Adam's ironic allusion to smell, Mueller's suggestion of its ever-presence, De Souza's relaying of known facts to illustrate both absence and presence, and my own qualified uncertainty. In offering such a clear description, Velasco Arenas et al. weave together not just their own experiences of walking, but draw a through-line between their observations and experiences and how the Healing Walk itself was situated in a broader history of colonialism, energy development, and environmental destruction. It is telling, too, that the Keepers of the Athabasca — the main organization behind the Tar Sands Healing Walk — reprinted the piece in its July, 2011 newsletter.[27] The style of the piece resonates with many of the goals of the Healing Walk as an event, which will be further discussed in Chapter 6 but included educating people outside the region about how the tar sands work and what its impacts are on local First Nations and Métis peoples.

5.2 What we see when we look at the oil sands region

Turning from questions of smell, in this section I look at how Alberta's oil sands have been visually represented. This is important before we further discuss the Healing Walk, because of the event's emphasis on showing the oil sands, or on people seeing them for themselves. In 2008, activist Maude Barlow looked down from an airplane and compared the oil sands to J.R.R. Tolkien's fictional, nightmarish Mordor (T. Audette, 2008). This comparison was particularly timely in the mid-to-late 2000s, on the heels of the Hollywood-released *Lord of the Rings* film franchise based on Tolkien's books. These films realized Mordor on-screen as a hellscape of fire and smoke that stood in particular contrast to the luscious green Shire that Tolkien's hobbits called home. Barlow's words captured media headlines in Alberta, where some took umbrage at the characterization of one of the province's primary economic engines. Who was Maude Barlow — then a senior advisor on water to the United Nations, and later head of the national Council of Canadians — to come from outside the province, fly over the oil sands, and criticize them? Fly-over criticism of Alberta's oil sands is a well-rehearsed move by activists and politicians who are not from the province, and media coverage that includes responses from defensive and annoyed provincial politicians is equally well-rehearsed.[28]

[27] Originally, it was published in *The Dominion*.

[28] An excellent example of this kind of story took place during the 2008 general election, when, as media reported, [then-]"NDP Leader Jack Layton cast doubt on [former prime minister] Stephen Harper's environmental policies as he flew over the Alberta oil sands in his campaign plane on Monday" and urged a moratorium on oil sands development (CTV.ca News Staff, 2008). In response, then-Alberta premier Ed Stelmach is reported to have,

Despite what might be anecdotally termed annoyance with the "Mordor" comparison, the fictional site name has lingered in activist discourses around the oil sands. I would argue there are two culturally prominent sets of images of the oil sands which have stuck since the late 2000s: those included in Edward Burtynsky's breathtaking photographic series, "Oil"; and images of oil-slicked ducks trapped alive and dead in Syncrude's Aurora mine tailings ponds in 2008. The two sets of images were taken within a year of each other, as the price of oil steadily climbed, making the extraction of hard-to-get bituminous oil a profitable and lucrative endeavour. Their shared time frame is where their similarities end, however.

Where Barlow's fly-by comparison of the region to Mordor invited those reading or listening to her words to imagine what such scale of development might mean for the environment, photographs of ducks drowning in tailings ponds — released to the public during a court case in 2010 — narrowed the scale of impact to a ground-level view. The kinds of sound cannons that Velasco Arenas et al. described in the excerpt above (with their "horrid continuous booms") had not been "fully deployed" when 1,606 migrating ducks landed on the tailings ponds in April, 2008 (CBC News, 2010). Oil sands tailings ponds are waste by-products of bitumen extraction that represent problems for legislators, industry members trying to innovate away from the wet tailings, local communities worried about seepage into water and groundwater systems, and animals confused by their liquid (even water-like) appearance. Tailings ponds are the result of separating tarry bitumen for its heavy oil. They are made up of left-behind solvents that were added to the water-sand-oil mix to make separation possible, and the solvents are contained in open-air ponds along with processed water, sand, salt, residual bitumen, and other material like heavy metals (Alberta Energy, 2013, p. 1; Brooymans & Farrell, 2008). As Images 4 and 5 (Appendix 1) suggest, "ponds" are something of a misnomer, though perhaps an understandable one; photographs of the region's earliest bitumen production sites, at the start of the 20th century, show small, fenced-off ponds in the middle of the wilderness.[29] Today, however, the government of Alberta estimates tailings ponds cover nearly 200 square kilometres

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warned all party leaders not to blame Alberta for the perceived ills of the environment. 'Anytime we hear wrong information pointed at Alberta, I will speak up. We have work ahead of us in terms of working with all of the political parties to make sure they have the correct information.' (CTV.ca News Staff, 2008)

[29] For examples, see Karl Clark's 1924 photographs of oil sands tailings ponds, collected by the Provincial Archives of Alberta (https://hermis.alberta.ca/PAA/Default.aspx?CollectionID=2), including the ominously named, "A pigeon trap" (Object No. PR1968.0015.0022.0257), and "They must have thought it was Jack Miner's Pond" (Object No. PR1968.0015.0022.0259).

of the province, making for one of the "most difficult environmental challenges for the oil sands mining sector" (Alberta Energy, 2013, p. 1). As the story of the Syncrude bitumen ducks illustrates, the oddly pristine lakes confuse wildlife seeking a place to rest, eat, and land.

When photographs and videos of the struggling and drowned birds were released, they were published on the front pages of Alberta's newspapers, played on newscasts, and were circulated nationally and internationally (Audette, 2010), fuelling, in some areas, growing opposition to bitumen development. By mid-2010, the images were used as part of a Corporate Ethics International billboard campaign urging U.S. tourists to boycott Alberta as a travel destination (CTV.ca News Staff, 2010a). As with criticisms leveled at the oil sands, the provincial government of the day responded negatively to the billboard campaign, which labeled Alberta "the other oil disaster" and placed a tailings pond duck image beside the image of a bird trying to rise from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010:

> [Then-] Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach reacted heatedly to the campaign.
>
> "This, of course, does anger me to a large degree because it's an attack on about 100,000 Albertans whose lives depend on the tourism industry," Stelmach said.
>
> The province's Energy Minister Ron Liepert called the ads "almost slanderous."
>
> "We must admit that we have to do a better job of ensuring that this propaganda doesn't seep into the minds of the public," Liepert [said]. (CTV.ca News Staff, 2010a)

Where the bitumen duck images were used to mobilize response to Alberta's oil sands development, Burtynsky's photographs of the same development, dated 2007, could not represent more of a departure from the suggestion of "Mordor" while still being pictures of Alberta's oil sands (and still taken from a bird's eye, or fly-over viewpoint). The Burtynsky photographs, collected in his *Oil* series,[30] include images of the tailings ponds glistening under a moody Alberta sky *(Alberta Oil Sands #10)*, foregrounding other steaming oil sands infrastructure below a stark blue sky *(Alberta Oil Sands #9)*, and laying grey-brown *(Alberta Oil Sands #2)*, all from the perspective of a camera in the sky (Burtynsky, n.d.). Part of a series that illustrates the many global journeys of oil, as well as aspects of its related car culture,

[30] See the series: http://www.edwardburtynsky.com/site_contents/Photographs/Oil.html

Burtynsky's images are colourful and center on infrastructure and its reach across landscapes.[31] As T.R. Kover (2014) writes, critics have charged the Burtynsky images are in fact so beautiful and fantastic they render bitumen extraction almost romantic, testing whether, "Burtynsky in aestheticizing environmental destruction is, in fact, justifying it or providing an aesthetic alibi for it. After all, many a Burtynsky print graces the walls of a corporate headquarters" (p. 128). In his own words, posted in an artist's statement online, Burtynsky is far more ambivalent:

> When I first started photographing industry it was out of a sense of awe at what we as a species were up to. Our achievements became a source of infinite possibilities. But time goes on, and that flush of wonder began to turn. The car that I drove cross-country began to represent not only freedom, but also something much more conflicted. I began to think about oil itself: as both the source of energy that makes everything possible, and as a source of dread, for its ongoing endangerment of our habitat. (Burtynsky, n.d.)

Burtynsky's discussion of a "sense of awe" or "flush of wonder" that came to be confounded by the limits of oil culture and oil extraction illustrates even the most beautiful (and forgiving) ways of seeing the oil sands are in no way de-linked from the troubling, conflicting oil entanglements taken up throughout this thesis. Having examined ways of experiencing and looking at the oil sands in this chapter, in the next, I turn to the theories that help us understand the possibilities afforded by thinking through oil sands entanglement.

[31] The reader may be most familiar with Burtynsky's oil sands images, which are dark blue, silver, grey and brown, but still fairly dark. Images from California oil fields are brown (*Oil Fields #19ab; Oil Fields #2; Oil Fields #27*), industrial images of refineries are grey (*Oil Tanker and Refineries; Oil Refineries #34; Oil Refineries #15; Oil Refineries #23; Oil Refineries #3; Oil Refineries #22*). However, the series as a whole is not monochromatic. In *Oil Fields #22*, a silver pipeline stretches into a green forest in Cold Lake, Alberta. In *Breezewood* and *Trucker's Jamboree #1,* road-side stops are brightly lit, while scenes from vehicle races are rich in reds and greens (*Talladega Speedway #1; Bonneville #1*). Even images of ruin — abandoned vehicle plants in southern Ontario and in Michigan — are surprisingly rich in colour (*Fisher Body Plant #1; Ford's Highland Park Plant #1, Loading Corridor; Packard Plant #1; Packard Plant #2; Dana Frame Plant #1; Dana Frame Plant #2; Dana Frame Plant #4*).

Chapter 6: Disentangling oil sands entanglements

The first time I sat down to interview Eriel Deranger, we met in a 104th Avenue coffee shop in downtown Edmonton called Credo. It was the spring of 2012, and I was an environment reporter at *The Edmonton Journal* writing a profile about her, the recently appointed communications director for the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. In my estimation, Deranger's job was a tough one to balance in Alberta, making for a compelling story that might challenge urban and rural northern Alberta readers to think differently about how Indigenous communities work and live with oil sands development. To "think differently" — to me, then as now — would mean making space for understanding, or at least contemplating fairly, why communities might both protest against and collaborate or work with the oil sands industry. It would mean being open to *not* generalizing across different First Nations and Métis communities, or across different oil sands developments, and putting aside the "Ecological Indian" stereotypes that delineate Indigenous communities as anchored to the past and mark the same communities as failures or traitors when they make decisions that actually support industry.[32] And, it would mean working toward better understanding each community, and each member of a community, on their own terms, as these necessarily change with changing or different circumstances.

Deranger's work entailed representing her community in press releases, media interviews, and public events like industry shareholders' meetings or protests. She was responsible for running interference between local, national, and international media members requesting interviews and the nation's leadership. This included selecting and making opportunities for the community to amplify its messages. Earlier that year, I had seen her taking notes at the government-appointed hearings into the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project when the panelists visited a west Edmonton hotel, and participating in the anti-Enbridge Northern Gateway Freedom Train rally outside the Alberta Legislature that had been organized by a group of British Columbia First Nations.

Taking in this snapshot of public engagement, it is important throughout a study of how First Nations and Métis peoples negotiate and create media in connection to the oil sands to understand that Deranger's spokesperson role is not as black-and-white as that of someone

[32] Shepard Krech III (2000 [1999]) renders the so-called "Ecological Indian" as a stereotype both fixed to European-Indigenous encounter (and carried-over mythologies of "Noble" Indian-ness), and as a tool used by Indigenous peoples to deflect criticisms of their own land use (p. 27).

speaking on behalf of an environmental organization such as Greenpeace. As noted in Chapter 2, the ACFN is widely considered to be at the forefront of Indigenous resistance to continued expansion of extraction efforts in the region.[33] The community also benefits economically from the oil sands industry. The oil sands have made jobs and access to wifi, cell phone, and satellite television services available to the community (Deranger & Laboucan-Massimo, 2013). Located roughly 200 kilometres north of Fort McMurray and 600 kilometres north of Edmonton, Fort Chipewyan is remote enough that, like in communities still farther north, it is expensive to get food and services to the community. In 2012, a loaf of bread could cost as much as $8 and a gallon of milk $16 (personal communication with Deranger, 2012). Meanwhile, the ACFN is often in the news in connection to above-average rates of cancer (particularly rare bile duct cancer); signs of local fish and wildlife suffering from exposure to pollutants;[34] its willingness to take big oil companies to court[35]; and its invitations to famous people to visit, often resulting in public denunciations of the tar sands and their impacts on carbon emissions, land, animals, and people. To try to summarize these disparate elements, as ACFN Chief Allan Adam put it at the time, the community has "mixed emotions about what goes on in the tar sands" (quoted in T. Audette, 2012b).

Deranger was, and remains, one of the best-recognized voices of Alberta's oil sands-critical movement, in 2012 Deranger explicitly noted she did not intend to be "the face or the voice for tar sands activism, for [her] community" (quoted in T. Audette, 2012b). Rather, her early career and activism had been focused on Indigenous rights, First Nations land claims, and working with urban youth. Her interest in oil sands development, and its impacts on Fort Chipewyan, was driven in part by how the land she had known growing up was changed by heavy development just over the course of her lifetime:

> Eriel Deranger was 12 when her father took her north of Fort McMurray, within sight of the Syncrude and Suncor oilsands facilities, to teach her about traditional hunting, trapping and fishing.

[33] See LeBillon & Carter (2012, p. 174).

[34] See, for example, a health report resulting from a study done by the ACFN, the Mikisew Cree First Nation, and the University of Manitoba, which showed links between oil sands development, its negative effects on moose and fish downstream, and then negative health effects for Indigenous peoples who eat locally hunted and fished food (Farias, 2014).

[35] Between 2011 and 2014 the ACFN's blog, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and the Tar Sands, detailed the nation's ongoing legal and other challenges to oil sands expansion (Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, n.d.).

> ‘My mom and dad were very political people,’ says Deranger, who is now a mother. ‘My dad sort of told us that we have to stop these projects.’[…]
>
> At 26, she returned to the land her father had shown her as a child: ‘I felt like something had been ripped out of me. Everything I saw as a child, basically gone from that strip of land.’ (T. Audette, 2012b)

I don’t share this anecdote to romanticize Deranger’s work. Her memories of the land and her work were also grounded in hard facts and research, as she described, “collecting data and compiling and compiling it, getting more frustrated,” and how this came to “consume [her] life” (quoted in T. Audette, 2012b). Before taking on the ACFN position, she had worked for the Sierra Club and the Rainforest Action Network — her time with the latter organization, and the beginning of her work on the Tar Sands Healing Walk, were documented in the 2012 film *Elemental* (Roshan & Vaughan-Lee).

Rather, I share Deranger’s description of changes to the land because they are what resonate most from this 2012 interview in a downtown coffee shop in a city that also benefits from oil sands development while many of its citizens worry about the environmental and social impacts of bitumen extraction. At the time, Deranger was 33 years old and I was 31. To contemplate the scope of change over just a decade and a half in our overlapping lifetimes — for me, in the abstract, for her, in the concrete — invites an understanding of the extent to which the tar sands as we know them today have not always been in place and have not always been a part of what it means for Alberta’s and Canada’s economies to run smoothly. Certainly, Indigenous peoples were long aware of existing bitumen deposits in the Athabasca region; non-Indigenous fur traders, meanwhile, first recorded word of the oil sands in the early 18th century, and trader Peter Pond saw them for himself in the 1770s (cf. Alberta Culture and Tourism, n.d.; Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, 2000). But to the fur traders, accessible bitumen was more oddity than resource (Alberta Culture and Tourism, n.d.); it would be roughly 200 years before experimentation gave way to commercial industrial development (Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, 2000). In Chapter 2, I outlined a brief history of industrial oil sands development in Northern Alberta, but it bears revisiting on these terms: The time before bitumen extraction sites and corporate land leases swallowed up huge swathes of the boreal forest and northeastern Alberta’s wetlands can be remembered by people who are not quite middle-aged, and our parents and grandparents. Understanding this shorter timeline, tracing it on top of centuries of knowing the tar sands were present, means displacing the necessity of the oil sands as they are today, or at

least troubling the stories we tell ourselves about their necessity. It also invites us to consider a relationship between "history" and "present," or "modern" development and "traditional" lifestyles, that is not wholly linear and which continues to inform cross-generational and cross-cultural interactions and memories. Knowing, too, that we can meet and talk to people today who clearly remember a time before contemporary, large-scale oil sands development is, potentially, another draw for those attending the Tar Sands Healing Walk.

The livelihoods of many in the oil sands region depend both on keeping their jobs and protecting the lands, waters, and rights they have inherited from their ancestors. Inheritance is, admittedly, a Euro-centric/legal term of ownership that does not translate well to many Indigenous cultural meanings of maintaining links to the land and environment based on family ties to the past and future. Nonetheless, inheritance can be a useful entry-point for understanding the importance of protecting the lands of one's ancestors and intending to continue doing so in the future. Such motivations are different from those of environmental organizations, and influence timelines and goals of resistance that are also inherently different. Above, Deranger is describing the potential for an alternative to shutting down the tar sands altogether, and an alternative to maintaining an untenable status quo.

6.1 Realizing the Tar Sands Healing Walk

Finding this alternative, or thinking through the problem of entanglement differently — ultimately, refusing to be wrapped into someone or something else's broader project — resonates with practices of "cultural persistence" and Indigenous resurgence. Deranger describes how the Healing Walk came to be, as a response to outside organizations' plans for a protest:

> It might have been the environmental groups that said, 'Hey, let's host an event up there,' because that is really how the conversation started, you know, [with] Greenpeace and Council of Canadians, I think it was. They were like, 'We should have a march or a protest or a rally in Fort McMurray. Let's talk to some of the people around there.' And [the local people] were just like, 'Hell, no, like, no one's going to want to come. It'll just be a bunch of people you shuttle in from other cities and you'll just get, they'll just make fun of you for doing it. You know, no one wants a bunch of hippies here.' (E. Deranger, personal communication, June 27, 2014)

The promise of organizing such a protest, for non-government environmental groups, is clear: as visually haunting as the tar sands are, large numbers of people arranged around them could appeal to visual media such as television, newspapers and websites. Media interest is important because, as Bart Cammaerts (2012) writes, drawing upon William A. Gamson and Gadi

Wolfsted (1993), "social movements are dependent on mainstream media for three interrelated purposes; to mobilize political support, to increase the legitimation and validation of their demands and to enable them to widen the scope of conflict beyond the likeminded" (p. 119). We can't know how such a protest would have proceeded, nor how it would have been mediated — whether, borrowing from Della Porta and Diani's (2006) framework of protest "logics," coverage would have been driven by the number of participants (pp. 171-173) or the potential for damage (pp. 173-176). Instead, we can see what little mainstream media coverage there was of the Tar Sands Healing Walk falling under a third category, that of "bearing witness" (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 176-178). This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

The problem with organizing a protest in the middle of the tar sands was two-fold, however. First, local people's and communities' work with industry presented an obstacle; second, it appeared external parties were trying to apply a resistance model that didn't properly fit local needs. First Nations and Métis peoples living outside Fort McMurray, as illustrated by the histories of Fort MacKay and Fort Chipewyan, undertake difficult balancing acts to safeguard their lands and land-based practices, their livelihoods, and the economic sustainability and independence of their communities. Balancing and negotiating a cross-section of interests may not make a protest appealing, but it also does not mean ignoring land and trap lines disappeared by industrial leases, or inedible and sick fish in local waters, or tap water unfit for drinking. Since the 1970s, critiques of the "dominant paradigm" in development studies have given communications and development scholars a foothold for understanding how and why the efforts and suggestions of the parachuting-in "external expert" are not always so helpful, nor fitting for longer-term change in a community with its own power structures, relationships, and approaches to solution-finding.[36] In the case of a proposed protest, there was a danger of "hippies" being "shuttle[d] in" not only to urge an end to tar sands development, but less explicitly, to tell local

[36] My favourite metaphor for the problems brought with the external expert is Linje Manyozo's (2012) description of playing soccer (or football) as a teenager in Malawi. Manyozo recalls an important match for which "a good goalkeeper" returned from the city and took over previously non-existent coaching duties, implementing a "new system that […] seemed to be working miracles" (p. 229). An eventual loss was met with a critical realization:

> …we lost the game on the day when [he] walked into our midst as the football expert. We could not comprehend 'the system', but the village blamed us for not understanding it. More painfully, [he] seemed to have walked off the defeat as a victor. We saw him before he left for the city, drinking and laughing with village elders. […] If we had lost when playing our traditional system, we might not have won, but it would not have hurt so much, and maybe it would have propelled us to prepare effectively for another game. (Manyozo, 2012, pp. 229-230)

people how they should live. Then, of course, they would go home, leaving local people to deal with potential consequences. Deranger's elaboration of the problems with a protest planned and realized by environmental organizations further explains the need to find another, community-driven, mode of bringing oil sands issues to light without bending to environmental organizations' repertoires of action:

> Five years ago, many of the communities, because of the direct relationship with industry, didn't feel like they could participate in protests or rallies or any kind of opposition to the industry at all because they felt as though it would impact their ability to survive, financially. And so creating a space that didn't claim to be like, for or against an industry, but opened up a place for people to have dialogue about the concerns that they're facing and meeting other people who have concerns and people who have been working on issues around climate change, environmental injustices, and so on and so forth. [The Healing Walk became] a space that wasn't about going out to be in front of everyone. Like even the walk itself, it's not in a city, it's not in like a central location, it's pretty far away. I think it allowed people to feel safe […] I think it just made people feel like, ok, so I can come to this and I don't have to do anything. And you know the fact that we've always said from Day One if you don't feel comfortable with being in any film or video [or being] identified, and making people feel as though they were allowed to come [anyway]. You know, I've had cousins and aunts and uncles that come to this thing because of what it is, because it's not a protest or a rally or a march. (E. Deranger, personal communication, June 27, 2014)

Oil sands entanglement means that, at the micro level, individuals employed in the bitumen extraction industry may fear losing their jobs should they be seen on TV or in the newspaper calling for an end to the tar sands. At the macro level, we might consider the risks of First Nations and Métis communities losing large contracts through association with a protest. These potential retributions are risks local people may face that those who would be "shuttle[d] in" to Fort McMurray — and then leave — would not.

To the credit of those environmental non-government organizations who reached out to Fort McMurray-area Indigenous communities to collaborate in realizing a tar sands protest or rally, they accepted community members' feedback. Deranger said, "Consultation happened like it never happened, and the community took it over" (personal communication, June 27, 2014). Ultimately, Deranger describes the Tar Sands Healing Walk as "born out of the communities." First Nations and Métis peoples in the Athabasca region invited people to join *them* and to encounter the tar sands, and they decided the terms on which their story would be told. The event was, in turn, an example of resistance to imposed narratives about life in the tar sands region.

The Healing Walk became a key entry-point for understanding processes of cross-cultural alliance-building and the centrality of Alberta's bituminous oil development in broader oil and pipeline debates. It also illustrates the challenges community interests can pose to a range of media and protest narratives, while highlighting potential openings for the assertion of community, culture, prayer, ceremony, healing, and mourning in a social movement's imaginable repertoire of action.

This doesn't mean the event was executed without some unease, however. Gayatri Roshan and Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee's film *Elemental* follows Deranger, a water commissioner in India, and an Australian inventor, on journeys toward highlighting and fixing environmental problems with water. Ahead of the 2010 Healing Walk — the first Tar Sands Healing Walk — Deranger and co-organizers are filmed preparing in what looks like an office. Deranger tells the filmmakers, "When the government is in bed with industry, how do you fight the government, how do you fight the industry?" The group of organizers is approached by ACFN Chief Alan Adam, who surveys their work and says, simply, "You guys are going to draw a lot of media attention on this." Watching the documentary, Adam's meaning, beyond the observation, is unclear — is "a lot of media attention on this" positive or negative for his community? As a viewer, one might extrapolate and wonder, how will Albertans, Canadians, governments and industry officials watch this event unfold, and how will they interpret its meaning? When Deranger replies, "It's just going to be peaceful, and walking," her words can be read as reassurance — "peaceful" and "walking" suggest a far different scene or happening than a protest or rally would have yielded. In the very next scene, back in her car and driving on the highway, Deranger adds further nuance to the event description for the film's audience:

> There's a whole healing that needs to be done, you know, and this walk, this Healing Walk, is a really good indication of the fact that there's a lot that needs to be undone, not just environmentally, but spiritually and culturally as well. These issues are deep-rooted in deep, deep scars of oppression and colonization, and we have to begin a process of decolonization, and part of that process of decolonization is giving people their voices back. So hopefully this walk will be a start to that. (quoted in Roshan & Vaughan-Lee, 2012)

As the documentary-makers move between the three stories, the context of colonization and decolonizing practices further situates the unique circumstances of Indigenous peoples in northern Alberta. When Deranger flags "deep scars of oppression and colonization" as having silenced Indigenous communities closest to the tar sands, she is raising the spectre of wounds

experienced by generations, wounds which exceed the immediate problem of economic sustainability versus community sustainability, and which exceed the historical context of contact or treaty-making. Local Indigenous marginalization from economic and political decision-making is contextualized by colonizing practices that predated Canada's birth as a country in 1867, Treaty 8 (negotiated in 1899 to govern relations between the Crown and First Nations in the Athabasca region and across northern Alberta, parts of northern British Columbia, and parts of northern Saskatchewan), and the boundary demarcation of the province of Alberta in 1905. Practices of treaty-making, land-settling, and resource-extracting had all been put to work by generations of French, Dutch, British, and finally Canadian governments before anyone could imagine the lucrative extraction and use of the bitumen that could be seen to run naturally along the Athabasca River on a sunny day.

It is a mistake to locate colonization in the past, however; as Jen Preston (2013) writes, "settler colonialism is not just a historical phenomenon; its practice and processes operate still within a contemporary neoliberal framework" (p. 43). These are the conflictual frameworks which, in turn, normalize the oil sands and make the Healing Walk — and the safe space organizers endeavoured to create for open discussion of the tar sands — necessary.

6.2 Creating a safe space

In 2014, Indigenous elders and leaders led the Healing Walk past tailings ponds and Syncrude's headquarters. They stopped to face all four directions — north, south, east, and west — and invited those who walked with them to join in their prayers or say their own. Dene drummers from northern Alberta and Manitoba provided the walk's heartbeat, while from time to time passing workers lay on car and truck horns. These extended honks highlighted how complicated it can be to organize and realize a protest that is not a protest; whether motivated by opposition or support, the honks illustrated how passionately people feel about the tar sands, and how implicated so many workers and regular people are in decisions made by companies and governments to chase down hard-to-get oil. Those walking often cheered and waved to the drivers, and some talked about how members of their own families worked for the oil industry, whether in the Fort McMurray area or in cities further south.

Jesse Cardinal describes being "a little bit afraid at first of what we were going to encounter," when she joined the team organizing the Tar Sands Healing Walk in 2012 (personal communication, July 3, 2015). To that point, the walk had been relatively small, held in the

summers of 2010 and 2011. When I asked her how the honks of passing drivers could be read, Cardinal said, "Well I think you could tell, when you look at the people, some are waving, smiling, giving the thumbs up, and some were like, 'Get off the road,' or giving you the finger kind of thing" (personal communication, July 3, 2015). She described how powerful shows of support by those passing the walk could be, while drawing direct links between violence done to the land and violence experienced by Indigenous peoples who live closest to the oil sands:

> This big truck honked, like in support of the Healing Walk, and I got really emotional, I actually started crying, because I was expecting the opposite, and it was actually more support than anything. We definitely had some incidents or cases of abuse where people were swearing or yelling, yelling sexual remarks towards the women, and for me, what it really highlighted was what the women in the tar sands regions face on a regular basis, because there's definitely a lot of exploitation toward women, and so for us on the Healing Walk, we were in a safe space because we had lots of police presence, you know, people all over, so, I mean, to experience this verbal sexual assault, it was probably not what these women walking in Fort McMurray experience, like they probably are a lot more frightened, right? (personal communication, July 3, 2015).

The importance of creating a "safe space" surfaced both during my time at the Healing Walk and in interviews with Deranger and Cardinal. It is telling, too, that the details of participants' safety were clearly outlined in the welcome offered by organizers of the 2014 Tar Sands Healing Walk, alongside acknowledgement of what it takes to realize a two-day event that brings as many as 500 people together.[37] There was security on-site from 9 p.m.-9 a.m., and participants were reminded to wear green tags that could be clearly seen if they did not want to be filmed or photographed. Certainly, these are standard organizational notes when so many people, many of whom are strangers traveling from far away, are invited to stay overnight together. Having security on-site, and talking about it, assured safety from those outside the camp and Healing Walk who might wish to interrupt or break into the event, and it assured safety within the camp. Giving out green tags for those who wished to avoid being seen on camera acknowledges the possibility that not everyone at the event would be comfortable with people outside it knowing they were there.

[37] Planning had started ten months earlier (field notes, June 27, 2014), almost immediately after the 2013 Healing Walk. Funding had been provided by the cosmetics company LUSH, the Sierra Club, the Council of Canadians, the Fort McMurray First Nation, the Chipewyan-Prairie First Nation, Fort McKay, the Mikisew Cree First Nation, and the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (field notes, June 27, 2014). Additionally, Fort McMurray First Nation continued to offer its campsite for free, including offering free power (field notes, June 27, 2014).

The provision of security was also lauded by organizers as one of their key contributions to the tar sands debate. When Deranger welcomed the crowd gathered at Indian Beach for the Healing Walk in 2014, she called the walk both a "great unifier for the people in this region," and a "safe space for people to work together" (field notes, June 27, 2014). Underlining the kind of entanglement she discussed in her interview, Deranger added, as part of her opening remarks, "No one in this region is not tied to the industry in some way […] so it's really hard sometimes to talk about your concerns" (field notes, June 27, 2014). The opportunity to share concerns, and then mobilize response, was presented as a key motive for organizing the event, which emphasized healing through prayer. As Cardinal explained:

> The Healing Walk, when it started, was never to accommodate people from outside the tar sands. It was for the people in the tar sands, the affected communities, to know that they had support, to acknowledge what was happening in that territory, to come in and help pray with them, pray for them. (personal communication, July 3, 2015

The potential to bring together feelings of isolation, fear, or mourning, and help people take action, is illustrated by the list of workshops, strategy sessions, and panels that took place at Indian Beach the day before the 2014 Healing Walk (see Image 6, Appendix 1). In these sessions, local people, members of environmental groups, and people fighting proposed pipelines shared their experiences, often discussing successes. For my part, I attended the media training and Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline sessions. At the first, participants discussed the importance of connecting those who could not be present via the #healingwalk hashtag, and suggested that, when circumstances made connecting to the Internet and social media platforms like Twitter impossible, users ought to bank commentary, pictures, and reflections in their "offline Twitter" and prepare to rejoin the conversation and flood the Twitter-sphere when they were back online. At the Enbridge Northern Gateway session, a Yinka Dene Alliance member spoke of a long campaign against the pipeline that had included reaching out to international investors in the pipeline, attending shareholders' meetings, writing media op-eds, advertising in Asian markets, and organizing Freedom Train 2012.[38]

Cardinal later explained the workshops were organized to help people better understand "what the issues were, like what were the tar sands, what were the pipeline concerns" (personal communication, July 3, 2015). Having these kinds of open, explanatory discussions appeared to

[38] Freedom Train 2012, a cross-country mobilization by Yinka Dene Alliance members to stop the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, is discussed at length in Chapter 14.

have been reason enough to create a "safe space" through the Healing Walk. In an editorial published online by the CBC national broadcaster, Deranger and Melina Laboucan-Massimo (2014) write,

> This year is the last healing walk, not because the oil sands will stop expanding tomorrow, but because our original goal has been achieved. First Nation communities, once isolated and at times fearful to talk about oil sands and their impacts, are no longer alone.
>
> The Tar Sands Healing Walk — a space and place for communities to come and share their concerns about oil sands development — has been crucial to creating First Nations solidarity in communities throughout Alberta, and also the rest of Canada and the United States, where First Nations are uniting because of their shared experiences living near oilsands extraction, pipelines and refineries. […] When we first started the healing walk five years ago, many First Nations didn't think people outside of their individual communities cared, much less understood what it was like to live at ground zero. 'We're just a downstream community. We're expendable,' was a common sentiment. (Deranger & Laboucan-Massimo, 2014)

Throughout this section, and to elaborate the concept of oil sands entanglement, I have discussed how "safe space" discourse, hand-in-hand with discourses of sharing experiences, listening, and learning underpinned the Tar Sands Healing Walk. In the above excerpt, Deranger and Laboucan-Massimo illustrate how that entanglement can start to be disentangled, or at least made evident, opening a path toward healing and a reduced sense of isolation. Challenges in expressing dissent shadowed the potential for local people or communities to participate in the kind of straight-forward, demand-driven protests discussed in a later chapter of this thesis, when British Columbia First Nations would lead a cross-country movement explicitly against the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. While the Tar Sands Healing Walk was not positioned as a protest — Deranger and Laboucan-Massimo explicitly note, elsewhere in the piece, "The healing walk is not a protest, it is a walk to heal the land and ourselves" — it is positioned as a starting-point for organizing and bringing people together. They write of the Healing Walk having fostered a new sense of Indigenous solidarity across borders; in Chapter 8 I will discuss other kinds of solidarity fostered by the Healing Walk as well.

First, however, we must pause over Deranger and Laboucan-Massimo's note regarding why the Tar Sands Healing Walk was coming to an end: "not because the oilsands will stop expanding tomorrow." This is a direct rebuttal to mainstream media outlets that would conflate

the efforts of the Tar Sands Healing Walk with other movements, and brings us, in Chapter 7, to challenges organizers faced in garnering media attention.

Chapter 7: Media logics and covering an event that exceeds demand

How the Tar Sands Healing Walk was covered by news organizations varied year-to-year. In 2016, a ProQuest search for the term, "Tar Sands Healing Walk" among periodicals yielded several archived press releases but few news reports. In Image 7 (Appendix 1), one can see boom microphones and larger cameras, but many of those assembled for a 2014 Tar Sands Healing Walk press conference can also be seen wielding hand-held mobile devices. This is not necessarily a sign that "professional" journalists representing mainstream media outlets were largely absent from the event, though generally much of the media generated that year was not mainstream. Instead, participants themselves played a role in mediating the Healing Walk, participating in the press conference as camera-carrying, social media-posting observers and witnesses. Eriel Deranger noted the local *Fort McMurray Today*, the Canadian Press newswire, and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) covered the event each year, while larger regional outlets like the *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald*, or the CBC, only sometimes published or broadcast stories (personal communication, June 27, 2014). Organizers themselves submitted editorials to the CBC and the national *Globe and Mail* "to try and amplify the experiences of the walk," and independent media like *Vice*, *Rabble*, and *DeSmogBlog* could be counted upon for coverage (Deranger, personal communication, June 27, 2014). As the person in charge of press releases and "pitch calls" to newsrooms, Deranger said she would be asked, "What's the significance of the walk? Who's going to be there? Are you asking anything of the government?" (personal communication, June 27, 2014). The implications — and potential affordances — of a lack of mainstream coverage will be further explored in Chapter 8, as the effects of this absence are partly seen when we identify key actors in a Twitter stream like #healingwalk compared to key actors in a stream for a more geographically diverse protest such as Idle No More. This chapter deals explicitly with how media was negotiated: how organizers interacted with mainstream outlets; how media messages were managed; and how the Tar Sands Healing Walk's work can be understood as collective action that exceeded demand.

In responding to media members' questions about significance, participation, and demands, Deranger emphasized the organizational and community goals of the Healing Walk:

> I say this is about bringing attention to the fact that people's lives are being impacted by these projects, and they're all coming not to say shut anything down, but to begin a discussion around what does it mean to stop the destruction and start the healing? […] When the media ask me what's different

> about this Healing Walk, I'm like, 'Well, it's the last one,' and they're like, 'Why's it the last one?' and I'm like, 'I feel like we've achieved our goals,' and they're like, 'So you feel like you've stopped the tar sands?' And I'm like, 'Well, we never tried to stop the tar sands, so no.' We feel like we've achieved our goal of bringing people together and raising awareness around the issues that are happening here. (Deranger, personal communication, June 27, 2014)

These kinds of mainstream media responses are hardly surprising. Constraining a broad message such as, "Stop the destruction, start the healing," to a call to stop the tar sands borrows framing from other movements and makes the imaginable purpose of the event more legible, particularly to media organizations that are swiftly growing smaller and which are less likely to dispatch resources north for a story that can't be quickly understood. From the perspective of a journalist, I can see three key reasons out-of-town or national media institutions may have opted not to attend the event in 2014: first, though it was the fifth anniversary, the event may have appeared less novel after having given it some attention in previous years; second, in 2014, fewer well-recognized environmental activists were in attendance compared to 2013, making the event both less novel and less prominent or obvious as national or international news;[39] and, third, the logistics and expense of traveling to Fort McMurray can be difficult to overcome when, on its surface, the story appears to be a known entity. Translated as a protest, it could expect, perhaps, primarily visual coverage — in a newspaper, a photograph with an accompanying "cut line" or brief text; on TV, brief video footage accompanied by a voice-over or an explanatory interview. Yet, in an interview in 2015, journalist Mike De Souza — who was between jobs with the national newspaper chain Postmedia and the international news service Reuters when he went to the Tar Sands Healing Walk in 2014 — clearly outlined how, from a reporter's perspective, the event could lend to better future coverage:

> It's the first opportunity that I had to see first-hand local communities that were affected and had a message that had some impacts, I think both positive and negative. I think there's some economic benefits a lot of these communities have had from the contracts they've gotten from these companies, and, you know, the Healing Walk was about talking of some of the negative impacts, and to see it first-hand was something that, you know, taught me a bit about, put a face to some of the people that I previously had only spoken to on the phone. So you know, that's how my perspective changed, and it just allowed me to know, and I think a lot of the coverage in general out there, it

[39] In 2013, an article in the United Kingdom newspaper *The Guardian* highlighted the presence of prominent environmental activists Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben at the event (Leahy, 2013), and Tzeporah Berman, a prominent activist in her own right wrote an editorial for the Canadian national newspaper *The Globe and Mail* about her attendance (Berman, 2013).

> talks of, it can talk of impacts, it can talk about benefits in general, but it's different when you are able to see it first-hand and get an extra layer of understanding of what is happening, and the faces of the people affected. (personal communication, November 1, 2015)

While De Souza's experience at the Tar Sands Healing Walk provides a valid argument (from a journalism practice perspective) for covering the event, we might ask why (from an activism practice perspective) media coverage was important for the event. Toward the end of this chapter, I will examine organizational tensions and challenges around appealing to media for coverage. At the heart of this chapter, however, is an argument regarding the rather professional, or learned, approach of organizers toward media. I have touched on this elsewhere (P.H. Audette-Longo, 2016), but I want to explicitly offer a departure from Patrick McCurdy's (2013) description of activists' "lay" understandings of the media. Following Nick Couldry's (2004) work on "media-oriented practices," McCurdy argues,

> Social movement actors have theories about how news media work and these 'lay theories of news media' inform, influence and underwrite the practice of activism, both directly and indirectly. […] Such practices range from interacting with mainstream media to using social media and producing activist media from pamphlets and photographs, to blogs and online video. (McCurdy, 2013, p. 59)

By "lay theories of news media," McCurdy means "theories or understandings, expressed and/or enacted by social movement actors" about how mainstream news outlets work, and "what drives them" (p. 62). McCurdy notes, "The word 'lay' should not be taken as a judgement on, or as a belittling of the theories expressed by activists" (p. 62). Instead, he is compartmentalizing knowledges about media held by social movement activists as categorically different from "the published 'professional' or 'academic' understandings of media" (p. 62). This categorization raises further questions, however: (1) how do we acknowledge a difference in the orientations of media- and message-management among movement organizers versus the media work of participants? (2) how do we account for knowledge gained by sustained activism over a long period and through a series of different projects and experiences with different media and activist organizations? (3) how do we recognize the extent to which different activists have different access to (professional, regional, national, or even international) supporting resources? For example, the organizers of the 2014 Healing Walk included people who were also associated directly with supporting organizations like local communities, the Keepers of the Athabasca, the Sierra Club of Canada, and Greenpeace, all of which in turn have access to different kinds of

support and networks for organizing media relations. Finally, must we further categorize and compartmentalize different levels of experience and responsibility for media negotiation among activists, and how amassing those experiences and learned lessons influence future media practices?

I admit these questions are, to some extent, rhetorical. In his work, Couldry (2004) makes the argument for the usefulness of practice-oriented categorization in media studies precisely to pull the focus of media research back from texts, effects, and institutions. "The value of practice theory," he writes, "is to ask open questions about what people are doing and how they categorise what they are doing, avoiding the disciplinary or other preconceptions that would automatically read their actions as, say, 'consumption' or 'being-an-audience'" (Couldry, 2004, p. 125). He cautions, however, that, "If we live in a 'media-saturated' world, then it is reasonable to expect that how that world is carved up into recognisable practices may no longer correspond to categorisations formed in a 'pre-saturation' world" (p. 121). A demarcation between "lay" and "professional" may do just this; ultimately, I am somewhat sceptical about further categorizing or trying to fix media practices within movements because, as I will show in this chapter and the next, practices are fluid.

Instead, throughout this thesis, I am explicitly looking at examples of how communities of First Nations and Métis people have come together to create and negotiate media as a response to oil sands development. My investigations of the Tar Sands Healing Walk, Freedom Train, and responses to the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings all point to how communities and community members have refined professional, practice-based knowledge of how journalism and media work.

7.1 Managing the message: 'Stop the destruction, start the healing'

A key element of organizers' media production ahead of the Tar Sands Healing Walk can be seen as organizational material geared toward participants but available to the public online via the website http://www.healingwalk.org/. We can see message management beginning here as, in 2014, Healing Walk participants were explicitly asked, "not to bring any signs or banners," but to take the "opportunity to look around and see what is going on, learn from the elders how things have changed, and listen to ideas on how to stop the expansion" (Tar Sands Healing Walk, 2014b). This meant no other call could be written over the Tar Sands Healing Walk's message, shared prominently on a banner that led the event: "Stop the destruction, start the healing"

(Image 8, Appendix 1). This message can be read as both outward- and inward-focused, not necessarily an actionable demand aimed at a specific target. In an interview, Deranger noted the Healing Walk wasn't, "about asking anything of the government" (personal communication, June 27, 2014). She elaborated:

> This is about people coming together and speaking out about something that they all agree on […], the industry is out of control and irresponsibly developed. And it doesn't matter if you have a job in the industry or if you are against it, it's a space where we feel like people can come and talk about their concerns, and to come together in ceremony. This is a walk in ceremony, and that's what makes it different, and that's why it's a story. (personal communication, June 27, 2014)

Deranger's comments build on her description of how she interacted with newsrooms as she worked to promote the event and get it covered by media. She concludes with her argument: it is different, it is a story, and it is newsworthy that people have come together in the oil sands to draw attention to (and change) the industry and its practices. This illustrates an acquired knowledge of what might appeal to media.

Though organizers distinguished the Tar Sands Healing Walk from a protest, we can understand it as appealing to a protest (and media) logic of "bearing witness" which can include participating in blockades or passive resistance, or sharing "alternative values and culture" via "conferences, journals, concerts, and documentaries" (della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 177). Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (2006) suggest the peace movement as a primary example of bearing witness, for its use of "religious tradition (and, in particular, the model of the pilgrimage)" (p. 178). Della Porta and Diani's description of this form of protest illustrates a slipperiness between protest, collective action, and activism as distinct categories or forms of resistance. On its surface, a conference, for example, would seem to have little in common with a pilgrimage, or a march. Yet the ethic of *showing* runs through all three, as well as through the Tar Sands Healing Walk.

In a co-written editorial published by the CBC the day before the 2014 Healing Walk, we can see two of the event's organizers, Deranger and Melina Laboucan-Massimo, doing some of this *showing* work, particularly as they highlight the "personal risks" to participants in the walk:

> For the fifth year straight, we will smell the crude oil and toxic plumes, especially if the wind pushes back south. Some walkers, as in past years, will be forced to stop walking due to breathing difficulties or bloody noses. We will walk at ground zero of the oilsands, surrounded by vast oilsands mines. […] On foot it starts to hit you, the size and the smell grabs at your core and leaves

> an indelible impact. The walk is 14 kilometres and coming around the corner at the start of the walk, seeing the massive tailings pond, the trucks lined up along the road, tears start streaming as you realize just how massive and unsustainable oilsands really are. It happens to a lot of us, this shared experience. (Deranger & Laboucan-Massimo, 2014, paras. 3 and 5)

In this excerpt, Deranger and Laboucan-Massimo write in the first-person plural to describe experiences of bad smells, pain, or injury, as a result of being so close to the oilsands. They then shift to a second-person narrative in what reads as an effort to make these experiences hit closer to home for the reader far away from the oil sands. If you could share this experience with them, they suggest, you too would cry at the size and impact of the oil sands. This invitation to feel their pain and to encounter the oil sands from the ground — a different experience, they write at the start of their editorial, from "flying over the oilsands, or driving past them" (Deranger & Laboucan-Massimo, 2014) — motivates the Healing Walk, inviting identification and, as I show in the next section, exceeding demand.

7.2 Exceeding demand

Della Porta and Diani (2006) argue the evolution of a protest movement — and the loyalty of its participants — can be understood in relationship to the extent to which "activists […] believe that an opportunity exists, that they have the power to bring about change," and that there are identifiable opponents (pp. 18-20). To make a demand that, arguably, exceeds the capacities of a government or industry to respond — for example, by taking up languages of healing and prayer — broadens the ability for a collective action to do something that may be even more productive than what a direct protest affords. Considering co-organizers' descriptions of the event, we might ask whether success can instead be measured through the building of alliances, the sharing of knowledge, and, in the invitation to heal together, the sharing of responsibility such that calls to action are targeted beyond — or to more people than — those who represent industries and governments.

As Jesse Cardinal wrote in a published personal reflection, the intention of the event was for it to be, "distinct from a rally, march, or protest. Instead, it was conceived of as a ceremonial walk of prayer, to be coordinated by First Nations in the area and their elders and ceremonial people" (Cardinal, 2014, p. 130). The premise of the walk, she writes, is a belief "in the power of prayer and the power of healing" (p. 131). Cardinal adds, "Healing is a lifelong journey, and to pray for the land, air, water, and all living beings, we believe, helps" (p. 132). To bring so many people, and their prayers, together, she writes, invites the discovery of "similarities and common

ground," allowing people to "learn from each other" (p. 132). Drawing upon material produced and published by organizers, interviews, and elements of how the Healing Walk was carried out, I describe it as ***collective action that exceeds demand***.

To explore the notion of an excess of demand (rather than disposing of social movement theory altogether, as discussed in Chapter 4), let us look at the structure of the Tar Sands Healing Walk:

- First, in Cardinal's writing, material posted online by event organizers before the 2014 Tar Sands Healing Walk, and in what was said during welcoming remarks and other addresses staged throughout the weekend of the walk, there is a clear theme of protecting, or safe-guarding, the traditional territories that are being swept up in oil sands development. This emphasis on territory, and the people who live in the oil sands region, can be understood as being structured around mourning, particularly around mourning lost landscapes, lost access to land, and losses associated with the illnesses that are brought on by proximity to tar sands development. Cardinal explains the ways healing and mourning work together, or inform each other, through the Healing Walk, alluding to a lengthier project than a stand-alone protest or the realization of a single demand:

> Healing is acknowledging the pain, that's what the Healing Walk was […] walking through the destruction of what had happened to the land, learning first-hand from people that their family hunted and trapped right where we walked. Like, so, to understand that it wasn't that long ago that this was an intact ecosystem to looking like, you know, a desert that's toxic. So, yeah, I think any healing that takes place is acknowledging the pain before you can move forward, right? But not staying stuck in that. But that's, that's where I think that the Healing Walk, there's always going to be a need for it, because the tar sands is, it's not like a broken leg where it's healed in a year, it's a constant thing, you know? (Cardinal, personal communication, July 3, 2015)

- This said, the very name of the event — a Healing Walk — moves focus to making and communicating a place for hope for the future; it puts action to mourning, and suggests a focus for mobilizing local Indigenous resurgence**.**
- At the same time, the Healing Walk also allowed, as Cardinal wrote, opportunities for people who were not from the region to learn and carry away new understanding. This goal is evident in logistical material posted to the Tar Sands Healing Walk web site which encouraged potential participants to leave their signs at home, as discussed above. In turn, when one looks at pictures taken during the event, the visual impact or result of

the request is a series of images of *people* — people walking, people drumming, people wearing white medical face masks or kerchiefs to withstand the air quality at the tailings ponds.

- These images are an important part of the structure, or organization, of the event, because they invite and demand different ways of visualizing Canada's oil sands, particularly in comparison to those discussed in Chapter 5. Maps, or pictures taken from the sky, of open pits, of tailings ponds, and of earth that has been wrung of not just its oil but its trees and grass, squeezing out wildlife, are all useful for contemplating the scale of development. They are also completely absent of a sense of the extent to which people might still live in this area, however. Images of the Tar Sands Healing Walk *showed* and reasserted the place (and smallness) of humans in this space.
- There are further political implications, as well, for making only one banner prominent. In terms of issuing a message, or demand, a banner which urges, "Stop the destruction, start the healing," can be read as both outward- and inward-focused. Given the context of the Healing Walk's community-oriented origins, this makes considerable sense, but also exemplifies an excess of demand. In this invitation for change to be made and healing to begin, I argue, there is a meeting of the kind of Indigenous resurgence that has been theorized by Taiaiake Alfred, Jeff Corntassel, Leanne Simpson, and others, and Lorna Roth's "cultural persistence."

Alfred and Corntassel (2005) write, "the mantras of a resurgent Indigenous movement" include: "land is life;" "language is power;" "freedom is the other side of fear;" "decolonize your diet;" and, "change happens one warrior at a time" (p. 613). The crux of their argument lays in linking Indigenous peoples' survival and resurgence to reconnection to land, reconnection to community, and reconnection to cultural foundations (p. 597). To look at the Tar Sands Healing Walk through this lens, or with these mantras in mind, there is one missing element: the inclusion of allies, or people who may not live on the same land or in the same community, or may not share the same cultural values. These are not people who need to be persuaded (as, we might imagine, some sort of audience to a protest), but people who are dedicating their own time and effort to be present and to support the cause of showing the oil sands for what they are (if not, *necessarily*, the cause of decolonization). It is on this count that I want to draw attention to, and argue, the mechanics of Indigenous resurgence can be seen in relationship to cultural

persistence practices: self-determination and intervention remain central, but invitation, the sharing of cultural resources, and cross-community alliance-building, shift what is imaginable or possible. In this, we can begin to imagine or outline what a collective action that exceeds demands looks like, how it might work, and what it may lay groundwork for in the future. This shift, or inclusion, calls to mind Willie Ermine's (2007) "ethical space", moving beyond what Ermine called "the superficial level of the encounter" (p. 195) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, to encompass "agreement[s] to interact," to affirm "human diversity," and to accept "contrasting perspectives" (p. 202).

I want to add to this concept of a space of engagement, the problem, or context, of entanglement. As I will discuss in Chapter 8, the tar sands were positioned by organizers — in social media, for example — as a frontline of frontlines. A space and politics of engagement and entanglement gives still more power to the guiding ethos of the event, which might well be summed up, at least on the surface, in a chant instigated by one activist during the first Tar Sands Healing Walk and captured on-camera by the *Elemental* film: "If one falls?" the activist shouts to the crowd; "We all fall!" the crowd shouts back.

7.3 Negotiating media

Before elaborating how a collective action that exceeds demand was translated to social media, we must grapple with more questions about how organizers negotiated mainstream media. This section deals with two kinds of negotiation: the difficulties organizers experienced mediating the Tar Sands Healing Walk's key messages through mainstream media; and a degree of ambivalence toward mainstream media institutions and whether their coverage actually mattered for the event. The two kinds of negotiation, as I show, intertwined through my interview with co-organizer Jesse Cardinal, and also raise questions about the very alliance-building between communities discussed above as opening a space of engagement.

To start, questioning the necessity of outside, or broader, media coverage is important even in the middle of a media study. William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld (1993) have argued, "Movements are generally much more dependent on media than the reverse," with specific needs including, "mobilization, validation, and scope enlargement" (p. 116). However, if we accept the Healing Walk was more ceremony than protest, then its (co-dependent) relationship to media as a vehicle for amplifying demands and swaying policy-makers is somewhat muddied. Second, one can't be blamed for wondering why organizers would put effort

toward attracting the CBC, CTVGlobeMedia, Global, the *Sun*, or Postmedia[40] outlets when social media practices among participants who write blogs, post messages on Twitter and Facebook, post photos on Instagram and Flickr, create online videos, and submit pieces to both mainstream and alternative outlets can fill at least some of the mainstream media's vacuum.

As Cardinal explained, the difficulty in expressing healing (versus protest) to mainstream media members was frustrating. In our interview the year after the final Tar Sands Healing Walk, she noted, "it was never meant to be a media event" (personal communication, July 3, 2015), and spoke at length about what it meant for local people to heal and to pray during the event. To her, just as the ceremony of the Healing Walk was not a protest, it was also not, at its core, designed to appeal to the media. In the following excerpt from our interview, I follow up on what she had described as mainstream media's "intolerance" for the Tar Sands Healing Walk:

> PAL: Was that also hard for media, especially, to sort of glom onto the idea of there not necessarily being an explicit call, and then on top of that, how do you sort of measure healing? Is that like a difficult thing to [explain]?
>
> JC: Well, that's where it became really frustrating for me as an organizer, because it's like, it was never meant to be a media event?
>
> PAL: Right.
>
> JC: But […] I found as it became less local, that there was more of an expectation. So, as it became […] more [about] outside visitors, there was more of an expectation on communication, social media, the messaging, all that kind of stuff. And that was my frustration because it really, I found, took away from what we were there for, was to help pray for the affected people who were living in that. So it was like, like you said, and I've heard that a few times, it's like, 'Well how do we keep media interested? [How is] the hook different this time? How is this year different from last year? What's your ask?' And that's just, like, that, to me, it's not important. That wasn't important for the communities. It was like, if you want to come, then come.

[40] In 2014, these sprawling media networks operated the vast majority of television, radio, and newspaper outlets regularly covering western Canada. The CBC is Canada's public national broadcaster, with a television, commercial-free radio, and Internet presence. CTVGlobemedia owned CTV, Canada's national commercial broadcaster, and *The Globe and Mail*, Canada's oldest national newspaper. At the time of writing, CTV is owned by BellMedia and *The Globe* is primarily held through the Thomson family's Woodbridge Company (Bradshaw, 2015). Global TV is a third national commercial broadcaster, and its owner, Corus, has private radio holdings. Global was once part of the Postmedia news organization, which today owns most major urban Canadian daily newspapers, including the *National Post*, *Edmonton Journal*, and *Calgary Herald*. In 2014, Sun Media-Quebecor published city tabloid newspapers and had a large regional newspaper presence throughout Alberta (including the *Fort McMurray Today*). At the time of writing, most of the company's English-language tabloids and community newspapers are owned by Postmedia (including the *Today*, the *Edmonton Sun*, and the *Calgary Sun*). Due to my focus on target markets for western, or Alberta, news, the Ontario-centric Torstar newspaper chain, French-language media networks, and smaller commercial radio stations and networks are missing from this brief sketch of the legacy media landscape.

> […] If you're coming to see the tar sands first-hand, and to help pray for people that are directly affected, and in that you do a bit of your own healing. But don't come with any expectations, you know? So that was like a big revelation of mine […] you know, and I'm learning about mainstream media, like that that's how they work, 'Well why should we go cover the Healing Walk, they did it last year, well how is it different from this year?' And it's like, yeah, we want to get the message of the tar sands out, we definitely do, but that's just where there's a huge miscommunication, and misunderstanding, right? And so, I think, […] for us moving forward, if we have healing walks it's not to engage mainstream media, because it's like, it's pointless for me. (personal communication, July 3, 2015)

In this exchange, Cardinal emphasizes the importance of experiencing the oil sands — a slightly different emphasis from *showing* the tar sands, as discussed above. This shift of discourse signals a shift from *looking at* to *praying for*; in keeping with my earlier discussion of exceeding demand, here the demand is *to be present*.

In the above excerpt from our interview, too, Cardinal explicitly identifies a sense that the event had grown very large and garnered a great degree of international attention (in 2013, the Healing Walk saw a peak 500 participants, including prominent activists Naomi Klein, Bill McKibben and Tzeporah Berman). This did not necessarily mean a loss of focus — the location of the Tar Sands Healing Walk anchored the event to the site of northern Alberta's bitumen extraction — but bringing various oil sands entanglements to the fore did broaden the Healing Walk's narrative, or its stakes. Below I share another excerpt from our interview:

> PAL: Over the years, did you feel like the intention shifted, or did the intention of the walk always stay the same?
>
> JC: Well the intention of the walk was always the same, which was to heal, to pray for the land, the air, the water, the living beings, the health of the people living in that area, so that never ever changed. It's just that as the tar sands continued to expand, the pipeline applications continued to expand, in situ continued to expand, oil by rail, that, it was just, really, it was like, where do we start? You know, like, we come here to pray, but it's just like so many people. It kind of got a little bit chaotic, [because] I just think people were, there's so much need for prayer, for the people coming there, but also, [for] some people it was the first time they came to a space created for healing and prayer, so it's overwhelming for people sometimes, or just seeing the tar sands, like, not knowing what they should do. We tried to be as clear to people as possible, you know, what was happening at the Healing Walk, and how they could participate, and really trying to include people. But it still was a new experience. We take it for granted because we live here, we know the people, but people coming from afar, trying to understand what they're going through. (personal communication, July 3, 2015)

Cardinal expresses a sense of "chaos," or being overwhelmed by the scope of what I am calling oil sands entanglement, as the Tar Sands Healing Walk successfully brought together, over five years, narratives of acute oil sands impacts, pipeline protests, growing concerns regarding moving oil by rail, and, not mentioned above, climate change and a range of activist movements including post-secondary divestment campaigns. By pulling all these elements to northern Alberta — in fact, for one weekend, hosting all these interests — Healing Walk organizers foregrounded the region's place as the very front line of front lines. (This theme ran through promotional material posted online by organizers ahead of the event, too, as I will discuss in the following chapter).

In 2015 and 2016, the Tar Sands Healing Walk was replaced by a "Healing Gathering for Land and Water," hosted again by local Indigenous peoples, but with far fewer participants and more of a ceremonial focus. During the years of the Tar Sands Healing Walk, in inviting people to come to northern Alberta, experience the tar sands, and take part in a ceremony rather than a protest, organizers and local participants took on the roles of cross-cultural engagement facilitators, which included teaching people how to engage with local customs and prayers. This role — of explaining and modelling ceremony for people coming to the region — was particularly noticeable as Crystal Lameman, a co-organizer, member of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation, and a Sierra Club of Canada campaigner, explained ceremonial protocols during opening remarks on the first day of the Healing Walk. Through the weekend, people were invited to take part in pipe ceremonies, sweat lodges, and water ceremonies that involved mixing water they had brought from home with all the other water brought by participants. Women were asked to cover their legs with skirts or scarfs during ceremonies, and all were told stories of the first year's Tar Sands Healing Walk, when participants were visited by a bear and an eagle as they made their way to the tailings ponds. One speaker told the crowd, too, of how,

> The old people are with us today. Our grandfathers, grandmothers, the Cree, the Dene, the Métis, and now all the visitors […] we're here together. And even the white people. […] The old people, there are hundreds and hundreds here, maybe thousands, maybe millions. They're all over the place. So smile. (field notes)

Others have written at length about the role of First Nations women as "cultural mediators" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.[41] In her discussion of

[41] See Clara Sue Kidwell (1992); Gail Valaskakis (2005).

women's leadership during Idle No More, Wanda Nanibush (2014) suggests women have always been leaders at the grassroots and ceremonial level because this was the only allowable space under disenfranchising colonial laws (p. 342). Nanibush writes that ceremonial roles "have allowed us significant influence and power. The teachings gathered at the skirts of our grandmothers have also required a different set of principles for working cross-culturally" (p. 342). In an article co-written with Lorna Roth and Beverly Nelson, Kasennahawi Marie David (1995) describes the role of Mohawk women as "custodians of the land" and "at the forefront in educational and communications fields" (p. 54). During the 1990 standoff, David writes, women were spokespeople, negotiators, liaisons with police, the voices of the community radio station, and the organizers of the food bank (p. 68).

As the Healing Walk's "ceremonial coordinator," Lameman's role in the walk was to guide participants through prayer ceremonies over the course of the weekend, and in this role she would often refer to herself as using her "mom" or "teacher" voice (field notes). This was a role of cultural mediation, a kind of cross-cultural engagement that privileged listening, watching, and participating in a way that was different than the social media engagement I discuss in the next chapter. In fact, participants were explicitly told not to photograph or film ceremonies. Their involvement was at once constrained and broadened to actual, hands-on participation. For example, during the Healing Walk, led by elders and local people, participants were invited to pray during stops at each direction of the circle, north, south, east, and west, whether this meant involvement in place-based ceremonies or saying their own prayers.

The balancing work of cross-cultural mediation was also not without some tension and ambivalence, as Cardinal discusses:

> The Healing Walk, when it started, was never to accommodate people from outside the tar sands. It was for people in the tar sands, the affected communities, to know that they had support, to acknowledge what was happening in that territory, to come in and help pray with them, pray for them, so as people come [from] outside, I mean, really, you're a visitor. So we're not, we can't hand-hold everything for you. You have to take your own responsibility for your feelings, for your participation, and understand that you're a guest in the territory, and we will set up the days for you, you know, set up the agenda, provide the meals, but you own your own experience. We're not here to create something for you […] If you're a journalist, write stories about it, if you're a scientist, do studies on it. It's like, what can you do to help, you know? So hopefully that experience would motivate people, it's like what

> can I do to help these people? And also understanding that, yes, this could be you one day. (personal communication, July 3, 2015)

In the above excerpt, Cardinal raises a key question of entanglement and resource extraction — could this "be you one day"? What this approach to entanglement means for participants' social media practices will be unpacked in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Tracing a network of entanglement online

In the previous two chapters, I have described how the Tar Sands Healing Walk came to be, how it operated as a physical meeting-place for overlapping yet geographically diverse oil-centred environmental activism, and how organizers navigated interactions with "mainstream" media newsrooms. This chapter turns to how the Healing Walk worked as a focal point for an online network of responses to the oil sands beyond the time and place of the event, however. I examine this network, and its promise for linking a range of activities to the oil sands, by mapping the use of the social media hashtag #healingwalk in Twitter posts published before, during, and after the fifth and final Tar Sands Healing Walk in June, 2014.[42] Where the two previous chapters have been based on the results of my ethnographic research, interviews with organizers, and discursive analysis of material produced by organizers, this chapter is both quantitative and qualitative; I will share the findings of a content analysis of the hashtag's use as well as more qualitative observations of Twitter posts and interactions. Mapping #healingwalk on Twitter grounds an exploration of the event's spatial and temporal reach, allowing further insight into the range of interests that converged because of the call to experience the tar sands. Three key areas will be discussed: (1) how users of the #healingwalk hashtag combined it with other markers to anchor the northern Alberta event to other political movements and events; (2) how key factors — such as affiliations with prominent non-government environmental organizations or use of visual media in tweets — contributed to certain actors appearing to more successfully amplify the messages of the event than others; and (3) how following the hashtag allows analysis of users' interactions, from modes of community-building among participants to attempts made by people critical of the event to enter (or interrupt) the conversation. These areas of investigation ultimately hinge on an understanding of "media as practice" (Couldry, 2004) — albeit with more of a focus on categorizing and understanding media activities than attempting to categorize media actors. Throughout this chapter, I will also draw further upon a cross-section of social movement and communication studies literature in order to delve into the above themes. As I will show, previous works in these fields have made room for new questions about activist networks and repertoires of action, and about how social movement participants use media to organize and to raise awareness.

[42] The "hashtag," or using the # symbol before a keyword or a phrase, allows "tweets" to be categorized and easily found through a search on the Twitter platform (Twitter, n.d.).

As in Chapter 7, and as I will be exploring still further in the next part of this thesis, I am also interested in how collective movement participants amplify their messages, filling a gap left open by so-called mainstream media. For example, whereas co-organizer Jesse Cardinal described mainstream media as showing a general "lack of understanding" of the event, she was much more positive about the social media produced by participants, including Twitter posts or photographs posted to Instagram:

> I think it was great […] that was one way people could show, express their feelings, or their experience, from how they saw it, right? [For] some of them it was a new experience, and so it's just good to see how that's portrayed by people who came to the Healing Walk, who were seeing it for the first time. I thought that there was a lot of social media response, through pictures, through blogs, through videos. (J. Cardinal, personal communication, July 3, 2015)

Building on organizers' descriptions of their experiences with media to amplify their messages, and the above observations of media coverage and social media use, in the next section, I discuss how and why social media use in a social movement can be studied. I then analyze how #healingwalk, as a Twitter hashtag, may have fulfilled some of the organizational objectives that successful relationships between protest movements and mainstream media had in the past, including affirmation and amplification (see Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 116). This analysis includes particular attention to users' practices and how in-place interactions with the tar sands were spread virtually.

Although organizers of the Tar Sands Healing Walk insisted the annual event was not a protest — and I have argued, above, that the walk represented a collective action that exceeded demand — it nonetheless worked as a meeting-point for overlapping, oil-centered advocacy and resistance. This is evident from its roots, discussed above, the list of supporting funders shared publicly by organizers during the 2014 event,[43] and the presence of members of Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, and other prominent environmental non-government organizations at the event in 2014. The cross-section of workshops and "strategy sessions" offered the day before the Healing Walk at the campsite and lead by people from northern Alberta and from outside northern Alberta (described in Chapter 6) also hint at converging interests. On June 27, 2014, participants in the Healing Walk had the opportunity to learn more about the tar sands and in situ mining,

[43] In addition to local First Nations communities, including Fort McMurray First Nation, which allowed Healing Walk participants to camp for free, Cardinal listed the Sierra Club, the Council of Canadians, and LUSH among supporting funders of the event during her opening remarks at the 2014 Tar Sands Healing Walk (field notes).

First Nations litigation and Treaty rights, and the four major oil sands pipelines proposed for development at that time (the Enbridge Northern Gateway, the TransCanada Keystone XL, the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain, and the TransCanada Energy East).[44] Members of the Yinka Dene Alliance, a collection of First Nations communities from north-central British Columbia, were present with their own stories of protesting against the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline. Women spoke of links between the land's destruction and violence against Indigenous women's bodies, and residents of nearby Fort MacKay brought stories of their limited ability to use tap water in their homes. Others still arrived waiting to see the tar sands for the first time, drawing connections between their communities, churches, or environmental activism, and what is happening in Canada's oil sands region.

To better explore and understand the range of interests that came to work under the same banner, however, social media provides concrete, longer-term, and more geographically diverse insight. In December, 2015, I collected and studied nearly one thousand posts marked with the event's social media hashtag (#healingwalk) and published on Twitter between May, 2014 and July, 2015. These were posts published by event organizers, participants, critics, people unable to travel to northern Alberta (but who expressed wishes to be there with friends and allies), and organizers of solidarity healing walks that took place both before and after the June event. Mapping #healingwalk on Twitter illuminated three main patterns: (1) multiple hashtags were used to anchor the northern Alberta event to other political movements (such as solidarity events, anti-pipeline protests, or institutional divestment campaigns); (2) key factors contributed to certain actors' "tweets" appearing to more successfully amplify the messages of the event than other actors' posts; and, (3) following the hashtag reveals a range of organization practices as well as how sharing more personal experiences of the Tar Sands Healing Walk online connected those involved.

8.1 Analyzing a social media meeting-place

Alexandra Segerberg and W. Lance Bennett (2011), and Bart Cammaerts (2012), provide over-arching, or guiding, concepts and problems for this chapter and this study of the #healingwalk hashtag. Segerberg and Bennett challenge the researcher to look at how a hashtag

[44] Details of the Healing Walk workshops and "Strategy Sessions — Next Steps in the Tar Sands Campaign," as well as an itinerary of keynote speakers, performances, and welcoming and closing remarks, can be found in the Healing Walk Program, distributed in hard copy at the event in 2014 (Image 6, Appendix 1) and online (Tar Sands Healing Walk, 2014c).

travels, changes, or is co-opted, exposing "the contours of a network cutting across (and beyond) the protest space" (p. 203), while Cammaerts situates social media use as among activists' imaginable repertoires of action within a "mediation opportunity structure." These avenues have proven particularly useful for isolating key patterns across the posted tweets collected and analyzed in this study, while anchoring social media use within a broader "protest ecology" (Segerberg & Bennett, 2011, p. 200) of activities among movement organizers, participants, observers, and media.

Segerberg and Bennett argue social media tools, like Twitter, are "deeply embedded in the surrounding protest ecologies in which they operate" (p. 200). They advocate analyzing a social media hashtag to gain insight into the contexts and networks of collective action, providing a "window on [a] protest space" (p. 200), not a complete view of its workings and motivations. The authors were responding to recent academic and popular work which had both privileged and criticized the notion of the Twitter-driven revolution. They argued such notions tended to be anecdotal, had the potential to misrepresent movements, and "place[d] an undue burden of expectations […] on what is just one of many factors in the contemporary political communication and organization repertoire" (p. 200). As something of an antidote to the potentially outsized view of Twitter's role in a movement, Segerberg and Bennett suggest closer analysis of a movement's "Twitter stream" — the stream organized around a shared, searchable hashtag, like #healingwalk. This analysis can be guided by three proposals: (1) the use of the hashtag by "diverse players" can hint at the cross-section of "networks, actors and locations" converging, or brought together by the movement (p. 200); (2) Twitter streams can point to gatekeepers, or indicate "which (and how many) agents introduce particular kinds of links, or amplify cues such as @-ness replies and RT retweets" (p. 202); (3) the conversation organized around the hashtag is just a "slice" of what is happening within a movement at any given point, from "rallying" to "debriefing" to "planning for next events at later stages" (p. 202).

Cammaerts (2012) also highlights a multiplicity of timelines at work in social media use by activists, drawing attention both to tactical use of "ICT-mediated resistance practices" during a protest (p. 128) and to the potentially affective and emotionally-binding work of shared and self-mediated "protest artefacts" online, including photographs and video clips posted online by activists, adding to,

> an ever expanding archive of images and self-representations of protest events [that] enables symbols and discourses embedded in them to be culturally transmitted on a long-term basis, feeding the struggle and contributing to the construction of a collective memory of protest. (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 125)

These come together under the umbrella of Cammaerts's "mediation opportunity structure," a concept that borrows from the schools of social movement theory and media and communications (p. 118). The concept of mediation "enables us to link up various ways in which media and communication are relevant to protest and activism," from how mainstream outlets cover an event or movement, to how activists represent themselves or use different media tools (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 118). The concept of the opportunity structure is used to describe openings and limits to collective action, of which media (and the imaginable success of a movement in receiving mass coverage) is just one factor (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 119).

My objective — to, as Segerberg and Bennett (2011) put it, "cut into the Twitter stream" in order to explore and understand the diverse interests that coalesced around the Tar Sands Healing Walk — was best served by collecting and coding Twitter posts that included the hashtag #healingwalk. Content analysis of these tweets provided "some indication of relative prominences and absences of key characteristics" in the texts (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, & Newbold, 1998, p. 95), given the method's allowance for "analysis of large bodies of text or media content" (Hansen et al., 1998, p. 100) and a systematic approach toward comparative analyses, or analyses of co-occurrences (Bauer, 2000, pp. 132-134) in order to understand how systems work. A content analysis is not "objective," but it is "procedurally explicit and replicable" (Bauer, 2000, p. 133). In recent years, content analysis has been used to study social media texts produced in connection to far-reaching social movements such as the Arab Spring, Occupy, or Idle No More.

In December, 2015, using the Twitter interface, I collected posts that were published between January, 2014 and July, 2015, and entered them into an Excel spreadsheet to code them according to the presence or absence of a series of characteristics. This 18-month time period allowed a long view of the hashtag's life in connection to the 2014 Healing Walk, and yielded 975 tweets. This collection of tweets cannot account for posts erased since 2014, and it does not include duplicate tweets (for example, when one user copied and pasted another's post verbatim,

without using Twitter's built-in "retweet" function[45]). Additionally, reaching almost two years into Twitter's online archives proved a very slow process, as the website itself slowed down the further it delved into the #healingwalk timeline.[46]

Once collected, I coded for three categories of characteristics: (1) how tweets were structured, (2) descriptions of the tweets, and (3) other hashtags used in posts. In terms of structure, I noted whether the user had embedded an image or video in their tweet, and whether the image they shared was a Tar Sands Healing Walk "meme" (see Image 9, Appendix 1 for an example) or a "selfie." Coding these structural characteristics while keeping detailed observational notes facilitated general insights about what kind of information was being shared (organizational, personal, or observational). Additionally, I did not specifically code or follow links to Instagram, Facebook, or other social media sites; in the future, such a broadening of this case study would certainly inform understanding of users' mediation practices. This said, Twitter's generally public profiles and rather porous boundaries allow analysis of information deliberately meant to reach a broader public. To describe tweets, I logged each user's name and Twitter "handle," the post's date and message, and the number of times the post was "retweeted" (see Fig. 1, Appendix 2).

Contrasting this data (for example, comparing the highest numbers of retweets to the use of images or videos) reveals media practices by event participants and organizers. The last set of characteristics I coded for was the other hashtags users employed to categorize their tweets and to ensure entrance to multiple conversations. For example, in the Tar Sands Healing Walk message (Fig. 1, Appendix 2), organizers further anchored their tweet by using #tarsands, #rmwb (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the local government and host region for the Healing Walk and oil development), and #ymm (Fort McMurray). In turn, someone seeking information on Twitter about the tar sands, their local government, or Fort McMurray, would also find information about the Healing Walk. In addition to accompanying hashtags, I coded for mentions of healing walks or events taking place elsewhere, as will be discussed in the next section.

[45] A "retweet," or "RT," is when a user forwards someone else's tweet (sometimes with comment, sometimes without) to share the original post with their own network.

[46] There are alternative methods for better delving into Twitter's archives (see, for examples, Callison & Hermida, 2015; Dahlberg-Grundberg & Lindgren, 2014; Tremayne, 2014), however they also come at a high price. I did not have access to a more complete Twitter archive or database of historic "tweets."

8.2 Anchoring #healingwalk

If using #healingwalk in a Twitter post is a way of anchoring one's message to the Tar Sands Healing Walk, analyzing other hashtags inserted into the #healingwalk stream allows a sense of other conversations that users believed their experience of the tar sands should be a part of, such as broader critiques of the oil sands (#tarsands, #notarsands) or discussions of Canadian politics (#cdnpoli, #canpoli). As seen in Figure 2 (Appendix 2), these hashtags were two of the most widely used in the stream studied here. The hashtag for Fort McMurray (#ymm) was one of the least used, though suggests users' facility with local politics or interest in locating themselves geographically during the period of the Healing Walk. More interesting were links made to Idle No More (#idlenomore/#INM), protests against the Keystone XL pipeline proposed to bring Alberta oil to United States refineries in the Gulf of Mexico (#KXL/#nokxl/#Keystone), and institutional divestment movements (#divestment/#divestnow). The use of these hashtags indicate an attempt to anchor #healingwalk to other activist networks. For example, the Idle No More hashtags were among the most popular and diversely used in the #healingwalk Twitter stream; often the hashtag was used to mark Indigenous resistance or non-Indigenous users' alliance with Indigenous rights discourse. We can also see in the use of (co-)movement tweets, such as #idlenomore, something of the promise held out by the "networked opportunity structure" Cammaerts (2012) describes, wherein activists can use social media to communicate amongst themselves or to counter mainstream discourses, but they can also work toward "facilitating offline protest and building offline networks and connections" (p. 130).

Hashtags and references to divestment were used largely in relation to divestment campaigns at the universities of Victoria, McGill, and Dalhousie. They were the least used among this sample (just 12 tweets carried these markers), and divestment activists themselves appear to have used them most often. However, this set of tweets deserves attention for the users' sharing of embedded images, links to YouTube videos, and emphasis on information that would carry visual impact. As a mediation practice, these tweets appear to have been aimed at visually linking their local movements to the oil sands. Put another way, the tweets seemed to be aimed at a home audience, people who were thousands of kilometres from the Tar Sands Healing Walk but plugged into their own community's politics.

Assumptions of linking, or "connection," are also evident in tweets that included reference to the Keystone XL pipeline. Users taking up both the #healingwalk and

#KXL/#nokxl/#Keystone hashtags seemed intent on amplifying the link between "frontline" activists, as evidenced by these pre-Healing Walk fundraising calls by anti-pipeline protesters journeying to Canada for the event:

> "Participating in the #HealingWalk will help empower us to build a community of resistance." — Yudith Nieto http://bitly.com/TSHWFunds #nokxl
> *@kxlblockade, posted June 11, 2014*

> Donate now to support Gulf Coast frontline folks attending the tar sands #HealingWalk. http://bitly.com/TSHWFunds #nokxl
> *@kxlblockade, posted June 12, 2014*

Links between the tar sands, its affective and visual qualities, and the pipeline project were also vividly rendered:

> From the belly of the beast, we will build the heart of the resistance. #tarsands #healingwalk #cdnpoli #nokxl #ymm
> *@HealingWalk, posted June 28, 2014*

The above post by Healing Walk organizers contained an image from the day's walk, and also spoke to the strengthening and diversifying of a network of people resisting the tar sands. "From the belly of the beast" centres Alberta's tar sands as the "heart" of oil and pipeline resistance. Given the circumstances of the Healing Walk's realization as a community-first event, explicitly linking the Healing Walk to the resistance work of others elsewhere seems also to work towards ensuring the realities of life for people in the Athabasca region are not forgotten as new battles are taken up.

On this note, of holding the tar sands region at the centre of debates on oil and oil-related development, a handful of solidarity Tar Sands Healing Walks co-occurred in Quebec and British Columbia in 2014. Figure 3 (Appendix 2) shows a list of other healing walks or oil-related events mentioned in the #healingwalk Twitter stream, the most popular of which was Montreal's Solidarity Healing Walk. The second-most popular event linked to the #healingwalk stream was a set of refinery corridor walks in the San Francisco Bay area similarly structured around spirituality and Indigeneity, and which made explicit links to Canada's experiences with oil as well (Butler, 2014).

8.3 Mediation practices

Following the previous discussion of how #healingwalk was drawn into other activist networks, and how it marked out its own tar sands-centred network that privileged the very frontline of frontlines, in this section, I look at key actors in the Twitter stream. This is an effort

aimed at better understanding particularly successful (or learned) mediation practices by activists. I submit that observable activist media practices are rather professional, based on the characteristics of the ten most re-tweeted #healingwalk posts (Appendix 3) and practices evident among key actors who used #healingwalk (Appendix 4).

Each of the most re-tweeted posts to the #healingwalk stream featured embedded images, so that users did not have to click through links to see shared media. All posts used additional hashtags, and most were shared the day of the main event. As evidenced in Appendix 3, most tweets are in the discursive style of very short news items (for example, "Grand Chief Nepinak, Grand Chief Phillip, ACFN Chief Adam stand together to stop the destruction," or "The march is led by water the thing we are here to protect"), or sound bytes (including quotes from prominent speakers).

Six of the ten most re-tweeted #healingwalk posts were authored by Edmonton-based Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner Mike Hudema. Hudema is well known in northern Alberta, and has been covered by regional media for a number of years in connection to his organization's opposition to the tar sands. At the time of writing, Hudema has approximately 41,900 followers on Twitter; in 2014, each of his #healingwalk tweets was re-tweeted, on average, 41 times.[47] Looking closely at the characteristics of his popular tweets, each was accompanied by an image embedded in the Twitter stream (see Image 10, Appendix 1). Altogether, Hudema posted 50 #healingwalk tweets, the vast majority of which included embedded photographs.

Aside from the main Healing Walk Twitter account (@HealingWalk), most of the users whose #healingwalk tweets were widely shared could also be counted upon to embed images and videos. Many of them shared Healing Walk memes, discussed above, but only one of the top actors incorporated selfies among shared, embedded images. Crystal Greenfeather, a self-identified member of the Moose clan who lives in Winnipeg, shared two selfies, one while waiting to get to the Healing Walk and another while at the event. Greenfeather is the only top user identified in this study who did not align with any other organization in her Twitter profile at the time of analysis. Other key actors are public figures, associated with environmental

[47] Access to the type of detailed Twitter databases described above, in relation to previous studies, would allow the researcher to gain a fuller grasp of the reach of Hudema's (and others') "tweets," including how many people may have encountered a given post in addition to how many people "re-tweeted" it. Using only the Twitter web site, some questions about audience impact are still unanswered.

organizations, alternative journalism sites, Indigenous rights activism, and anti-pipeline movements.

When Candis Callison and Alfred Hermida (2015) collected nearly 750,000 #IdleNoMore tweets to get a better grasp of the "key actors" who shaped the movement's hashtag, they employed two methods to "quantify influence on Twitter," including the number of times users' tweets were retweeted and an algorithm to determine users' influence based on attention from other influential users (p. 702). While they found the "significant presence of non-elite actors" among the 500 most influential Twitter users during the grassroots movement, "institutional elites, such as journalists from mainstream organizations and celebrities" were among the top 25 (p. 697).

Due primarily to resources, I exclusively used retweets as an indicator of message amplification.[48] My analysis reflects a vacuum of well-known journalists, in particular, at the Tar Sands Healing Walk in 2014. Idle No More took place in many communities, including major cities, in late 2012 and early 2013, making it logistically easier to cover, even if its grassroots drive and mix of protest and resurgence ethics made it a rather complicated issue. The Tar Sands Healing Walk took place in northern Alberta, a place to which it is difficult and expensive to travel. In the absence of "professional" media, activists appear to have been central conveyors of information about the event. This creates the potential for activists to be primarily communicating to and amongst themselves (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 130), however in a context of amplifying as publicly as possible, particularly by taking up successful media practices and tapping into a cross-section of hashtag channels, the question of audience demands a more complete examination than can be taken up in this case study.

8.4 Interactions

While the two preceding sections focused primarily on what could be counted — use of other hashtags, links made to other events, and observable mediation practices by users — this

[48] To compare, Callison and Hermida (2015) used the paid subscription service Topsy Pro Analytics to gather tweets (p. 702). Such services tap into the "Twitter firehose," or index millions of tweets and provide more information than a Twitter search does. Callison and Hermida report being able to see more than tweets and retweet counts. For example they could also see how many people were using mobile devices (p. 702), and using Topsy's algorithms they could suss out the relative influence of different users (p. 703). Topsy was sold in December, 2013 to Apple and shut down in 2015 (Moon & Fares, 2016). At the time of writing, many services providing further analysis of tweets and their impact have short windows for gathering data for free before charging a monthly fee (cf. Kakroo, 2015; Keyhole, n.d.; Valinsky, 2015); my access to such data was further limited by not employing live collection of tweets as they were posted, but returning to the tweets about a year and a half after the final Healing Walk. Thus, my data was obtained by searching Twitter and measuring what I could see: retweets.

section discusses observations made during the collection and coding of tweets that shed light on community-building practices by participants and the porous nature of a Twitter hashtag. This includes shared logistical information on the #healingwalk stream, attempts by participants to put the Tar Sands Healing Walk in front of absent politicians and mainstream media, and attempts by people outside the movement to add their voices to the discussion.

In the months and weeks before the Healing Walk, there were a number of tweets dealing exclusively with logistical information regarding the Healing Walk, such as fundraising calls both for the walk itself (the #healingwalk memes each featured the organization's web site for making donations), and for helping people to travel to the walk. Other organizational logistics also arose on the Twitter stream, including calls to carpool in order to get to Fort McMurray. Some of the details of people's travel — images from their road trips, or food they ate while at the Healing Walk — can hardly be read as political, yet all these elements together start to build a sense of community across the hashtag, as well as momentum, as people's shared images and messages relayed a sense of gearing-up for the event. Others, unable to join, made a point of taking to Twitter to send supportive messages, contributing to the community from a distance.

Although organizers were clear that they were not asking the government for anything, members of this networked #healingwalk community nonetheless reached out to politicians, asking them to respond to the Tar Sands Healing Walk. For example, on June 25, just before the Healing Walk and in the midst of a federal byelection in Fort McMurray, one participant approached Justin Trudeau online:

> Vous participerez au #HealingWalk ?? @JustinTrudeau: Heureux d'être à #FortMcMurray avec @KyleHarrietha aujourd'hui. #YMM #PolCan # PLC

In other tweets, the same user noted he had been at the previous year's Healing Walk; in this post, he capitalizes on the Liberal leader's tweet regarding visiting Fort McMurray with the local candidate, and asks if he will participate in the walk. After the Tar Sands Healing Walk, another user tried a similar, if slightly less targeted, tactic, using federal politicians' presence at the Calgary Stampede (and presumably on the #CalgaryStampede hashtag) to draw attention to the Fort McMurray event:

> Devastation and Prayer at the Last #TarSands #HealingWalk: http://youtu.be/3MvTYu40prE #CalgaryStampede #Stampede2014 #cpc #IdleNoMore #oilsands
> *posted July 8, 2014*

> Inside #TarSands Last #HealingWalk http://www.vice.com/en_ca/read/inside-the-tar-sands-last-healing-walk-519 … #CalgaryStampede #Stampede2014 #cpc #IdleNoMore #oilsands #cdnpoli #lpc #ndp #gpc
> *posted July 9, 2014*

The user directs links to specific political parties by using their hashtags: the Conservative Party of Canada (#cpc), the Liberal party (#lpc), the NDP (#ndp), and the Green party (#gpc). Users not only seemed aware of an absence of political response to the movement; one noted mainstream media's absence, evidenced by this tweet aimed at the public broadcaster:

> @cbc Coverage, please. RT@CrystalDawnGee Tailing pond behind the #Tarsands #Healingwalk crowd. #cdnpoli #abpoli
> *posted June 26, 2014*

While the above anecdotal evidence of people building organizational networks and of participants trying to gain media and political attention for the movement illustrate ways in which people identified with the Tar Sands Healing Walk, the porous nature of Twitter hashtag streams was also in evidence. As Segerberg and Bennett write,

> Unlike the profile feed, which is controlled by a particular actor, the community-generated hashtag convention allows anyone to use a hashtag for any tweeted message whatsoever. Hashtagged messages — and their retweets — may disperse widely in unpremeditated combinations across a variety of feeds and networks. (2011, p. 203)

While examples of interruptions to the #healingwalk stream do not appear to have been taken up widely, they show both how outside critics could make inroads into the conversation, and offer some insight as to broader oil sands debates. Below is just one example of an interruptive exchange that arose June 28, the day of the Healing Walk, posted by Cody Battershill.

> Most if not all of lobby groups involved in #HealingWalk receive $$$ from the same places @bcbluecon @ezralevant @SylviaStead @notarsands *@codyincalgary*

In his tweet, Battershill uses the #healingwalk hashtag to draw attention to his criticisms of the organizations involved in the Tar Sands Healing Walk, and includes *The Globe and Mail*'s public editor, Sylvia Stead, and then-author Ezra Levant. Since 2014, Levant has built the far-right website Rebel Media. Battershill has been described as a "one-man oil sands advocate" going head-to-head with "celebrity activists" critiquing bitumen extraction (Gerson, 2014); he is also the founder of Canada Action (DeSmog Canada, n.d.), the same oil advocacy group that created and distributed the pro-oil meme featuring Fort McKay First Nation Chief Jim Boucher

noted earlier (Image 3, Appendix 1). Though Battershill's post only netted two retweets, it nonetheless drew out at least one response:

> @codyincalgary That's fair ! You guys threaten the whole #earth with your tarsands C02 !! @bcbluecon @ezralevant @SylviaStead @NoTarSands
> *posted June 28, 2014*

Such attempts to interrupt the Twitter stream are also part of a movement's online ecosystem, providing a potential avenue for understanding how movement participants reach those outside their immediate spheres of influence.

8.5 Looking out from #healingwalk

If the Tar Sands Healing Walk is a key entry-point for understanding processes of cross-cultural alliance-building and how Alberta's bituminous oil development is discursively taken up by a range of media, activist, and international narratives, the #healingwalk hashtag on social media grounds an exploration of the event's spatial and temporal reach. By pulling together theoretical and conceptual material from communication and social movement literature, this analysis of the #healingwalk Twitter stream contributes to a better understanding of how social movement participants take up social media to amplify messages, organize, and, ultimately, knit together diverse environmental activism(s) under a single banner — in this case, "Stop the destruction, start the healing." Of particular interest were the goals that appeared to be embedded in different users' practices, from linking geographically diverse "frontlines" or resistance movements to the oil sands for at-home audiences, to posting news-like images and short observations across the Twitter streams or conversational channels of several different movements.

This said, the media work, or practice, by people involved in a collective action that was analyzed in this chapter raises questions about the affordances of an event that receives little traditional media coverage. Overall, absence of mainstream coverage does not seem to dissuade organizers or participants, and in fact seems to make space for a rich social and alternative media environment. However, this raises other questions about how the practices seen in the context of the Tar Sands Healing Walk could be carried over to other social movements: Would a firm demand of policymakers on the part of organizers change how they are covered by mainstream media? Additionally, in the vein of a cross-section of alternative media scholarship, how can audience reach beyond those already persuaded be better understood? An attempt in the last section of this chapter to catch a glimpse of non-participant reception of the #healingwalk stream

through a short analysis of a critic's Twitter post does not really do justice to this question. Further analysis of these elements, particularly in the context of rural or isolated movements, is necessary.

Chapter 9: After the Tar Sands Healing Walk

The Tar Sands Healing Walk was started in 2010 to offer a safe space for Fort McMurray-area First Nations and Métis people to pray for the land, engage in ceremony, and share their stories of the impacts of oil sands development. Each summer, until 2014, it drew as many as 500 people from across North America and elsewhere to move alongside northern Alberta's tailings ponds and refineries. As I have described in this first part of my thesis, through analysis of interviews, ethnographic research, and mapping social media use, the ceremony of the walk invited participants to pray, to mourn, to heal, and to acknowledge the effects of bitumen extraction on the daily lives of members of First Nations and Métis communities living atop the world's third-largest proven oil reserve (Government of Alberta, n.d.). Analyzing the Tar Sands Healing Walk as an anchoring-point for thinking through oil sands entanglement, and as a site of "cultural persistence," has allowed an opening for looking more closely at social movement theory, Indigenous resurgence theory, and media theory. To explore these further, in the next part of my thesis, I will shift focus to how First Nations and Métis peoples in British Columbia have negotiated and created media in connection to the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway project. Before moving away from the Tar Sands Healing Walk, however, I want to close with one example of what came after.

As the 2014 event came to a close, organizers spoke of building upon its momentum to mobilize more locally-focused cultural revitalization and decolonization efforts. In the weeks following an oil sands pipeline spill of five million litres of emulsion in 2015, the Fort McMurray First Nation announced new plans for moving together in the place of the annual Healing Walk ceremony: a "healing gathering for land, water, [and] spirit" to be focused around cultural workshops and guided tours not just of contaminated areas, but also of non-contaminated areas (Keepers of the Athabasca, 2015). This widening of organizers' focus further emphasizes local land-based practices and ceremonies, and the potential for the event to educate across cultures. In an interview, Jesse Cardinal described the new event as something of a "break," or "a step away from what everybody coming there wanted," and a turn to what local communities wanted; she also described far fewer participants, perhaps just 25-50 people (personal communication, July 3, 2015).

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) covered the event, emphasizing how "people have come together to experience and celebrate Indigenous culture and tradition"

(Stewart, 2015). APTN's camera followed organizer Cleo Reece as she prepared for a water ceremony, met cyclists taking part in the three-day gathering who had biked from Washington State "to see the tar sands first hand," and followed participants to a lake, where,

> Large quantities of oil [were] on top of the water, coating rocks and plants. You could smell the oil in the air. This is a healing gathering, but at this moment, it was pain that was shared. The moment was cut short as security arrived and asked the people to leave. Reece says we must take better care of the environment for future generations. (Stewart, 2015)

In January, 2016, organizers of the Healing Gathering for the Land and Water posted a sample agenda to Facebook for the July 2016 event, based on the previous year's itinerary (Healing Gathering for the Land and Water, 2016a). Plans for the four-day event included learning about the history of the Fort McMurray First Nation and tar sands development, learning about traditional food preparation, guided medicine walks and tours of nearby industrial sites, and opportunities to pray, to dance, to take part in ceremonies, and to heal (Healing Gathering for the Land and Water, 2016a). Listed sponsors of the event included the Keepers of the Athabasca, the Fort McMurray First Nation, the Glasswaters Foundation, and Lush Cosmetics, and there was a suggested daily rate for those participating in the event of $50 (Healing Gathering for the Land and Water, 2016a). In late May, when wildfires burned in the Fort McMurray area, Healing Gathering organizers posted a Facebook update for followers, indicating the event would still take place, because, they wrote, "Healing is needed now more than ever — please share and pass the word" (Healing Gathering for the Land and Water, 2016b).

I am concluding this section with this brief description of the Healing Gathering not only to book-end discussion of the Tar Sands Healing Walk, but as an example of how the former event's infrastructure — built up as a response to the oil sands industry — has left a framework and legacy in place for continued cross-cultural exchange in the heart of the oil sands.

Part Two: The Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline

Chapter 10: Future imaginaries and further entanglements

> *Stop waiting til tomorrow, stop living yesterday.*
> *Cuz there won't be tomorrow, if we don't change today.*
> *We're generation now, children of the future, earth's revolution;*
> *Creation's crying out, I feel her pain, I can't walk away.*
> *I do my part to fix what's broken,*
> *Give back what was taken,*
> *Hope for the dawn of a new day,*
> *Calling out to each and every person, join me in the earth revolution.*
> — refrain from the song, "Earth Revolution," Ta'Kaiya Blaney (2012)[49]

Indigenous activist, singer, and actor Ta'Kaiya Blaney was 11 years old and colouring a sign on the steps of the Alberta Legislature when I interviewed her for *The Edmonton Journal* in May, 2012. She was protesting alongside the Yinka Dene Alliance, a group of British Columbia First Nations people who were traveling across the country by train that summer to amplify their resistance to the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. Had it been built, the pipeline would have directly affected communities in northern Alberta and British Columbia. But Freedom Train 2012, led by the Yinka Dene Alliance, connected members of northern British Columbia First Nations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in communities across the country. The protest was made public through: press releases that were issued through the Marketwired newswire and included quotes from alliance leaders and contact information for a Vancouver-based communications firm; near-daily blog posts and Facebook updates; public rallies and marches; and private gatherings with locals. This media infrastructure helped make connections between communities material; in addition to amplifying messages of resistance, they inform the creation of what Bart Cammaerts (2012) refers to as a co-constitutive archive of "protest artefacts" that can fuel a movement and empower its members and allies (p. 125).

My use of the word "infrastructure" is also quite deliberate here, as it was in Chapter 9. Studying the paths of communication and transportation infrastructures alongside one another gives us a way to visualize oil sands entanglements. Brian Larkin describes infrastructures as "technical systems of transport, telecommunications, urban planning, energy, and water," that "facilitate the flow of goods in a wider cultural as well as physical sense" (Larkin, 2008, p. 5). In this set of chapters, I map out the materiality of pipeline and oil sands infrastructures, how messages circulated along the same (and more) routes, and I discuss cultural implications and the

[49] See Blaney's web site, http://www.takaiyablaney.com/home

ways in which this pipeline linked communities through the promise of potential economic benefits and resistance.

Highways, railroad tracks, and pipelines stretch out from northern Alberta to connect the oil sands to refineries and ports. These transportation infrastructures necessarily connect and entangle landscapes, people, and future imaginaries. Oil sands entanglements are freighted with both positive and negative effects and affects: the oil sands and their mobilizing infrastructures can bring communities the benefits of employment and revenue *at the same time* as they bring health problems and risks of land, water, and air contamination. The previous set of chapters mapped out the Tar Sands Healing Walk to examine these entanglements. Oil sands entanglements and cultural persistence are further unpacked in this set of chapters, however I am also preoccupied here with the extent to which proposed — and unrealized — infrastructures ask us to engage with speculative futures. The Enbridge Northern Gateway project had fierce proponents and equally fierce detractors. Through their public discourses, these groups made multiple claims for oil-fueled and oil-lite futures in Canada. Whereas the oil sands are largely occupied by extraction projects that cannot be, the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline is a project that — at the time of writing — will not be. Holding a cancelled infrastructure project at the centre of each chapter in this part of my thesis demands serious contemplation regarding the sort of country, communities, economies and environment we want for the future, and how these will be mediated. After all, future infrastructures, even those which start to seem unavoidable, can still be imagined otherwise.

Earlier in this thesis, I noted Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's (2015) description of "common entanglements [that] emerge not *from* human plans but *despite* them" (p. 267, my emphasis). Through the 2010s, proposed bitumen-carrying pipeline projects were a main point of conflict in ongoing debates about new federal government legislation that curbed environmental protections and continued oil sands expansion. These broader debates saw Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous allies and environmental organizations engaging in a range of actions to amplify organized resistance and cultural persistence, including the Idle No More and Tar Sands Healing Walk movements. Organized street protests in Canada's largest cities, ongoing occupations in remote regions, presentations in boardrooms and to local and international governments, and even new efforts to encourage fossil fuel divestment, have all pulled focus to the pipelines as a final line of defense.

10.1 Entangled futures

In these anti-pipeline efforts, Blaney's voice has often been heard. At the height of the Enbridge Northern Gateway battle, she sang protest songs that called out environmental impacts and rendered — as in the refrain above — "Creation" as a woman who was being hurt by bad choices. Her voice was clear, "calling out to each and every person," as the lyrics of her song suggest, and videos posted to YouTube garnered thousands of views. She would sing "Earth Revolution" — part of a six-song 2012 album entitled *Shallow Waters* — at protests and rallies, urging the adults around her to join her in "turn[ing] this around" and "fix[ing] this right now" (see Bouchard, 2013; McCue, 2011). The album's title track, "Shallow Waters," was most clearly about the Northern Gateway, and by the time she was 10 years old Blaney had shared it with Greenpeace and delivered its accompanying music video by hand to Enbridge's Vancouver offices (Hager, 2015). By 14, Blaney — a member of the Sliammon First Nation near Powell River, B.C. — had performed for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, and sung her protest songs across North America and in Rio de Janeiro, Paris, and Indonesia (Hager, 2015).

Blaney stands out in my memory for her certainty and her description of the necessity — as she saw it — of Indigenous support before a pipeline like the Enbridge Northern Gateway could ever be realized (T. Audette, 2012c). She would also, it turned out years later, be correct in her assertion and "strong feeling" that this particular pipeline would not be built (T. Audette, 2012). I interviewed her very briefly between a rally on the steps of Alberta's Legislature and a march down Jasper Avenue, Edmonton's main commercial street and home to one of Enbridge's corporate offices. The next day's story began with her quiet assertion that, "There are so many people that oppose it […] Also, Canada needs our consent, and they're not going to get it" (quoted in T. Audette, 2012).

But Blaney and her songs also stand out because of what she represented, as a child, standing up to the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline and the oil industry. People are not symbols. Yet, if an infrastructure project evokes the future, the image of a child wearing a traditional cedar bark hat while singing protest songs and talking easily about First Nations rights holds up a distorted mirror to future imaginaries that would continue trajectories of settler colonial and neoliberal natural resource development efforts. In this moment when a child is seen

standing up to a pipeline, the symbolism of infrastructures as gateways to progress is confronted by the symbolism of future generations.

Large-scale and much-debated plans for infrastructure projects tell us a great deal about how a culture sees itself now *and* what it anticipates for its future — even when those proposals are not fully realized.[50] The question of what infrastructures lay groundwork *for* comes into focus as we read Larkin (2008), who describes the role of infrastructures as enabling the "future orientation" of colonial rule (p. 25), which necessarily "operate[s] in the present, but with a powerful sense of a range of possible futures open to it. Its actions [are] geared toward shaping how that future might be" (p. 25). Meanwhile, the symbol of a child — as Lee Edelman (2004) argues at length — is also freighted with potential futures. Edelman argues the constructions of future imaginaries attached to children are built on and entangled with a romanticization of the past. He writes the politics of such an imaginary are bound by a "constraining mandate of futurism" (Edelman, 2004, p. 4) that is both linear and repetitious. A child represents reproduction, futurity, and *continuity*. Like infrastructures, the idea or symbol of a child is bound up in history and the expectation they will carry on the rather conservative and rehearsed stories we tell ourselves about what progress (and nation) look like. This said, a "Native child," as Andrea Smith (2010) writes, represents an interruption: their *presence* introduces a symbolic disruption of colonial linearity and reproduction of settler norms. To Edelman's critique of futurity as a politics of reproductivity that "justifies contemporary oppression" (Smith A. , 2010, p. 46), Smith writes, **"**If the goal of queerness is to challenge the reproduction of the social order, then the Native child may already be queered" (p. 48). In other words, in the face of settler-colonial efforts to erase the presence and potential of Indigenous peoples,[51] an Indigenous child's persistence and resistance challenges the status quo or continuity of a settler-colonial agenda, as well as any single-avenue (or single-pipeline) path to the future.

In the chapters that follow, I further elaborate ways in which the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline can be understood as a continuation of status-quo settler colonialism, how it

[50] Consider, as examples, the cultural legacy of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline being tabled by Thomas Berger's decision in the 1970s, Pierre Trudeau's National Energy Program of the 1980s, and even the failed Alsands oil project.

[51] See the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's findings for a broader discussion of government efforts — including decades of residential schooling for Indigenous children — to erase all the underpinnings of Indigenous peoples' cultures in Canada, or carry out "cultural genocide" (Sinclair, Littlechild, & Wilson, 2015, p. 5).

was weighed by decision-makers, and how interruptions to industry and government narratives can be conceptualized as avenues toward future oil sands *dis*entanglement.

Chapter 11: The Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline

Proposed to stretch 1,172 kilometres from Hardisty, Alta. to Kitimat, B.C., the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline promised to carry an estimated 525,000 barrels of bituminous oil every day from Canada's oil sands to Asia- and internationally-bound tankers. Had it been built, the $6.5-billion project would have been the first oil sands pipeline to cross northern British Columbia and would have met an estimated 220 supertankers each year (Leggett et al., 2013a, 4).[52] Those tankers would have then navigated the Kitimat Arm of the Douglas Channel. The proposed port demanded slow movement around islands and rocky outcrops,[53] though engineers for Enbridge argued the port's location made it a low risk for experiencing tsunamis, landslides, or earthquakes (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013a, p. 60).

The Northern Gateway proposal included one large pipeline headed to Kitimat with diluted bitumen, a second smaller pipeline going to Hardisty (near Edmonton) with condensate that would be used to thin out the traveling bitumen, and a new tanker terminal at Kitimat. Both pipelines would have been laid within a one-kilometre-wide corridor, with a 25-metre right-of-way, along the pipeline path (Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, 2010a, p. 2-1). The bitumen-carrying pipeline would have been about 914 millimetres (36 inches) in diameter while a parallel condensate pipeline would have been 508 millimetres (20 inches) in diameter (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013b, p. 3).[54] This is a journey, on the mainland, that would have crossed six major watersheds (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013a, p. 49) and the territories of ten aboriginal language groups (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013a, p. 23).

The main objective of the Enbridge Northern Gateway route was to connect Alberta oil to Asian markets, or markets alternative to the United States. This was what made the project a "gateway," a link for Canada to extend its oil exporting reach beyond North America. The

[52] To put this number in perspective, Enbridge estimated only 1,500 tankers had called at Kitimat's port since 1978 (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013a, p. 47). This would have been approximately 44 tankers per year, if we assume an average number of calls per year between 1978 and 2012, making for a quintupling of tanker traffic along the Kitimat Arm of the Douglas Channel. My estimate is not meant to suggest the port area has been left largely untouched by industry, however; Kitimat has been home to an aluminum smelter since the 1950s (RioTinto, n.d.) and the town has become a hub for liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in recent years (see District of Kitimat, 2016).

[53] Enbridge was soundly criticized in 2012 when it released promotional videos for the project that "omitted more than 1,000 square kilometres of islands along the proposed Northern Gateway tanker route" (Hong, 2012, p. 129). In his travelogue, *The Oil Man and the Sea: Navigating the Northern Gateway*, Arno Kopecky (2013) offers a detailed first-person account of the difficulties even small boats might encounter accessing the Kitimat port.

[54] Enbridge's (2010) multi-volume proposal goes into far greater detail as to the make-up of the pipes (steel), the project's overall design, and plans for coating the pipelines to safeguard against erosion (see Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, 2010b, pp. 5-1 – 5-2).

pipeline company envisioned building a terminal at Kitimat that could host supertankers, or Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs). VLCCs "can carry three times as much oil as the tankers currently calling at the terminal in Burnaby, British Columbia" (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013a, p. 60). The tankers can measure as wide as 70 metres (about 230 feet) and as long as 344 metres (nearly 1,130 feet) (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013b, p. 133). The tankers would have shared "waters used by Aboriginal groups, commercial and recreational fisheries, sailors and kayakers, tourist vessels, ferries, and other shipping" vessels (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013a, p. 6), before hitting open water, beyond Haida Gwaii.

The Northern Gateway project was touted as necessary for Canada's economic future as a whole by industry, Alberta's provincial politicians, and, until a 2015 change in government, by federal political leaders. On the premise of broadening access to international markets for Canada's oil, Enbridge began feasibility studies for the pipeline in the late 1990s (Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, 2010a, p. 1-1). The project was formally launched in 2004 (Northern Gateway, n.d. a). Because the pipeline would cross the provincial border between Alberta and British Columbia, it was subject to federal review by the National Energy Board (NEB) and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA). Over the next decade, during most of which Stephen Harper was prime minister of Canada, senior cabinet ministers championed the need for the pipeline despite its ongoing review by the arms-length NEB-CEAA Joint Review Panel (JRP). For example, in 2012, Harper told reporters the project was:

> "[…] in the vital interest of Canada and in the vital interest of British Columbia, as Canada's Asia-Pacific gateway. The economic growth we expect to have here in the future is going to be based on commerce with the Asia-Pacific region and we think it's important that we continue to diversify our exports through this province." (quoted in Fekete, 2012)

Harper was responding to provincial politicians in British Columbia who had issued a list of conditions they said needed to be met before the Northern Gateway could be realized, including receiving a "fair share" of the pipeline's revenues (Fekete, 2012). His comment rendered British Columbia itself as a gateway to Asian markets, and it also discursively hardened the link between what is described as necessary for the nation's economic future (diversified exports) and the Enbridge Northern Gateway brand. Harper's response to reporters aligned with the overwhelming government and industry rhetoric at the time, which presented the Northern Gateway as a solution to two problems: (1) the world needed safe and secure sources of oil and Canada was just such a source, positioned to realize its potential as an "energy superpower"; and

(2) the oil sands are land-locked and require a mode of transport to access refineries and markets. Though the pipeline hearing panelists would ultimately conclude Canada would be better off with the pipeline than without it (Joint Review Panel for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, 2013), the hearings made room to contest this powerful rhetoric.

11.1 The hearings

A joint Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency–National Energy Board panel was recommended to review the case for building the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline by Harper's federal government in 2006, and its members were appointed in 2010. The three-person panel — Sheila Leggett, the chair, and members Hans Matthews and Kenneth Bateman — was tasked with weighing the project's economic benefits and environmental hazards based on oral and written submissions from both proponents and opponents. They would then make a recommendation to the government to approve or reject the pipeline. The hearings represented a "whole-of-government approach to Aboriginal consultation and public participation" (Government of Canada, 2011, p. 3); in other words, in addition to weighing questions of environmental sustainability and economic impact, the panel represented the only avenue for indigenous communities to share their interests and concerns in relationship to the pipeline.

When I was a reporter for *The Edmonton Journal*, I obtained a set of briefing notes written in 2011 for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. These notes outlined key issues the federal government anticipated in connection to the pipeline and hearings. The notes included maps of the proposed pipeline, a newspaper story, reference to oil spills in Alberta and the Gulf of Mexico which "ha[d] the First Nations concerned with the safety and risks associated with the proposed Northern Gateway project" (Government of Canada, 2011, p. 3), and a bullet point stating, "Opposition to oil sands projects including the Northern Gateway has become a big fundraiser for environmental non-governmental organizations" (Government of Canada, 2011, p. 3). Though this last note can only be described as tangential to First Nations and Métis issues (its source was a newspaper article), it does seem to speak to the bigger political picture bureaucrats were working with in 2011. It also foregrounds early media coverage of the hearings, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

The key issue for the purpose of this thesis, however, was the perceived problem, on the part of First Nations, that the panel's hearings were not a suitable forum for consultation:

> One of the main obstacles for the project is the unsettled land claims in BC […]. The Northern Gateway would cross key watersheds that are home to salmon stocks on which the local Aboriginal communities rely. Some First Nations insist that the risk of an oil spill is too great and some have also expressed opposition to the Panel process and alleged a lack of adequate Aboriginal consultation. The First Nations feel the reliance on the Panel process to act as a one-time opportunity for Aboriginal groups to provide information about Aboriginal interests will undermine consultation in a very serious way […]. (Government of Canada, 2011, p. 2)

The briefing notes clarified that the federal department "rel[ied] on the Panel process to fulfil the duty of consultation" (Government of Canada, 2011, p. 4). Bureaucrats added, "Any consultation requirements not adequately addressed during the Panel process will be addressed following the review and prior to the Department issuing any authorizations enabling the project to proceed" (Government of Canada, 2011, p. 4).

Canada has a legal duty to consult with First Nations on development projects that will affect them. This duty to consult can become something of a short-hand for Canadians. In passing — perhaps through references made in media — we may have a sense and knowledge that before a major infrastructure project is realized, First Nations and Métis people who would be affected must be consulted. But *how* this consultation is supposed to happen, or what the potential outcomes can be when parties ultimately disagree, remain somewhat muddled. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has spoken often of needing to engage in "meaningful consultation" with Indigenous peoples (Morin, 2016), but also distinguished consultation (and consent) from the capacity for First Nations communities to prevent pipelines from being built, arguing, "No, they don't have a veto" (O'Neil, 2016).

In his 2013 book, *Aboriginal Consultation, Environmental Assessment, and Regulatory Review in Canada*, lawyer Kirk N. Lambrecht notes *the duty* was first defined by a 2004 Supreme Court of Canada decision, *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* (p. xxv). However, *the process* remains only roughly sketched through a series of follow-up court decisions:

> There is, as yet, no consensus or doctrine for how the duty to consult may be applied in project development. Instead, in keeping with the common law, adversarial perspectives are taken. The 'age-old tradition of the common law' results in conflicting points of view, promoted by an adversarial system embedded in Western traditions. […] As a result there has been an explosion of courses, conferences, publications, workshops, and symposiums addressing Aboriginal consultation in the context of project development. Indeed, an

> Aboriginal consultation industry has been created in the first decade of the twenty-first century, just as the environmental assessment industry was created from the environmental initiatives of earlier decades. (Lambrecht, 2013, p. xxvi)

Ultimately, Lambrecht writes, "The law mandates integration of Aboriginal concerns into Crown decision making as a constitutional imperative, but it is also practical" (p. 10). Hearings such as the JRP for the Enbridge Northern Gateway can be, and are, forums for expressing concerns, while courts can be avenues for contesting findings. I am oversimplifying this process, however, as there are further problems. For example, Indigenous communities who may say "no" to a project from Day 1 are more or less squeezed into investing preparation time and money into a quasi-judicial process. This is more evident in transcript elements shared below. The presence or absence of treaties matters. And, there are also new challenges and opportunities presented by Canada having signed on to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2016, though what this adoption will mean for consultation stands to be seen and has no relationship to the Enbridge Northern Gateway process.

The early stages of the consultation process for Northern Gateway included the government inviting Indigenous communities to weigh in on the draft terms of the JRP, and contacting affected communities to explain how the consultation process would work (Gitxaala Nation v. Canada, 2016 FCA 187, paras. 23-25). Northern Gateway pre-hearings began in August, 2010; from the start there were First Nations participants who argued the federal government was neglecting its duty to directly consult with aboriginal communities on the project. On the third day of hearings, for example, the Haisla First Nation's elected Chief Councillor Dolores Pollard welcomed the panel to Kitimat, B.C. but also admonished its members. Pollard noted: the panel had not asked to hold hearings on Haisla First Nation territory (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 3, Line 570); it had not invited the local First Nation to speak first during the preliminary hearings (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 3, Lines 565-566); it had organized the rec centre hearing room so that those speaking to the panel had their backs to traditional chiefs (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 3, Line 560); and a gift had been given to her in the hallway rather than in public, which was, in her words, "even more demeaning to the cultures and the traditions of First Nations People of Canada" (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 3, Line 571). Pollard's list of oversights suggest a failure by the government, at this stage, to learn about local relationships, practices, or "cultural sensitivities" (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 3, Lines 573-575).

The chief councilor outlined broader concerns regarding the hearing and consultation process, as well:

> […] we have serious misgivings about the adequacy, as well as the legitimacy of the Joint Review Panel process, and the respective roles of the Panel and the National Energy Board.
>
> Suffice it to say that the lack of consultation on the structure of the Panel, the terms of reference for the review and the inadequacy of the budget allocated for First Nations' participation in the JRP process […] had not engendered confidence that there is serious intent to give equal weight to the concerns and interests of those most affected by the proposed project. (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 3, Lines 579-580)

How power was balanced by the JRP was a question raised again a few days later, when Saik'uz First Nation member Jasmine Thomas spoke to the panel:

> So I feel, as a young woman here, this is like a David and Goliath battle. You look at these multi-national companies such as Enbridge who throw out 8,000-page documents at our people who have only had contact with the Western world for not even 100 years here, and we've got to catch up. We've got to pool all our resources to try to review this project to see if it is something that we would like to pursue, or if it is not.
>
> […] We are seeking a true government-to-government process with the federal government, further review of the Enbridge project. We are prepared to defend our rights and title through all necessary means, including through the Canadian courts. (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 6, Lines 2176; 2181)

Thomas suggested an "independent First Nations review process, outside the JRP" (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 6, Line 2188). Her testimony at this stage of the hearings is also notable for a brief confrontation with the panelists, noted in the same transcript:

> [Thomas:] Enbridge Incorporated was ranked number 18 on the *Financial Post* 2008 list of Canada's biggest companies by revenue. Enbridge Energy Partners, owners and operators of Enbridge's U.S. liquids pipeline, including the Lakehead System, was ranked 268th on the Fortune 500 list of the United States largest companies by revenue. Those are some great numbers.
>
> Member Matthews: Excuse me, miss, can you —
>
> Ms. Thomas: The Government of Canada has — we have listened for 100 years. You will listen to me for 15 minutes. So these are my issues. These are some of my list of issues that my people have come to raise awareness to. (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 6, Lines 2170-2172)

Just as there is a defiance in Pollard's outline of ways in which the very structure of the hearings failed to meet local expectations, Thomas's response to being interrupted mid-presentation

illustrates a refusal on the part of some Indigenous participants to have responses to the proposed pipeline contained or policed.

There are other such examples in the transcripts for community hearings, which began in Kitamaat Village in January, 2012, and which are the focus of my discussion in Chapter 13. From the outset, panelists and bureaucrats attempted to regulate what did and did not constitute oral testimony. As I have written elsewhere (P.H. Audette-Longo, 2017), throughout the hearing transcripts panelists can be seen reminding intervenors to stay on-topic and not to make arguments. Oral evidence was prescribed by the process: it was defined as information that could not otherwise be written (JRP, *Hearing Procedural Direction #3*, 5); and, ideally, it would take the form of "oral traditional knowledge, such as that given by Aboriginal peoples; and personal knowledge and experiences about the potential effects of the Project on you or your community" (Joint Review Panel, *Hearing Procedural Direction #4*, 1). The JRP was explicit in what it considered outside the boundaries of oral knowledge: "technical and scientific information;" "opinions, views, information or perspectives of others;" "detailed information on your views on the decisions the Panel should make and your opinions about the Project;" "recommendations to the Panel on whether or not to approve the Project or terms and conditions that should be applied if the Project were to proceed;" and "questions that you want answered by the applicant or the Panel, or rhetorical questions" (Joint Review Panel, *Hearing Procedural Direction #4*, 1). Speakers were warned that not following the rules of the community hearings could lead to being prevented from presenting (Joint Review Panel, *Hearing Procedural Direction #4*, 2). Having attended community hearings, Patricia Burke Wood and Julie E.E. Young (2016) have also argued they were structured to limit participation: "We … observed the Panel regularly caution participants to restrict their comments to the immediate project and not discuss, for example, the broader impact of oil sands development" (p. 475). Burke Wood and Young also describe a refused presentation by a group of Haida children who had planned to dance as their intervention in community hearings at Skidegate in B.C. (p. 481). Community hearings were followed by a second stage of hearings that started in April, 2012 and invited people to make arguments in 10-minute oral statements. The third and final stage of hearings in late 2012 and early 2013 allowed final arguments and questions to be asked of Enbridge.

Elsewhere, Lorna Roth and I have argued that policy-makers need to pay very close attention to how engagement processes are structured: all parties need to examine and evaluate

how they are listening and speaking, whether they have developed a constrained setting for sharing and mutual learning, and what the shared goals of the engagement are (Roth & Audette-Longo, forthcoming). Developing a one-sided and universal process of engagement that insists, again and again, that participants bend to the rules of the hearings, risks decision-making that benefits only one party and does not meet a community's own goals for its future (Roth & Audette-Longo, forthcoming). Moving forward, the Canadian government may be struggling to strike a balance between consultation and consent when it comes to industrial development and Indigenous land rights. But striking out again and again with a single set of rules that governs how consultation takes place *and* doesn't work for everyone at the table seems a set-up for ensuring repeated failure and growing distrust among Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

This said, when Canada's Federal Court of Appeal ultimately quashed the pipeline's approval due to the government's failure to meet its consultation obligations, it did not take issue with the hearings. In their decision, the Court described the government as having "exercised good faith and designed a good framework to fulfil its duty to consult" (Gitxaala Nation v. Canada, 2016 FCA 187, para. 8). Instead the Court found problems after the hearings were finished and the final report released; at this stage, the federal government fell short of its duty to follow up with Indigenous communities before approving the pipeline in June 2014.

11.2 Protesters, protectors

Though this set of chapters is particularly interested in ways opposition to the pipeline was expressed, and how this lends to conceptualizing oil sands entanglements and imagining alternative futures, not all First Nations and Métis communities who were potentially affected by the pipeline were against it. Such a view is problematically essentialist on two counts. First, it assumes uniformity among all communities and all Indigenous peoples, an impossible standard for any group to meet, but perhaps particularly impossible for one that is actually comprised of many different nations and communities which are geographically separated and have independent governance systems. Second, such a generalization risks sedimenting a stereotype of Ecological Indian-ness (Krech III, 2000 [1999]) that waits to be disproven. As Sarah Jaquette Ray (2013) writes, "mainstream environmentalism puts Native Americans in an impossible position — to support modern environmentalist agendas or be seen as not authentically Native American" (pp. 85-86; see also Brady & Monani, 2012). Jaquette Ray continues:

> […] the ecological Indian stereotype not only appropriates Native American identity, it imposes forms of identity and representation for non-Indian ends. […] this stereotype ignores historical and contemporary realities in favour of white environmentalist sentiments. The stereotype actually *diminishes*, rather than authorizes, Native American agency. (Ray, 2013, p. 86)

The question of authenticity is about more than appearances; Indigenous communities are often called upon to prove continued — and authentic — presence in a place to determine the validity of land rights challenges or concerns about proposed development projects.

Indigenous support was also touted by Enbridge, who consistently boasted that it had won over as many as 60 per cent of the affected First Nations communities (Northern Gateway, n.d. b; CBC News, 2012; The Canadian Press, 2012a). This support was measured by Enbridge as communities that had signed on to a deal that promised them a 10 per cent "equity stake" in the pipeline, equivalent to roughly $280 million, total, over three decades (CBC News, 2012). Jen Preston (2013) suggests Enbridge's equity packages can be roughly equated to 19th century treaty deals:

> corporations such as Enbridge have developed extensive 'aboriginal' policies and 'equity offers' cloaked in the language of self-determination and promising, for example, 'opportunities in training and education, employment, procurement, business development, and community investment.' (Preston, 2013, p. 48, quoting from Enbridge's 2009 Aboriginal and Native American policy)

Enbridge never identified the communities that accepted the equity deals, but consistently referred to having a majority on-side, which in turn undermined efforts by the pipeline's Indigenous opponents to be heard and seen as a collective, or as the "solid wall of opposition" some groups described at the time.[55]

Nonetheless, by the spring of 2012, the most vociferous opponents to the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline were First Nations people from the unceded and largely treaty-less territories of British Columbia. Indigenous groups had worked hard to ensure their rights were at the front of the debate for years; as early as 2010, representatives of 61 Indigenous communities from across British Columbia met and signed the Save the Fraser Declaration. The declaration took up the language and claims of Indigenous sovereignty, beginning by noting First Nations' unceded and original claims to the watershed area:[56]

[55] See further discussion in Chapter 14.

[56] The Fraser River is British Columbia's longest, stretching from Rocky Mountains at Mount Robson Provincial Park (west of Jasper, Alta.) to meet the Strait of Georgia at Vancouver (Newton & Robinson, 2007). On a

> We have inhabited and governed our territories within the Fraser watershed, according to our laws and traditions, since time immemorial. Our relationship with the watershed is ancient and profound, and our inherent Title and Rights and legal authority over these lands and waters have never been relinquished through treaty or war. […]
>
> We have come together to defend these lands and waters from a grave threat: the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines project. This project which would link the Tar Sands to Asia through our territories, and the headwaters of this great river, and the federal process to approve it, violate our laws, traditions, values and our inherent rights as Indigenous Peoples under international law. We are united and exercise our inherent Title, Rights, and responsibility to ourselves, our ancestors, our descendants and to the people of the world, to defend these lands and waters. Our laws require this. (Save the Fraser Gathering of Nations, 2010)

This introduction was followed by an emboldened call, or warning:

> We will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar Tar Sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds, or the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon. (Save the Fraser Gathering of Nations, 2010)

This show of solidarity, signed in Williams Lake (Save the Fraser Gathering of Nations, 2010), a small city in British Columbia's central interior, remains available online at the time of writing. First Nations chiefs from the Nadleh Whut'en,[57] Xaxli'p,[58] and Saik'uz[59] First Nations also issued a national press release through the international Marketwired service, announcing both the signing of the declaration and its publication as a full page advertisement in the national *Globe and Mail* (Save the Fraser Gathering of Nations, 2010).

First Nations were not alone in their opposition, although they were powerfully harnessing a collection of voices on a scale not matched by anyone except the industry and government proponents. In 2012, when I was reporting for the *Edmonton Journal*, I spoke to landowners outside the city who were concerned they were running out of space for more

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map, in north-central British Columbia the river can be seen running roughly parallel to Yellowhead Highway 16 before turning south at Prince George (overlapping closely with the proposed route of the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline). The Fraser River's watershed areas follow the river's path and spread out through most of most of British Columbia's central interior (for detailed maps of connected water sheds and tributary rivers, see Fraser Basin Council, n.d.).

[57] The Nadleh Whut'en First Nation's territory is in north-central British Columbia, west of the city of Prince George (Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, n.d.).

[58] The territory of the Xaxli'p First Nation (formerly known as Fountain Band) is in British Columbia's Central Interior region (Xaxli'p, n.d.), west of the city of Kamloops.

[59] The Saik'uz First Nation's territory is also in north-central British Columbia; its "main community, Reserve No. 1 is located on the east end of Nulki Lake on Tachick Lake 14 [kilometres] south of Vanderhoof B.C." (Saik'uz First Nation, 2015).

pipelines on their property (T. Audette, 2012d), and people from as far away as Montreal and Alaska who had written to the JRP to express both their dismay and their interest in participating in the hearings (T. Audette, 2012e). Environmental non-government organizations like Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, and the Council of Canadians lined up against the project (Pipe Up Against Enbridge, n.d.), celebrities including Canadian singer Sarah Harmer spoke out against the pipeline (The Canadian Press, 2012b), and whether or not they supported the construction of other bitumen-carrying pipelines going into the 2015 election, the federal Green, NDP, and Liberal parties all opposed the Northern Gateway (Hussain, 2015).

11.3 One ending: Looking forward and back

In the end, it was Justin Trudeau's new federal government that killed the Enbridge Northern Gateway project. The government could have responded to the Federal Court of Appeal's 2016 decision to quash approval of the pipeline by engaging in the necessary follow-up consultation (Morgan, 2016). However, later in the year, Trudeau told reporters:

> "It has become clear that this project is not in the best interest of the local affected communities, including Indigenous Peoples," Trudeau said, describing the local area as the "jewel" of B.C.
>
> "The Great Bear Rainforest is no place for a pipeline and the Douglas Channel is no place for oil tanker traffic." (Tasker, 2016b)

It is worth mentioning that Justin Trudeau's principal secretary, Gerald Butts, was previously the president and CEO of WWF-Canada. In 2012, as public hearings into the Northern Gateway proposal began, Butler wrote a column in the national *Globe and Mail* advocating protection of the Great Bear Sea and Rainforest and juxtaposing the national drive to meet Asian-bound tankers with the environmental ethic of local communities:

> Mercifully, the communities that have been sustained by this wondrous ecosystem don't share our undervaluing of nature. B.C.'s coastal first nations [sic] know well that Great Bear's value as a functioning ecosystem dwarfs the tantalizing but fleeting promise of short-term cash from oil revenue. And they know from history what we know from traditional science: that this meticulously interconnected ecosystem is very vulnerable to disruption. (Butts, 2012)

Trudeau's particular emphasis on the rainforest in announcing his decision on Northern Gateway also brings to mind his father Pierre Elliott Trudeau's decision to postpone the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. Justice Thomas Berger, who made the initial recommendation, later suggested that it

was how non-humans used the land through which the northern gas pipeline would travel that ultimately swayed the former prime minister:

> after my report had been handed in, I read in the newspapers that [Pierre] Trudeau and his sons were camping in the Northern Yukon. I said to my wife, 'That's it. […] No one can visit the Porcupine herd [of caribou], and then decide to build a pipeline that would drive them from their calving grounds. How could you face yourself at the shaving mirror each morning for the rest of your life?' (Berger, 1988 [1977], pp. 3-4; see also McCall, 2011, p. 49)

The Mackenzie Valley pipeline proposal, Berger's lengthy hearings in isolated communities in northern Canada, his final report recommending the pipeline be postponed, and Pierre Trudeau's decision to accept Berger's recommendation, seemed to haunt the narrative of the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings. Berger's hearings involved: visiting 35 Northern communities over the course of two years (Stern, 2007, p. 421); making space for a discussion of a natural gas pipeline to expand outward and include discussion of Indigenous rights and treaties; and inviting and supporting media coverage by giving ongoing access to the press and the National Film Board.[60] CBC's Northern Service covered the hearings daily and translated them across languages so that those living in isolated communities far away, even, from the proposed energy corridor itself "under(stood) something of what has been said by the experts at the formal hearings" (Berger T. , 1975, pp. 13-14). For some, Berger's recommendations and process of inquiry stand as an example of open and democratic consultation. In a 2006 documentary for CBC's *The Nature of Things*, David Suzuki accompanied Berger to the Northwest Territories as the region contemplated a renewed Mackenzie Valley pipeline project; Suzuki described Berger as having, "once made time stand still, halting the drive of the industrial machine to the furthest reaches of the country" (Bowie, 2006). Mark Nuttall (2010) writes that,

> The images of the hearings and of Berger himself conducting his inquiry remain both iconic and symbolic […]
>
> Berger huddled with local people in schoolrooms and community halls, hearing their stories of life on the land, poring over maps of places of local cultural, historical, economic and spiritual significance. (Nuttall, 2010, p. 65)

For others, Berger's hearings are a worst-case scenario. After the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings, on the other hand, *Sun* Media columnist Lorne Gunter (2013) lamented the amount of money that had been spent (nearly $500,000) and the number of people who had been

[60] Shirley Roburn (2018) puts the Berger Inquiry process in conversation with the process for the Great Whale, or James Bay, hydroelectric project, describing the latter as the "opposite" of a "benchmark for large-scale energy projects creating needed dialogue to advance Indigenous rights" (p.173).

heard (more than 1,100). Gunter concluded, “The only energy project in Canadian history to get a bigger review was the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline,” which, he said, was, “studied to death, literally.” Gunter was not alone in the media in assessing both the necessity of the Enbridge project and the unnecessary length of the hearing process. In the following chapter I discuss media coverage at different stages of the hearings, including key themes and key absences.

Chapter 12: Media coverage of the Northern Gateway

To understand how Indigenous peoples created and negotiated media in connection to the Northern Gateway proposal, it is necessary to situate their work in connection to narratives of the pipeline project that were established by mainstream media. To this end, in this chapter I discuss key media themes evident in English-language print publications at three points in the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline process: (1) following the start of the NEB-EAA hearings (publication date January 11, 2012); (2) following the release of the NEB-EAA joint review panel's final report conditionally approving the pipeline (publication date December 20, 2013); (3) and when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his federal government would not see the pipeline through (publication date November 30, 2016). Altogether, I analyzed 61 pieces (38 news articles, 20 columns, and 3 unsigned editorials) published in 17 daily newspapers whose archives are accessible through the Factiva database.[61]

Broadly, my analysis yielded three findings:

- The Enbridge Northern Gateway project, and all bitumen-carrying pipelines, were consistently presented as necessary. In the same vein, when the future was explicitly discussed, it was talked about in the short-term, or as a matter of months: as examples, the list of conditions Enbridge would need to meet or the decisions the federal government would have to make. The exception to this rule was coverage of the first day of the hearings, in Kitimaat Village, where members of the Haisla Nation outlined their concerns for future generations if there was an oil spill as a result of the pipeline and tanker project. Climate change was rarely mentioned, and a future after or without oil was not taken up.
- Even when the project, and later other pipelines, was approved, sources and columnists were only cautiously optimistic about its prospects. First Nations were consistently spoken of as key challengers to realizing the Enbridge Northern Gateway project. They were expected to present obstacles through court cases, protests, or other means; the spectre of violence, on more than one occasion, was hinted at as a possibility.

[61] For a complete list of articles analyzed, see Appendix 5. This list was generated by searching the Factiva database for the term "Enbridge" on the specific dates of publication. Duplicate articles — articles written by the same person and published in more than one newspaper, a practice that is both common and growing as fewer companies own more titles — were not included in the population.

- Primarily at the start of the hearings and when the joint review panel announced its recommendations, doubt was cast on who had the right to speak about the pipeline. The spectre of foreign influences — whether internationally-funded environmental non-government organizations, or multinational oil companies — hung over the first day of the hearings, especially.

In reading each article, I employed both content and critical discursive analyses. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) pays attention to "the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk, 2008, p. 85). CDA is qualitative and requires understanding of the context from which texts emerged; beyond description, this research practice highlights key themes, unpacks how words are used and why, and draws the reader's attention to still more questions about how power works through discourse. Quantitative content analysis (CA) looks for common variables across a large number of texts to find quasi-objective patterns (cf. Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, & Newbold, 1998; Bauer, 2000). The objectivity of CA is easily contested, of course, as the researcher (subjectively) selects guiding questions that align with their broader research goals.

In undertaking this analysis of legacy media texts, I aimed to isolate who was positioned to speak to the pipeline issues of the day and determine the extent to which different government and industry rhetoric worked its way into coverage; for example, I coded explicitly for the appearance in print of terms that were used by Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver including "national interest," "national economic interest," and "vital" (and comparisons of the pipeline project to the Canadian Pacific Railway).[62] The 17-variable coding frame was tested by a second coder who reviewed 10 texts (16 per cent of the total population), yielding an average inter-coder reliability of 94 per cent. Inter-coder reliability is considered low when it hovers around 66 per cent (Bauer, 2000, p. 144). A high coder agreement speaks to the ease with which someone else could use my coding frame with the same texts and arrive at similar findings. Given the availability of precise start- and end-points for the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project, a future study taking up a wider range of related stories would be beneficial for understanding how Indigenous peoples' voices were heard throughout the pipeline debate. Future studies would

[62] For a copy of the coding form, or to see questions asked of each text, see Appendix 6. Complete results are included in Appendix 7. I also looked for other key terms, including those related to oil spills, climate change, or the Lac Mégantic tragedy.

also benefit from: closer analysis of differences between texts published in different regions (see Dusyk, Axsen, & Dullemond, 2018); attending to how pipeline debates were covered in tandem with other major events (such as elections or the Lac Mégantic tragedy in Quebec); accounting for who is positioned not only to speak but to write op-ed pieces; and paying attention to the changing media landscape in the years during which the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline was being debated. It bears noting, for example, that by the time of the Trudeau government's final decision on the pipeline in 2016, many of the publications analyzed here (including the *Sun* tabloids, the *National Post*, and even smaller newspapers like the *Fort McMurray Today*) were owned by Postmedia. This marks only the disappearance of one company (Quebecor) from the English-language media landscape between 2012 and 2016, but it results in fewer people covering fewer stories for more audiences.[63]

As I designed my coding frame, I re-used three variables of analysis I had employed as part of my Master's dissertation:[64] I asked who was quoted as speaking first, second, and third in each story to shed light on the extent to which Indigenous sources, federal government sources, or other sources were positioned as leading and framing the story. In my previous work I used this approach as one way to quantify the extent to which Inuit people were present in print coverage of climate change in the Arctic between 2006 and 2010. I found Inuit voices were often absent in coverage of stories that explicitly related to them — the word "Inuit" might appear in a story three times without any comments or quotes attributed to an Inuit person (Audette-Longo, 2012, p. 17). This finding has since driven my research — rather than revisiting questions of representation, I am interested in how Indigenous peoples create and negotiate media as a matter of practice across media sites. In the following chapters, I turn to this explicitly by investigating presentations during the Northern Gateway hearings and the alternative media site created in Freedom Train 2012. First, however, it is important to understand what narratives these media sites interrupted and how mediated narratives play into broader oil sands entanglements.

[63] At the time of writing, Postmedia and Torstar had just "swapped" 41 newspapers in Ontario, then closed most (Watson, 2017). At this point, most English-language print media markets in Canada are monopolized by one company. This marks a foreclosure of the mediated public sphere, or of a possibility for a diversity of views and stories about the news of the day. It also, arguably, makes more space available for new alternative venues to break into the field.

[64] See P.H. Audette-Longo, 2012, pp. 15-16. Note that, unlike in most North American universities, where Masters students complete a thesis, in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science students write a dissertation (see: http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/msc-dissertation-series).

12.1 Who has the right to speak?

Who *should* speak to the Enbridge Northern Gateway proposal was one of the key questions covered by media as hearings began in 2012. The night before the hearings began, Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver (2012) had issued an "open letter" urging the diversification of Canada's oil exports and casting pipeline opponents as "threaten[ing] to hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical ideological agenda." As a *Calgary Herald* columnist pointed out, Oliver's open letter somewhat "overshadowed" the hearing's opening (Corbella, 2012). While she admonished the minister's "intemperate" prose, Licia Corbella also argued, "…someone is messing with the system and the government should investigate to find out who." She had come to this conclusion based on interviews she had undertaken with a handful of people from Brazil who were registered to speak during the hearings, but apparently did not know how their names got on the list and did not know anything significant about the pipeline proposal. A *Toronto Star* columnist, Thomas Walkom (2012), was in the minority in the day's media cycle when he called the "federal government's claim that big-money foreign interests are trying to hijack hearings" both "high parody" and "deeply disturbing" given the extent to which "Canada's oil industry is dominated by multinationals."

Whereas Oliver had warned of the radical agendas of those who wished to take over the hearings, tabloid columnists in British Columbia and Alberta were more focused on the perceived hypocrisy and short-sightedness of pipeline opponents who did not understand the necessity of mobilizing oil. As a columnist for the Vancouver *Province* wrote:

> They're not 'radical' at all. Many, if not most, are your typical latte liberals of whom Vancouver has more than its fair share.
>
> They want it both ways. They want instant access to gasoline and other oil-based products for the cars, boats and planes they use for their precious hiking, biking and skiing weekends. But they don't want the production and distribution of those fuels to disturb them or the planet in any way. (Ferry, 2012)

A *Sun* chain columnist, meanwhile, lamented the failure of an oil sands champion to emerge — a somewhat odd sentiment given Ezra Levant then worked for the Sun News Network and his book *Ethical Oil* had an oil sands-supporting organizational spin-off (ethicaloil.org). As illustrated in the following excerpt, Dave Breakenridge charged pipeline opponents with stupidity, or failure to grasp the ramifications of their resistance and its embedded anti-Canadianness:

> Wouldn't it be nice if people in this country were reminded more forcefully, or even didn't have to be reminded at all, of the good that Alberta and its industry does for Canada?
>
> Why is it Canadians are willing to take foreign cash to help sell out their nation's economy […] No one is going to lengths to point out how job growth is strongest in Alberta, and that is spurred by the resource economy. (Breakenridge, 2012)

Meanwhile, British Columbia's finance minister at the time, Kevin Falcon, was quoted echoing Oliver's assessment, adding: "I think we have to be very worried about foreign money that is going into lobbying efforts against British Columbia's and Canada's economic interests" (Zussman & Bennett, 2012). Then-Alberta premier Alison Redford told reporters she was concerned about the number of people expected to speak during the hearings:

> I have been disappointed with the approach that the panel has taken with respect to how they define people that can be adversely affected by the decisions. […] They've taken a very wide interpretation of that definition and I think it's allowed for the sort of hearing agenda that we're seeing, which is a year-and-a-half of meetings with 4,100 people and 10 minute submissions. Do we get a good result from that? I don't know. (quoted in Wood, 2012)

Despite stories framed around the question of who should not speak, there was little explicit discussion who *should* speak to the pipeline issue. The federal and provincial government members' rhetoric both suggested the Northern Gateway pipeline should be a done deal, and undermined principles of open deliberation which would seem to underpin carrying out an investigatory hearing of the sort the NEB and EAA were expected to lead. Suggestions of who did and did not deserve to be heard also worked their way through news media columns, where one group in particular was deemed to not merit hearing at all: people who represented environmental organizations. As a backdrop to this, it is important to note that people in government and in roles of elected opposition to the government were consistently positioned to speak first in most stories in 2012, and in 2013 and 2016 (see Appendix 7). Despite expressed concerns about who might be swaying debate, those in positions of established power were rarely in danger of losing prominence of place in the print stories studied here.

Following the first day of hearings, in 2012, government members in Ottawa, Edmonton, and Victoria seemed intent on suggesting there were people participating in the process who did not belong because they were not really affected by the project. This narrative served to contain opposition: while the economic benefits of the project were touted as national, risks or negative effects were often understood as only in proximity to the physical pipeline. This means that,

particularly following the first day of hearings in Kitamaat Village, B.C., oil sands entanglements and the impacts of climate change were minimized by media.[65] This focus on proximity additionally aligns with more space given over, in the first set of stories published here, to Indigenous voices (see Fig. 8, Appendix 7). In the *National Post*, the first day of hearings ushered in the observation that NEB-EAA panelists had a difficult task at hand:

> … federal regulators charged with deciding whether the project is in the national interest were faced with … a clash of values between First Nations and those favouring development in the rest of the country. (Cattaneo, 2012)

A similar narrative appeared on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*, where a "pitched battle over the Northern Gateway pipeline" was described, and it was noted that, "opponents called on God and salmon to fight a project they see as dangerous" (Vanderklippe, 2012a):

> As Ottawa has suggested that foreign-funded radicals are plotting to derail the project, the real fight was here, in coastal communities where the Exxon Valdez spill still resonates and many first nations [sic] communities fear the consequences of a pipeline on their traditional territory and local waters. (Vanderklippe, 2012a)

Marcelina Piotrowski (2013) has argued the "oil pipeline debates," by privileging the voices of Indigenous peoples in connection to the Enbridge Northern Gateway proposal, more or less made it impossible for non-Indigenous people to engage with the issue (p. 630). She argues: (1) "visibility operates as a currency, a form of exchange for voice" (p. 631); and (2) in the stories of pipelines, Indigenous voices were contained in their visibility, or given limited opportunity to be heard as a way of assuaging "colonial guilt" (p. 631). Ultimately, she writes, the prominence of Indigenous voices and images in connection to the Enbridge Northern Gateway debate "result[ed] in conveniently distancing this issue from concerned non-indigenous people in Canada and individuals beyond Canadian borders by suggesting that the topic is outside their sphere of understanding and therefore their ability to speak as political subjects" (p. 630). She continues:

> …framing the oil debate as an indigenous people's issue has the effect of suggesting that non-indigenous people should become apolitical listeners, not speakers on these topics. Non-indigenous care, as a possibility, becomes literally and metaphorically invisible, through the lack of alternative

[65] See Figure 12 (Appendix 7), which shows that only one of 15 articles published on January 11, 2012 mentioned the terms of climate change. The terms of climate science were far more prominent by 2016, when more than half of the stories following the Trudeau government's decision noted climate change or greenhouse gas emissions.

> representations of those who might be affected by the pipeline. (Piotrowski, 2013, p. 631).

I find this assessment, overall, curious. To start, the question of whether Indigenous voices were centered to the exclusion of other voices demands further questioning: was this actually the case? My own findings suggest that while Indigenous peoples' voices (or the spectre of Indigenous interruption) were ever-present throughout the debate, their voices did not outweigh those of other speakers. More interesting, I would argue, is the question of how Indigenous voices were limited to a single issue and what these limitations produced in terms of media coverage and political foreclosure. Did framing of Indigenous peoples as experts of only the pipeline or only their home territories disallow them from being positioned as speaking on behalf of national concerns the way that politicians discussing economic growth are seen as speaking on behalf of national interests? I am not sure this is the question Piotrowski is asking by framing her analysis around matters of care. More perplexing is the notion that Indigenous people's expertise on the potential impacts of a pipeline through their lands (Piotrowski, 2013, p. 632) pushes away non-Indigenous care (or interest?) in the issue. Who, then, is the ideal group or expert to speak on a matter of environmental concern and infrastructure development?

12.2 Safe-guarding Canada's future, and opponents as threats

Moving from who should speak to how arguments were presented, opposition to the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal was framed most prominently (or positively) when it was cast narrowly, for example when the immediate risk was that of a spill and its potential effect on communities along the pipeline route. Even then, it seemed to be most positively framed as a matter for concern, not action. The promise of the pipeline for Canada's economic future, on the other hand, was particularly prominent following the first day of hearings in 2012 and the JRP's conditional approval in 2013. A *Globe and Mail* editorial following the JRP decision could easily stand in as representative of most organizations' implicit and explicit support for the pipeline:

> For Canada's oil to get to markets at home and overseas, many of these pipelines must be built. The question is not 'if.' It is where and how and under what environmental rules. … Concern about climate change should not be a reason to oppose Northern Gateway. The oil is going to move, one way or the other, thanks to all of the other projects on tap, and the rise of oil-by-rail. The only reason to consider opposing the project is concern over an oil spill — especially in the Douglas Channel leading out of Kitimat, or elsewhere off the coast of B.C. (The Globe and Mail, 2013)

In 2013, the JRP panelists found that the pipeline would be good for the economy, bad for woodland caribou and grizzly bears, bad if there were a spill, but with planning most environmental effects could be mitigated (Joint Review Panel for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, 2013). On balance, they argued in a press release accompanying their final report, "After weighing all of the oral and written evidence, the Panel found that Canada and Canadians would be better off with the Enbridge Northern Gateway project than without it" (Joint Review Panel for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, 2013). This argument carried a great deal of weight among columnists and those writing opinion pieces.

In the *Edmonton Journal*, Gary Lamphier (2013) argued the approval, "won't be well received by the anti-oilsands [sic] ideologues out there. But it's high time to move on. Canada needs this pipeline, and the sooner it's built the better." The *Edmonton Sun*'s unsigned editorial applauded the panel for making "the right decision" but also called the conclusion that Canada was better off with the pipeline "a statement of the obvious":

> We're a resource-rich country, but when it comes to oil and natural gas, most of our resources are landlocked in the centre of the nation.
>
> If we don't develop efficient ways to get them to Canadian harbours on the west and east coast, and from there to foreign markets, our economy will suffer. Canadians will suffer.
>
> Any political party that opposes the Northern Gateway — and others now under review across Canada — may as well tell us they don't care about our economic well-being. (The Edmonton Sun, 2013)

The *Sun* further argued it was the government's job to see the pipelines through, discursively enmeshing and entangling government, industry and citizen interests as the same.

There were concerns, immediately, that what looked like "an early Christmas present for Enbridge and the federal government" (Thomson, 2013) would not come through. Enbridge CEO Al Monaco was quoted in Postmedia News saying:

> While we are happy with today's announcement, we are not celebrating. That's because regulatory approval is a very important element of the project and a critical step, but it's just one step. (Postmedia News, 2013a)

Edmonton Journal business columnist Lamphier noted, "It's a long way from first base to home plate," but with the NEB-EAA joint panel's approval,

> at least the proposed $7.9-billion Northern Gateway pipeline project has finally left the batter's box, where it's been stuck for years. And that's very welcome news for Canada's energy industry, which remains hostage to an increasingly saturated U.S. market. (Lamphier, 2013)

In opinion pieces, the panel's decision (and the Harper government's expected approval) was taken as a near-given, even if the actual pipeline's realization was not. In British Columbia's capital city newspaper, the *Victoria Times Colonist*, a columnist described "wariness" — if not necessarily full-blown "opposition" — as "broader than portrayed," adding:

> Back in 1945, Hugh MacLennan's seminal novel, Two Solitudes, spoke to the gulf between French and English Canada. Today, someone could write a book about the cultural gap between Calgary and the coast. (Knox, 2013)

The cultural difference could be boiled down to an Albertan insistence that a "bottleneck — or a pipeline-neck" needs to be worked around to get oil to open markets, versus a coastal British Columbia "fear that adding 220 supertankers a year to the snotty waters of B.C.'s inner coast would be rolling the dice on another Exxon Valdez" (Knox, 2013). Positions in British Columbia and Alberta weren't universal however; whereas Alberta's provincial government and local governments actively supported the Enbridge Northern Gateway project, Edmonton-Strathcona NDP MP Linda Duncan, a federal opposition member, wondered whether, "The decision would lead to more 'fast-tracked approval of oilsands expansion'" (quoted in Ibrahim & Kent, 2013).

Across publications, winning over First Nations was presented as the next "even bigger challenge" for Enbridge, as their "support has remained elusive" and some warned of court challenges (McCarthy, Galloway, & Jang, 2013). In one *Calgary Herald* column, links were explicitly made to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline:

> The decision from Harper's Conservatives on Northern Gateway will be the most significant ruling from Ottawa on a pipeline since The Berger Commission effectively halted the development of the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline through the Northwest Territories in the 1970s. First Nations issues proved to be the critical stumbling block. (Ewart, 2013)

A *Vancouver Sun* columnist described First Nations as "probably hold[ing] the key to whether this pipeline will ever be built" and "predictably vow[ing] renewed opposition" (Hume, 2013). The consultation issue was closely examined in a Postmedia story that led with Yinka Dene Alliance member and Chief Martin Louie indicating their participation in the government-ordered hearing process had been unsuccessful but that did not mean their opposition would end: he is quoted saying,

> We don't have many choices, we either go to court or roadblocks. […] I'm pretty sure we'll be going to court. I know it's expensive, but it's important to

> save whatever we have, the water and the land, for our children. (Postmedia News, 2013b)

The spectre of roadblocks was, in passing, treated as somewhat radical. The next person quoted in the story (Art Sterritt, executive director of Coastal First Nations) was described as sharing "a more moderate response" to the panel's final report, though he also "did not rule out legal action" (Postmedia News, 2013b). Then-prime minister Stephen Harper is quoted acknowledging the government had more consultation work to do, adding, "of course the government has every desire to see aboriginal people participate in the economic development of our country" (quoted in Postmedia News, 2013b).

Potential violence — if not wholly supported by leaders — was brought up by First Nations interviewees immediately after the panel's report was released:

> "I definitely worry about confrontation because the emotions run so high in our territory over this project," said Ellis Ross, chief councillor of the Haisla First Nation near Kitimat, B.C. "I don't want anybody to get hurt. Any type of action that proposes destruction or harm is really not acceptable to me."
>
> Still, Mr. Ross said there is nothing that Enbridge will be able to do in the future to persuade the Haisla that the oil pipeline should be built. Two Haisla members have already proposed unspecified "violent actions" against the Northern Gateway project, he added. "I can't condone that. I had two meetings with band members to say that is not right," Mr. Ross said in an interview. (Jones & Jang, 2013)

The question of how Indigenous peoples would respond to the JRP's findings prompted this description of Indigenous communities as slipping back and forth between being for and against development:

> Aboriginal groups opposing the Northern Gateway and other fossil fuel projects across the country, such as fracking, alternate between attacking them on environmental grounds and demanding a share of the profits, from what they say is their land. Indeed, settling native land claims would help move these projects along considerably. (The Edmonton Sun, 2013; The Ottawa Sun, 2013)

Published in both the Ottawa and Edmonton *Suns,* the editorial precariously grouped the positions of all Indigenous communities as though they were one, rather than acknowledging different communities and people have different positions.

For anyone who has been following the pipeline debates in Canada in the last decade, little about my findings is surprising: during the years of the Harper government, we were often told of the importance of oil and gas; during the years of the Trudeau government, we are often

told of the importance of taking climate science seriously. This said, when the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline was ultimately cancelled by Trudeau's government, the announcement came alongside his approval of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion through southern British Columbia's Lower Mainland and the Enbridge Line 3 replacement. The prospect of Indigenous opposition was still very present, as more First Nations from more places across Canada teamed up to fight pipelines, rail cars and other oil projects (The Canadian Press, 2016). "The struggle will simply intensify," Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbia Chiefs is quoted promising (The Canadian Press, 2016), and as I will show in my conclusion, Indigenous objections to continued fossil fuel development have grown and diversified. In the next chapter, however, I will stay with the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline hearings and what they tell us about oil sands entanglements.

Chapter 13: Mobilizing memory, prayers, and connections in the Northern Gateway hearings

The question of who was positioned to speak to the Northern Gateway project — and under what circumstances — was discussed in Chapters 11 and 12 in connection to the structure of the government-appointed public hearings and media coverage. This chapter turns to transcripts from the community hearings that began in January, 2012 to examine how the same question was taken up by Indigenous hearing participants. Studying the transcripts, it is evident that different communities took up different strategies for approaching the hearings, including inviting legal counsel, bringing in speakers from outside the community who had experienced local oil spills, and inviting panelists to a feast. In this chapter I focus on just two approaches, however. First, how participants drew upon shared memories of the Berger Inquiry to express concerns about how the Northern Gateway hearings were handled; and second, how prayers entered into the record can be read as both resistance and cultural persistence. In the context of oil sands entanglement, these themes deserve special attention because of how they test shared cross-cultural understandings of Canada's relationship to natural resource extraction in the past, the present, and for the future.

In the following sections of this chapter, I briefly revisit the importance of the hearings and discuss problems of participation. I then take up the Berger Inquiry, followed by discussing prayers entered into the hearing record. I close by considering the necessity of continuing to revisit the hearing transcripts for the Northern Gateway project (and transcripts from other pipeline hearings) in order to attend to place-specific questions and experiences and not essentialize the positions of diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

This chapter shares pieces of the transcripts as fully as possible to analyze over-arching themes, including cultural memory, intergenerational environmental responsibility, and Indigenous self-determination. Focusing on the transcripts makes for a methodological challenge, as what is happening immediately outside, before, or after the hearings, or what is not being said aloud, is missing from the words on the page. Patricia Burke Wood and Julie E.E. Young (2016) have argued, "the JRP hearings were held in a context of constant protest" (p. 480) that was not captured in the transcripts. There were actual protests at the hearing sites, people in attendance wore "No Enbridge" T-shirts and applauded each other's testimonies, and, on Haida Gwaii, "hand-painted billboards opposed to the project were posted around the towns and along the main road" (Burke Wood & Young, 2016, pp. 480-481). Particularly in the case of reading

prayers entered into the record, there are additional problems of reading for content over context; Sophie McCall (2011) argues treating, "traditional narratives in isolation from the circumstances of the recital misses the point that storytelling is an embodied performance, a series of situated tellings, a moment or event in which interlocutors mutually shape meaning through communication" (p. 138). Words are also, literally, missing from the page, or missing from the record. Some prayers are described as "opening prayer" or "closing prayer" but are not shared; some words and phrases are over-written as "native words" in the transcript or spelled phonetically (McCreary, 2014, p. 155).

The next section of this chapter further contextualizes participation in the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings

13.1 Citizen participation in the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings

As a whole, the hearings were meant to inform the JRP's recommendation to approve or reject the pipeline. As discussed in Chapter 11, the hearing process was also the main government access-point for First Nations and Métis community members to weigh in on the pipeline before a decision was made.[66] Through much of the life of the Northern Gateway proposal, obligations to consult with Indigenous communities fell to Enbridge (T. Audette, 2012e):

> According to a "scenario note" for a 2006 meeting between the deputy minister of aboriginal affairs, the president of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and others, First Nations groups in B.C. and Alberta expected "federal engagement on consultation and provision benefits" related to the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline to be in line with what was available to aboriginal groups during the 1970s Berger Inquiry into the Mackenzie Valley natural gas pipeline through the Northwest Territories.
>
> However, the note indicates, "Indian and Northern Affairs Canada does not have the capacity to meet such demands as it does not have the regulatory framework, authorities, and resourcing in place south of 60 to address these concerns."
>
> Instead, nearly 500 pages of documents outlining the Aboriginal Affairs' pipeline consultation strategy between 2004 and 2011 — released to *The Edmonton Journal* under Access to Information laws — show Ottawa expects Enbridge to fulfil some of the Crown's duty to consult with First Nations and Métis groups. (Audette, 2012e)

[66] For further discussion, see: Panofsky, 2011 and McCreary, 2014.

It goes without saying that Enbridge is a company, not a signatory to land treaties nor a representative of the government or the Crown.[67] It is a Canadian company that began moving Alberta oil from the Leduc oil fields to Saskatchewan refineries (as the Interprovincial Pipe Line Company) in the late 1940s (Enbridge, n.d.), and its key interest was to see the Northern Gateway pipeline realized. The company organized aboriginal engagement groups in British Columbia and Alberta in 2008 (T. Audette, 2012e), provided "capacity funding to interested Aboriginal groups" (Gitxaala Nation v. Canada, 2016, para. 58), and offered supporting Indigenous communities along the pipeline route "benefits associated with the project […] includ[ing]: equity ownership; employment and training and procurement opportunities" (Government of Canada, 2011, p. 000002).

Indigenous communities who opposed the pipeline thus had limited avenues to make their objections clear; those interested in a process of "co-development"[68] also had narrow avenues for engaging in a dialogical process, rather than reactionary or adversarial ones. Speaking to the JRP in Edmonton in 2012, Alexander First Nation Chief Herbert Arcand admonished the quasi-judicial panel and Enbridge for making room to study and offer insight on "traditional practices and uses" of the land, but offering no room in the hearings to, "address community development and growth plans, matters that would be a foregone consideration for a provincial municipality" (JRP, Line 8998).

Opportunities to speak back to the pipeline included: participate in the government hearings (though opportunities to opine on or ask questions about the pipeline during community hearings were curtailed); engage with media; undertake court actions;[69] and organize protests.

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[67] For accessible if not critical descriptions of treaty-making processes, see Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's website (https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028568/1100100028572). Treaty 6 (1876) governs the area around Edmonton (https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028710/1100100028783); Treaty 8 (1899) includes Fort McMurray and northern Alberta as well as parts of the Northwest Territories, northern Saskatchewan, and northern British Columbia (https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028813/1100100028853). Most British Columbia First Nations do not have treaties; to find out more about continuing work to create modern treaties, see British Columbia's Treaty Commission (http://www.bctreaty.ca/).

[68] Roth (2005) describes "co-development" as engaged and non-linear; she writes, it "can encompass consenting and conflictual constituency groups, as well as allow for their unique timing issues and power relationships as they coexist within a single state and co-move at various rhythms and paces on their way towards social, cultural, political, and economic transformation" (pp. 230-231). In a context like the pipeline debate, a co-development approach might find ways to draw out Indigenous communities' goals and needs in addition to Enbridge's.

[69] Following approval of the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, as many as eight First Nations began court appeal processes alongside environmental non-government organizations and a labour union (G. Smith, 2014; G. Smith, 2015). As noted in Chapter 11, in mid-2016, the Federal Court of Appeal found the federal government

The next chapter picks up on this last thread: outside government hearings, there was vociferous and active opposition to the pipeline that was structured around protests, petitions, and networking across oil sands entanglements.

Narrow opportunities to speak back to the pipelines invite us to grapple with the potential and imaginable *results* of taking part in the community hearings. Consider, briefly, how we might map Sherry Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation" onto the community hearings. Arnstein's eight-rung ladder offers a critical differentiation between the "empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of [a] process" (p. 216). At the bottom of the eight-rung ladder, citizens are dealt with: they are informed of decisions, persuaded and coerced. At the top, they have real control. For Arnstein, "consultation," "placation," "partnership," and "delegated power" are steps in between. In other words, Arnstein asks to what extent citizen participation processes of public debate *look like* participation but are actually little more than information about what those in power will already do, or worse, manipulation. Arnstein writes:

> […] participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo. (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216)

This chapter seeks to highlight ways in which participants can be seen as having used the limitations of the hearing process to their own advantage, and I argue throughout this thesis that attending to oil sands entanglements allows us to think through how power, resistance, and "cultural persistence" move. Arnstein (1969) also qualifies the limitation of imagining the powerful and powerless as two separate and whole categories, noting power can be fluid and rifts can arise within any group (p. 217). However, she writes:

> The justification for using such simplistic abstractions is that in most cases the have-nots really do perceive the powerful as a monolithic 'system,' and powerholders actually do view the have-nots as a sea of 'those people,' with little comprehension of the class and caste differences among them." (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217)

Arnstein's ladder (or typology) is useful as a guide for naming rituals of consultation and listening and thinking through how a hearing process might move from being an exercise in

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failed to properly consult First Nations communities after the panel's final report was submitted and before deciding whether to approve or reject the project. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government took a pass on re-launching the consultations to respond to the court's finding, leaving the Enbridge Northern Gateway project behind.

tokenism to partnership in good faith, to citizen control as an expression of actual empowerment. Questions of empowerment are dealt with head-on in the following section.

13.2 The spirit of the Berger Inquiry

As highlighted in Chapters 11 and 12, the spectre of the Berger Inquiry haunted the Enbridge Northern Gateway project. It was explicitly named in internal government documents and media reports, and implicitly seemed to hang over the Natural Resources minister's warnings about taking too long to settle pipeline decisions. I briefly discussed how the inquiry has been celebrated since the 1970s for having listened to Indigenous peoples in the North. In this section, I look at: (1) cases when the Berger Inquiry was discussed by hearing participants when panelists visited communities in British Columbia and Alberta in 2012 and 2013; (2) the mediatization of the Inquiry and how cultural memory has been mobilized since; and (3) the consequences of shifting our attention to how the hearings were leveraged by Indigenous peoples beyond the scope of Berger's involvement. Putting the two sets of hearings into conversation with one another is not merely a matter of contrasting two projects that were not built — the Mackenzie Valley natural gas pipeline was put on hold after Berger's recommended ten-year moratorium to settle land issues with Indigenous peoples,[70] while the Northern Gateway pipeline was cancelled altogether in 2016. Instead, the two sets of hearings offer a point of participatory juxtaposition, between having space to speak freely to a major natural resource project and having testimonies policed and managed.

Dene Elder Francois Paulette made this comparison explicitly when he spoke to the JRP in 2012 in Edmonton, describing how the Berger Inquiry was, "quite different, different than this […] because the Berger Inquiry of the '70s was perhaps one of the most democratic way[s] of hearing out people and not being selective of who you want to listen to or you just want to talk about the pipeline" (JRP, Line 9442). The earlier process worked, Paulette said, because Berger "was open to listening to people" (JRP, Line 9458).

Thirty-six years earlier, Paulette spoke during the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry hearings in Fort Smith, in the Northwest Territories. At that time, he called himself one of the "young bucks" (quoted in O'Malley, 1976, p. 218) of the Dene First Nation. They were young people stepping up to fight for their lands, even if they were also called, "radicals, leftists,

[70] The project has since been revived as the Mackenzie Gas Project led by Imperial Oil, ConocoPhillips, Shell, ExxonMobil, and the Aboriginal Pipeline Group (Mackenzie Gas Project, n.d.). For stories about the project's ongoing journey, see Crozier, 2011 and McGregor, 2016.

Communists," or "socialists" (quoted in O'Malley, 1976, p. 219). Those categories, he said, were similar to previous ones: "In the past the Indian people fought for their land and were called pagans, savages, and today they are called militants" (quoted in O'Malley, 1976, p. 220). In his 1967 testimony, Paulette said he didn't understand the rush to build a pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley:

> This earth is going to be here all the time. It's not going to be taken away […] Why are we rushing? These things I do not understand. The oil, the minerals are going to be there all the time […] I don't think anything of this sort should be rushed. (O'Malley, 1976, p. 220)

In 2012, when Paulette traveled to Edmonton to weigh in on the potential effects of building a bitumen pipeline to carry Alberta oil west to tankers at Kitimat, B.C., he was told clearly that his concerns fell outside the mandate of the joint EAA-NEB panel reviewing the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal (JRP Line 9467). Much of Elder Paulette's testimony was to do with cancer concerns for people living in the "pathway of the tar sands" (JRP, Line 9439), north of Fort McMurray, as well as concerns about climate change — these fell outside the purview of the JRP hearings.[71] Francois also spoke of "Dinacharya," a Dene word for "the paths that we walk" (JRP, Line 9450). He said this word, "refers to the spiritual laws, the spiritual codes of living […a] spiritual path and […] connection with the earth, the environmental, social relationship that we have with the land" (JRP, Line 9451). Such a relationship, Paulette said, demands taking much more into account than the single path of one pipeline.

[71] To put this in some perspective, the terms "climate change" and "cancer" do not appear anywhere in the first volume of the JRP's final report, entitled *Connections*. In the second volume, entitled *Considerations,* panelists write:

> In the early stages of the public hearing, the Panel heard from many people who said that the Panel should consider the environmental impacts of bitumen extraction, including the production of greenhouse gases and related effects on climate change. The Panel considered the degree of connection between the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project and upstream oil sands development, downstream air emissions from bitumen upgrading, and eventual use of petroleum products to be transported by the project. The Panel concluded that connections to oil sands development were not sufficiently direct to allow consideration of their environmental effects in its assessment of the project, other than in its consideration of cumulative effects. The Panel also concluded that downstream effects would be hypothetical and of no meaningful utility to the Panel's process. The Panel considered emissions arising from construction activities, pipeline operations, and the operation of tankers in Canadian waters to be within the scope of its assessment. (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013b, p. 3)

Paulette's 2012 testimony — his insistence on speaking to issues that were being left off the agenda, and on making comparisons to the Berger Inquiry — speaks in part to the extent to which the 1970s hearings have become a compelling point of shared memory. While for some, as we have seen, the outcome of the Berger Inquiry appears to be a worst-case scenario for resource development, for others the consequences of Berger's recommendations *and* the process of inquiry resonate with demands for more open and democratic consultation. For example, in Burns Lake, B.C. in 2012, Lake Babine Nation Chief Wilf Adam suggested the panelists assume "the same wisdom and patience and understanding" as Berger had exemplified during the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry (JRP, Line 6776). Cutting to the point, Chief Adam hinted at a difference of underlying motive between the Northern Gateway hearings and the Mackenzie Valley hearings: "We understand it will be difficult for you to balance the importance that we place on our lands and resources by the demands of Ottawa with the Harper government and the oil companies to diversify the market of the Alberta tar sands" (JRP, Line 6775).

Images from the hearings have become "iconic" (Nuttall, 2010, p. 65). CBC makes 21 reports about the Berger Inquiry, originally produced for television or radio, available in an online archive (http://www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/the-berger-pipeline-inquiry). "The Story," as CBC tells it, hints at Berger's hero status, noting his "odyssey" of the North and describing his final report as something of a "Native Charter of Rights:"

> It was going to be the biggest private construction project in history. But before a pipeline could be built from the Beaufort Sea to energy-hungry markets in the south, the impact on the North's people, economy and environment had to be determined. That task was given to Justice Thomas Berger, who embarked on an extraordinary three-year odyssey across the Arctic. His report shocked the government that appointed him, and was heralded by some as "Canada's Native Charter of Rights." (CBC, n.d.)

The term "odyssey" hints at ways in which southern Canadian audiences might imagine or mythologize Canada's North and the people who live there; borrowing from Homer's ancient tales, it suggests an epic journey to unknown and exotic lands. The North as a geographical space many southern Canadians had thought of as empty and awaiting development was abruptly pushed to the centre of the country's media landscape, and re-cast as the contested homelands of diverse Indigenous peoples. In his final report, Berger called Canada's North both a "last frontier" about which "all of us have read […] but few of us have seen," and a "homeland of the Dene, Inuit and Métis" (Berger 1977: vii). Martin O'Malley, a *Globe and Mail* reporter assigned

to cover the hearings, described hearing testimonies as "warm, funny, sad, angry, ominous, frivolous, political, historical, pre-historical, [and] eerie" tales (O'Malley, 1976, p. 15); for those interested in populating their Northern fantasies with facts, an incredible amount of media *stuff* was generated in connection to the hearings, including "transcripts […] books, novels, poems, reports, newsletters, journals, letters, legends" (O'Malley, 1976).

The notion of Berger (a non-Indigenous Canadian) having authored a "Native Charter of Rights," meanwhile, was raised during a 1977 radio interview with George Manuel, then the chief of the National Indian Brotherhood (later the Assembly of First Nations). Manuel called the Berger report,

> the first humane sort of recognition of the real problems of Indian people and also the goals of the Indian people (are) recognized in the Berger report, that is not intended as an insurrection, all they're asking for is, you know, participation, full participation as equals to the other citizens of the Northwest Territories (quoted in Our Native Land, 1977).

He added, "This report is a Charter of Indian Rights in my opinion and it is the best statement on Indian rights to come from any government body since Europeans first came to Canada." (quoted in Our Native Land, 1977). Marc Nuttall, in 2010, wrote, "It would not be overstating things to say that Thomas Berger changed the way Canadians view resource development" (p. 67).

This may be in part due to Berger's interest in mediatizing the hearings. During a lecture given at Queen's University in 1975, Berger spoke of wishing to reach out to and ensure the participation of the people who lived in the North, saying it was necessary to carry out "an inquiry without walls" for people who belonged to "four races, speaking seven languages" (Berger, 1975, p. 13). Such an undertaking required Berger to, in his words, "bring the Inquiry to the people" (Berger, p. 13) by visiting Northern communities and inviting and supporting new kinds of media coverage. Berger described the media as "an essential part of the whole process" (Berger, 1975, p. 13) and said his team had "sought to ensure that [media was] given every opportunity to provide an account of what [was] being said by all parties at the Inquiry," as, "the things that [were] said are the public's business, and it is the business of the media to make sure the public hears them" (Berger, 1975, p. 13). This view of the media's utility in supporting the inquiry process was — and remains — very much in keeping with development theories that hold communications as a key tool for ensuring the public is, as Linje Manyozo (2012) writes of communications for development practices, "inform[ed], educat[ed] and sensitis[ed] about

development and pertinent social issues" (p. 54) so that community members might take actions that they determine for themselves are the most appropriate.

The hearings template set out by Berger was never realized again, despite how warmly it is recollected by some. This motivating ethic, of holding an "inquiry without walls," is missing from contemporary pipeline politics in Canada. Despite shared memories of the Berger Inquiry, its empowering ethic has been replaced by a tokenist one that runs the gamut from, as Arnstein might put it, manipulation through placation while falling short of realizing real partnership. Going forward, to consider how these resource development hearings take place, as well as how they are mediatized, we must ask, what has become of Berger's practices? How has the promise of a cross-cultural, open conversation about land, memory and resources been mobilized? And what needs to be done to push the Berger Inquiry model *further*, as opposed to remembering it fondly?

This said, even the warmest memories of the Berger Inquiry must be troubled and understood as entangled. Sophie McCall (2011) has written that, while the transcripts from the hearings would later provide a starting-point for "vibrant local politics that re-oriented how land research is conducted, for whose interests, and to what ends" (p. 56), at the time of the Mackenzie Valley hearings, the thrust of the argument presented by the final report was that, "the struggle for Aboriginal rights relie[d] upon a politics of recognition that locates agency in Canadian leadership" (McCall, 2011, p. 49). In Chapter 11, too, I noted the tendency to attribute the postponement of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline to Berger, former prime minister Pierre Trudeau, and both men's interests in protecting non-human life in the North. To fail to acknowledge agency on the part of Indigenous peoples overlooks the critical political and anti-colonial analyses Glen Coulthard (2014b) notes had been developed by First Nations by the mid-1970s. This aligns with economist Mel Watkins's description, in 1977, of Dene people's testimony going "beyond" the pipeline, "beyond simply asserting their ownership of the land" (pp. ix-xi). Dene participants advocated "the right to be a self-determining people," insisting the federal government recognize self-determination "as an integral part" of the rights of First Nations; the pipeline inquiry was a site for "mov[ing] down the long and difficult road to decolonize themselves" (Watkins, 1977, pp. ix-xi). Coulthard (2014) argues his community "effectively utilized both the [Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories] and the Berger Inquiry to voice their position" (p. 155). This rendering of the inquiry process as something to be

used — as opposed to something to be welcomed into or fortunate to have received as an opportunity — provides an avenue for rethinking this formula of citizenship participation or Indigenous consultation, too. Despite their processual limitations, hearings can also be seen as a site of resistance, "cultural persistence," and persuasion. This potential is taken up further in the following sections of this chapter.

13.3 Prayers on the record[72]

In studying the JRP's Northern Gateway community hearing transcripts, I argue those who entered prayers into the hearing record challenged what a shared future looks like across an entangled landscape. Patricia Burke Wood and David A. Rossiter (2017) have argued that statements entered into the record represent "more than a challenge to the pipeline project; they represent distinct perspectives of territory, property, and place in support of a case for Aboriginal sovereignty in B.C." (p. 166). As I have argued elsewhere (Audette-Longo, 2017), I suggest the shared prayers, specifically those on the record, worked as a futurity practice, or avenue for realizing a range of potential and preferred futures. I thus return to tensions between two different future imaginaries. One, in keeping with Canada's settler-colonial history, imagines a future built upon continued resource extraction and new export mobility to gain economic prosperity. Another, Indigenous, perspective focuses on land rights, protecting the natural world, maintaining relations between humans and non-humans, and expressing place-based generational continuity and Indigenous self-determination. For example, in January, 2012, when Verlie Nelson, [73] a member of the Haisla First Nation's Beaver Clan, said an opening prayer in Kitamaat Village, she asked for blessings and protection, describing the sea "treasures" of local rivers and waters that have fed her community while qualifying that these are no longer as accessible as they once were: "In the past, Father, we were able to get these close by; now it is overharvested and the habitat is destroyed and now, Father, a new threat" (JRP, Vol. 8, Lines 3770, 3772-3774). Viewed as a way of opening space to respond to resource-based nation-building rhetoric, Nelson's prayer reminded those present that such a national project as introducing a new pipeline and tanker hub to British Columbia's northwest coast stood to have

[72] Significant portions of this section and sections 13.4, 13.5, 13.6 and 13.7 have been published here: Audette-Longo, Patricia H. (2017). Prayers on the record: Mobilizing Indigenous futures and discourses of spirituality in Canada's pipeline hearings. *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 4 (2-3): 66-93. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/resilience.4.2-3.0066

[73] In hearing transcripts, Nelson's name, "Haymaskue," is spelled phonetically (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 8, Line 3679). In a news report published the next day, Nelson was identified as Verlie (Vanderklippe, 2012a).

significant impacts on local people. In further affecting, or "threat[ening]" wildlife on which people indigenous to the area once depended — a relationship to the environment and daily practices shared with ancestors — these impacts could have consequences for ways of life and imaginable futures. Nelson concluded her prayer on this note:

> Shared common knowledge reveals the devastation that results when the proposed type of oil that is to be piped here and shipped out is not contained. We pray that you will help us preserve this and protect it for future generations. God, please help us. We ask that any decisions that are made will not be for temporary economic gain because our resources need to be protected for our children, their children and those yet to be born. When all is said and done, may our presentations be a significant influence on the final decision regarding this proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline Project. All these things we pray for in thy holy name. We thank thee and pray for [sic]. Amen. (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 8, Lines 3775-3778)

Nelson had opened her prayer with an invitation to stand, directing her words to "Creator God," and she closed with "Amen." These framing mechanisms directed her appeal and her thanks to God, on behalf of her community and beyond the hearing panelists. Though addressing her words to God, Nelson also gently directed, or advised, panelists to listen to and be moved by what they would hear from people presenting their experiences, fears, and hopes. In terms of responsibility to the future, Nelson questioned a project that promised local and national development, and appealed to the value of thinking through a multiplicity of generations as opposed to "temporary economic gain," when she said, "our resources need to be protected for our children, their children and those yet to be born." In her prayer, the promise and rights of children, grandchildren, and those after are presented as concerns for the hearing panel to consider seriously and to think about as part of a longer history and future than the imaginable lifetime and economic benefits of the pipeline.

As the hearing moved away from Kitamaat Village, to other communities and cities along the proposed pipeline corridor, the themes Nelson took up in the Haisla Recreation Centre — futurity, potential loss, and implicit or explicit questions about communities' influence in these proceedings — consistently re-emerged in opening and closing prayers. In asking for environmental protection and to have influence over the final decision, these prayers went against the grain of the national debate, strategically intervening in its course. In the first set of community hearings, especially, prayers spoken on the record offered some of the clearest — and least interrupted — indications of where community members stood on the question of the

pipeline. These prayers sometimes showed how they hoped the panel would treat the matters before them, and what they hoped would be taken to heart and protected for future generations.

13.4 Futurity, resurgence, persistence, and sustainable development[74]

In a Canadian context, Indigenous futures have been rendered secondary or altogether absent in the face of the settler nation's efforts to realize its destiny through processes marked as economic development and modernization. Long-standing discourses of the "vanishing Indian," combined with colonial government policies, meant First Nations communities were expected to have disappeared or to have become utterly disconnected or unrecognizable (See: Sinclair et al., *What We Have Learned*, 5). In this context, speaking for Indigenous presence now and going forward signifies futurity and a refusal by First Nations and Métis people to be discounted or ignored. I borrow here from Jason Edward Lewis's (2014) research creation work and call to action for Indigenous peoples engaging in online world- and cyberspace-making. Lewis brings place-presence and time-presence together when he argues,

> Our absence from the future imaginaries of the settler culture should worry us. Absence implies non-existence, or, at the very least, non-importance. A people that are absent in the future need not be consulted in the present about how that future comes about. A culture that is assumed not to be important one hundred years from now can be discounted now, for what are the consequences? (Lewis, 2014, p. 58).

Lewis's call emphasizes imagining and realizing a future by creating or adding to online spaces today. Prayers entered into the record of the Enbridge Northern Gateway hearings can be read as an exercise in future-imagining by elaborating place-based practices that draw from the past and are necessary for future generations to understand their cultures and their homes.

It is important to draw attention to *presence* and *practice* as defining characteristics of futurity for this chapter, inspired by readings of Indigenous resurgence literature. Decolonizing in its drive, Indigenous resurgence insists for the most part upon non-governmental, grassroots-mobilized, practice-based approaches (see Alfred, 2009[2005], 2009; Corntassel, 2012; L. Simpson, 2011). The continued presence of Indigenous communities practicing ceremonies and traditions, or living in ways different from a settler-colonial imaginary — despite the imposition

[74] Significant portions of this section and sections 13.3, 13.5, 13.6 and 13.7 have been published here: Audette-Longo, Patricia H. (2017). Prayers on the record: Mobilizing Indigenous futures and discourses of spirituality in Canada's pipeline hearings. *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 4 (2-3): 66-93. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/resilience.4.2-3.0066

of infrastructure development projects — grounds one mode of future-imagining. Another mode could be the co-realization of infrastructure and economic development projects that benefit future generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Consider, for example, former Fort McKay First Nation Chief Dorothy McDonald's proposal for "parallel development," discussed in Chapter 2. Or, let us consider how Judy Wilson-Raybould described the importance of consulting First Nations communities when she explained, in a 2014 federal Liberal party video, that:

> First Nations […] are certainly not opposed to development, they're pro-environment and wanting to ensure that we get the balance right. They want their voices heard in terms of, how can we go about ensuring that this territory is protected, because this is a place that's so diverse. (Liberal Party of Canada, 2014)

Wilson-Raybould was the Assembly of First Nations BC Regional Chief at the time, and she is Trudeau's justice minister at the time of writing. Her words, and McDonald's vision, resonate with Roth's (2005) description of "co-development," and its emphasis on a diversity of pathways toward imagining alternatives to the status quo. The idea of Indigenous "life projects" is a helpful addition to this discussion, emphasizing self-determination and drawing upon a community's past to imagine its future. Just as Roth's "cultural persistence" expands a range of potential action beyond response, and Simpson's description of resurgence shifts perspective from resistance to rebuilding, Mario Blaser (2004) describes Indigenous communities' "life projects" as exceeding resistance:

> […] Indigenous communities do not just resist development, do not just react to state and market; they also sustain 'life projects.' Life projects are embedded in local histories; they encompass visions of the world and the future that are distinct from those embodied by projects promoted by state and markets. Life projects diverge from development in their attention to the uniqueness of people's experiences of place and self and their rejection of visions that claim to be universal. Thus, life projects are premised on densely and uniquely woven 'threads' of landscapes, memories, expectations and desires. (Blaser, 2004, p. 26)[75]

[75] In his co-edited collection, *In the Way of Development*, Blaser attributes the introduction of the term "life project" to a fellow contributor, noting, "it seems to be gaining currency among grassroots activists in several places" and citing its use in Escobar's *Encountering Development* (Blaser, 2004, p. 42). In Escobar's (2012 [1995]) work, members of the Organization of Black Communities of the Pacific Coast of Colombia link "hav[ing] our own life project" to "cultural autonomy" (p. 212). Elsewhere in *In the Way of Development*, Latin American Indigenous leader Bruno Barras (2004) defines a "life project" as self-determined, autonomous future-making wherein community members "advance our own projects so that what is done in the communities has continuity …" (p. 51).

Community distinctiveness (different histories, locations, and futures), members' awareness of what is happening elsewhere, and cross-cultural and inter-community engagement are all important elements of a "life project" as well as of "cultural persistence" practices.

Concepts of "life projects," "cultural persistence," and Indigenous resurgence all emphasize a need to understand a community's past and its practices, as well as a willingness to imagine alternatives or additions to universal expectations of where it ought to go. It also dismantles and critiques the notion that all communities "ought" to be on the same track to a prescribed ideal of modernization. They also contest concepts of sustainability which commonly bring economic and environmental interests together, focusing on meeting today's needs without developing to the point of sacrificing the needs of future generations (see Jacobs, 2004 [1999], p. 23). Understanding the environmental sustainability of the pipeline, in addition to the jobs it would create or the oil it would move over the course of its estimated 50-year lifespan, was identified by the hearing panel as one of its responsibilities in its final report (Leggett, Bateman, & Matthews, 2013b, p. 4). However, sustainability can be critiqued as always in service to economic development. In his critique of the 1987 UN Commission on Environment and Development's Report, Arturo Escobar (2012[1995]) writes, it "focuses less on the negative consequences of economic growth on the environment than on the effects of environmental degradation on growth and potential for growth," skewing the interests of sustainable development toward economic growth over environmental sustainability (p. 195).

How different cultures might approach sustainability and sustainable development in unique ways relates to the question of "life projects," while also presenting an interesting problem of definition underscored in a story shared by Leanne Simpson. During a class discussion in Winnipeg, she asked an Indigenous Elder, Robin Green-ba, about the concept:

> He told the class that sustainable development thinking is backwards, that we should be doing the opposite. He explained that what makes sense from a Nishnaabeg perspective is that humans should be taking as little as possible, giving up as much as possible to promote sustainability and promote mino bimaadiziwin in the coming generations. He felt that we should be as gentle as possible with our Mother, and that we should be taking the bare minimum to ensure our survival. He talked about how we need to manage ourselves so that *life can promote life*. (Simpson L. , 2011, p. 141)[76]

[76] Simpson (2011) explains, "Nishnaabeg is translated as 'the people' and refers to Ojibwe, Odawa (Ottawa), Potawatomi, Michi Saagiig (Mississauga), Saulteaux, Chippewa and Omámíwinini (Algonquin) people"

Simpson's story reveals how, when worldviews coexist, sustainable development and environmental sustainability become more slippery. Deborah McGregor (2004) argues there are only "superficial similarities between Indigenous views of sustainable development and those of Western society" (p. 74), as the former are tied to "views of development (that) are based not on taking but on giving" and a sense of responsibility and relationship-building (p. 76). She argues Indigenous and non-Indigenous views of sustainable development overlap primarily in "the recognition that the path of progress upon which the current world order relies is not sustainable, and that fundamental changes are required" (p. 74). While engaging environmental sustainability in a discussion of development "provides a narrative anchor by which [Indigenous] concerns with survival can be articulated with non-Indigenous peoples' concerns with survival" (Blaser, Feit, & McRae, 2004, p. 10), different views of relationships with time and place, or different articulations of what sustainability *is* are difficult to bridge. Notions of "taking as little as possible," and "giving up as much as possible," seem incompatible with discussions of jobs and international trade. Yet the Northern Gateway hearings provided a cross-cultural space for encountering different communities' interests and fears for the future. Green-ba's words, and those of others discussed here, suggest sustainable self-management can be read as not only future-oriented, but future-tethered.

13.5 The responsibility of futurity[77]

The notion of being tethered to the future, elaborated from Leanne Simpson's discussion of how sustainability might be understood in an Indigenous cultural context, suggests a forward-and-back responsibility evident in prayers offered during the hearings. By this, I mean a responsibility to ancestors and future generations at the same time. Inter-generational obligation was a theme among prayers entered into the record as panelists moved through communities along British Columbia's northern coastline and on Haida Gwaii. Take, for example, Rev. Ha'eis Clare Hill's opening prayer in the coastal Gitga'at First Nation community of Hartley Bay, where he is recorded as "speaking in native language":

(p. 25). As discussed in Chapter 4, Simpson translates *mino bimaadiziwin* as "The art of living the good life." She notes that Winona LaDuke translates the term to mean "continuous rebirth" (p. 26).

[77] Significant portions of this section and sections 13.3, 13.4, 13.6 and 13.7 have been published here: Audette-Longo, Patricia H. (2017). Prayers on the record: Mobilizing Indigenous futures and discourses of spirituality in Canada's pipeline hearings. *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 4 (2-3): 66-93. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/resilience.4.2-3.0066

> Today, we gather in community with your people, the spirit of our Ancestors and all creation. Today, we are reminded of the teaching of our grandparents to live with respect to all creation. You, Great Creator, led our Ancestors to be the caretakers of Mother Earth and as its children, its inheritors, it is our duty and obligation to protect it so that we may be sustained, nourished and live in a safe, hospitable environment, not only for us, but for all. As we hear the evidence, our stories given here today, help us to remember to be respectful of one another so that we may truly hear one another with open ears and open hearts. Please send your spirit to be with us and grant us your strength, truth, courage, compassion and peace. (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 24, Lines 14591-14593)

An appeal directed beyond the panelists, Hill's opening prayer focused on taking care of the land over the course of a timeline that exceeds both the lived histories of those in the room, and the pipeline's imaginable lifespan. The words of Robin Green-ba ("we need to manage ourselves so that *life can promote life*") provide helpful pathways for considering the spirits and teachings Hill describes. In self-identifying his community as the inheritors of "Mother Earth," Hill draws attention to the practices and sacrifices — carried out by both ancestors and the spirits of "all creation" — that enabled the Gitga'at First Nation's existence today. To be tethered to the future, then, can be seen as holding the hands of both ancestors and members of future generations; the responsibility of embodying this connection positioned as Creator-given and embedded in all relations.

Hill's naming of inheritance, "duty" and "obligation" — terms understood across cultures and often associated with institutional legal frameworks — can be read as signaling the community's responsibility to a greater cause than economic development, and also as self-determination. By linking the Creator's wishes to the community's knowledge, and emphasizing the community's role as "caretakers," Hill shifts the responsibility for maintaining the environment from the jurisdiction of either Enbridge or the federal government back to the community. This demands recognition of the community's authority to determine and communicate appropriate modes of maintaining a livable ecosystem. The identification of a higher calling to "protect," "sustain," and "nourish" the environment ends with a cross-cultural caveat, as well: Hill notes these responsibilities are "not only for us, but for all." In the transcript of the prayer, "all" would seem to include non-humans in addition to members of the Gitga'at First Nation, while the hearing setting also suggests the community's responsibility for other communities, too.

Prayers shared on the record seemed at times to sow seeds of openness, or invitations across communities, as evident in this excerpt from Hill's later closing prayer in which panel members were made the subjects of appeal:

> We pray for the clean and life-filled waters and for the life they sustain as well as on the land. We pray for all those entrusted with policy decisions about your creation. We pray for all those who have economic powers over your creation. Fill their hearts, their minds and their souls with compassion and respect. And gracious God, we pray for ourselves, that we may have the strength to continue to be stewards of your creation and to be able to protect it from harmful decisions. This we ask of you, great Creator. Be with us, now and forever. (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 25, Lines 16034-16038)

In naming "all those entrusted with policy decisions" and "all those who have economic powers," Hill brings the panelists — and members of the federal government, bureaucrats, and Enbridge representatives — into a circle of people who are entangled in pipeline decision-making and who also need guidance or support. Discursively, it would seem the entanglements are differentially empowered; however, members of the Gitga'at First Nation have always been and will remain "stewards" and protectors *of* creation, while policy-makers and those with "economic powers" have potential to exert force *over* creation, or over the environment. The discursive difference between "of" and "over" is perhaps best illuminated in transcripts from a pre-hearing in Kitimat, B.C. in 2010. Saik'uz First Nation member Jasmine Thomas describes her community as, "People of the Land," and elaborates, "There's no distinction, there is no separation. I am that land and that land is me. The fate of that land, that water, that air is also the fate of me and my people" (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 4, Line 2166). In excerpts from both opening and closing prayers, Hill consistently represents the Gitga'at First Nation as subjects of their living world rather than having power over it; their authority as caretakers is both a gift from a Creator and dependent upon practice. To live the examples of grandparents' teachings, as Hill referred to in the above opening prayer, to be sustained by place, and to be stewards, suggests a sort of hands-on responsibility closer to calls for everyday practices of Indigenous resurgence, and different from purchasing land or overseeing its governance.

When read as discourses of futurity, prayers emphasized the passing forward of traditions to future generations by showing and participating in teachings rather than talking about them. These explanations echo the objectives of Indigenous resurgence, beyond opportunities afforded by the state or industry. For example, Jeff Corntassel's discussion of what can be done today to

ensure that future generations recognize themselves as Indigenous allows one to better envision futurity as continuity, renewal, and agency:

> Future generations will map their own pathways to community resurgence, ideally on their own terms. Through our everyday acts of resurgence, our ancestors along with future generations will recognize us as Indigenous to the land. And this is how our homelands will recognize us as being Indigenous to that place. (Corntassel, 2012, p. 99)

As we read or consider the prayers of those who spoke during the hearings, it is useful again to think of what it might mean to be future-tethered, to picture someone holding the hands of their ancestors and their descendants at the same time. Such a through-line of generational continuity is evident in this excerpt from an opening prayer in Burns Lake, B.C., offered by a Lake Babine First Nation Elder identified in the transcripts as "Mr. Pierre:"

> Our people have been here since time immemorial. Our ancestors lived here and lived off the land, the fish and all of the animals for sustenance, and now we follow their footsteps and our children and their children's children, they will follow our ways. If the pipeline goes through and bursts it will destroy our lands. Our children will suffer if this is to happen. The whole world will be destroyed, as well as the Skeena and the other rivers. We survive on the fish that are born in these rivers, and all of that will be destroyed. We need to think about this and speak against it. We do not want this for our territory neither do our neighbouring brothers and sisters. Many will be speaking on this behalf today. (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 12, Lines 6366-6368)

Mr. Pierre's description of multiple generations living in the same place, surviving in the same ways, illustrates how a culture and its future are fostered through "liv[ing] here and liv[ing] off the land," making paths for each other across "time immemorial." This prayer centres the future ("our children and their children's children") while naming potential destruction should a pipeline spill occur. In his prayer, landscapes and water systems stand to be lost, as well as culture; in short, "the whole world will be destroyed."

Remembering and reimagining time and place as a futurity practice, or an insistence upon realizing Indigenous futures, is conceptually complemented by Indigenous resurgence literature. Similarly emphasizing past-present-future relationships, and drawing from the works of Taiaiake Alfred and Leanne Simpson, Glen Coulthard defines resurgence as "draw[ing] critically on the past with an eye to radically transform[ing] the colonial power relations that have come to dominate our present" (Coulthard, 2014a, p. 157). The prayers discussed here were shared in the decidedly non-radical setting of a government hearing, yet we can see Indigenous resurgence pulled, as a thread, through them: prayers are spiritual, and in every case, speakers directed their

appeals beyond panelists; attention was drawn to gifts of the land and water that were bestowed upon them and their ancestors by their Creator; and their histories helped define their presence today and tomorrow. These prayers reasserted place and recognition in the eyes of a power beyond the state, despite colonial histories and institutions. This does not transform power relations, but the prayers can be read as a key strategy for the circumstances, particularly given that the pipeline hearings (at all stages) were the only setting for government consultation with Indigenous communities along and near the proposed pipeline route.

In this place between radically transforming power relations and ensuring that a multiplicity of experiences, histories, and knowledge systems are also heard in an institutional setting, Roth's (2005) discussion of "cultural persistence" offers a model for considering how community members found ways not just to react to, or resist, dominating powers, but to live and embody difference. Persistence engages the possibility for a range of actions in a cross-cultural context. Praying at the beginning and end of a day's hearings makes room to frame and re-frame events as the speaker sees necessary. As a practice in "cultural persistence," it can be seen as ensuring those who leave the hearings do not miss a certain cultural nuance or depth to the day's testimonies.

13.6 Framing the record[78]

As an opening for the day's testimonies in Burn's Lake, B.C., Mr. Pierre's words laid down a path for those after him to follow. Because prayers fell outside the mandate of oral evidence, they allowed the registration of arguments and emotions, and contested the governed boundaries of what could or should be said during the hearings. For example, in Mr. Pierre's prayer, an extensive outline of worst-case scenarios linking a pipeline break to the destruction of lands, wiping-out of fish, and suffering of future generations, implies the speaker's opposition to the project even before he argues explicitly, "We do not want this for our territory neither do our neighbouring brothers and sisters." Mr. Pierre closes by saying these issues would come up again ("Many will be speaking on this behalf today"), effectively framing and contextualizing the day's forthcoming testimony. In opening prayers at Hartley Bay, Hill similarly offered a frame for the day's hearings, foregrounding the need to "hear one another with open ears and open

[78] Significant portions of this section and sections 13.3, 13.4, 13.5 and 13.7 have been published here: Audette-Longo, Patricia H. (2017). Prayers on the record: Mobilizing Indigenous futures and discourses of spirituality in Canada's pipeline hearings. *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 4 (2-3): 66-93. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/resilience.4.2-3.0066

hearts." Given the political circumstances (not least of which included the Natural Resources Minister's pressure to streamline pipeline approval processes), it is no surprise that those offering prayers might ask for the words shared through the day to carry weight, as Nelson did in Kitamaat Village as well. This recurring request serves as a reminder that the hearings were not only a space of encounter, but of potential confrontation. As the hearings progressed, and as hearing orders explicitly outlined what could and could not be shared, transcribed prayers relaying calls for all those present to approach the hearings with respect, open minds, and a willingness to listen can be read as a response to the visiting hearing panelists and a setting of the day's agenda in individual communities. Prayers on the record can thus be read as discursive framing devices for understanding community members' oral testimonies.

When the panel visited Old Massett, on Haida Gwaii, a series of ceremonies and prayers preceded the start of the hearing, most of which are absent from the written record. However, Haida Chief Allan Wilson's transcribed welcome, which came before the panel chair's, briefly summarized an unrecorded prayer, anchoring the chief's words to shared spirituality, and similarly operates to frame the hearings that followed. His words did not take the form of a prayer; he does not appeal to a greater entity, for example. However, he mobilized discourses of continuity, responsibility, and authority that we have seen in examples of prayers. This excerpt from his welcoming speech is discussed in the absence of a transcribed prayer because it explicitly positioned the community's forthcoming testimonies ("Our stance is strong" and an accounting for all those present who "have the same feeling"). It also centred the Haida people as hosts rather than invited presenters of testimony, and elaborated a position on the pipeline just as the hearing order urged participants not to do when sharing "oral traditional knowledge."

> No other nation can lay claim to Haida Gwaii; it doesn't matter who they are or where they come from. The Haida people have been here for thousands of years; it is ours. […] we stand, and we stand solid. Our stance is strong. And as my niece in her prayer, ask the Lord protect Haida Gwaii for our future, our children, grandchildren and their grandchildren. They're not here to say no, so it's up to each one of us that we be able to preserve Haida Gwaii for them. It's very important because we've seen devastation around the world. The concern for Haida Gwaii is huge. We have our Elders here. We have our young people. We have our children. They all have the same feeling. … (Joint Review Panel, Vol. 23, Lines 13342-13344)

Chief Wilson's welcome, like the testimonies and prayers of others who appeared before the quasi-judicial panel, challenged the proposed bitumen pipeline project as a risk to the

community's ability to survive in place. His welcome also invested responsibility in present community members (the inheritors of "thousands of years" of shared, place-based history) on behalf of future generations who are "not here to say no." In mobilizing a discourse of futurity and protection — and signaling his community's awareness of "devastation around the world" — the chief's words contested development or modernization narratives. In taking the position of host to the hearing panel, rather than intervenor in the panel's deliberations, Wilson also appeared to question the authority of outsiders to determine his community's future. Relating Wilson's words to the concepts of "life projects" discussed earlier, community knowledge and pre-colonial claims to the land are foregrounded here as concerns for policy-making and thinking through alternative or non-universal development claims. Presented in different communities, examples of spiritual discourse in the hearings discussed in this chapter reflect common themes and comparable histories, even if communities do not necessarily share common "life projects."

13.7 Co-existence and relationship-building[79]

Examining the hearing record in tandem with a decolonial approach that emphasizes intertwining threads of futurity, "cultural persistence," and resurgence allows consideration of co-existing and competing futures. In reviewing how discourses of futurity could be traced through prayers put on the record during community hearings into the Enbridge Northern Gateway project, this chapter highlights themes of inter-generational responsibility and a trenchant set of futurity discourses that strategically framed the hearings. Indigenous community members who presented prayers during the hearings inserted a practice-based futurity into a discussion of environmental sustainability and national economic development. This injection of futurity raises, and leaves us with, questions about how different future orientations might reasonably and fruitfully co-exist, particularly when one orientation seems limited to the half-century life of an infrastructure project and another holds the past, present, and future together as co-constitutive.

Admittedly, these characterizations risk essentializing settler and Indigenous communities (and their interactions and entanglements). Nonetheless, the futures gestured to in prayers offer a point of contrast and an entry-point for broader discussion. Not all Indigenous

[79] Significant portions of this section and sections 13.3, 13.4, 13.5 and 13.6 have been published here: Audette-Longo, Patricia H. (2017). Prayers on the record: Mobilizing Indigenous futures and discourses of spirituality in Canada's pipeline hearings. *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 4 (2-3): 66-93. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/resilience.4.2-3.0066

communities will always treat every economic development proposal the same way, nor will building infrastructure always necessarily undermine a community's links to its past and future. Rather, it is more productive to understand how universal, or in this case, national, development discourses — and failures to engage a range of orientations, belief systems, and community "life projects" — can obscure the best futures communities can imagine for themselves. Prayers entered into the record shed light upon how responsibility might be understood as multi-generational, but not necessarily how projects of "co-development," enriched by a diversity of approaches toward future-imagining, might be realized. So long as evidence-giving during a government-mandated hearing remains so circumscribed, this will not be a setting for finding place-based solutions or realizing multi-faceted approaches to future-imagining, even if it is a setting for cross-cultural encounter.

The prayers shared by community members and studied here asserted community interests despite circumstances that otherwise placed limitations upon what could or could not be said. These assertions framed hearings by sharing histories of stewardship and relationships, relating these claims to the rights of future generations to live as Indigenous peoples, and foregrounding relationships to place and presence as key to imagining futures. Transcribed and archived, they also situate place-based politics, histories, and futures as integral to thinking through what defines a national infrastructure project and its imaginable benefits and impacts, advocating a rethinking of universal claims.

Though this chapter has explicitly taken up discourses of prayer and spirituality, ceremony works its way through the oil sands entanglements that are explored throughout this thesis. In his book, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methodologies,* Shawn Wilson (2008) describes the underpinnings of an "Indigenous research paradigm" as "relational accountability" (p. 22). The ceremony of research comes through in the sharing of stories and the participatory/community responsibility of finding answers to shared questions; he illustrates these ideas through shared conversations about undertaking research as and with Indigenous peoples, and about opportunities to depart from Eurocentric approaches to research. The concepts of ceremony and relationality, of co-responsibility, and of co-world making (or exploring entanglements), can be seen in the work that was done by groups like the Yinka Dene Alliance who organized Freedom Train to think across communities to find solutions to the threat of the proposed pipeline. Relationality and spirituality are evidenced in the incorporation

of a water ceremony in a Freedom Train rally in Jasper, Alta., which brought together waters from northern British Columbia and northern Alberta. The following chapter takes up the Yinka Dene Alliance's work.

Chapter 14: Freedom Train[80]

When members of the Yinka Dene Alliance traveled across the country in the spring of 2012 to protest the Enbridge Northern Gateway, they moved away from the sites of ongoing JRP hearings. They created new opportunities to share and amplify opposition to the pipeline project. Freedom Train thus mediated a reordering of the broader discussion of the proposed pipeline and a refusal of national narratives of economic growth and prosperity, working toward refocusing the scale of the debate. This chapter is preoccupied with how they mediated such messages and how they brought people together under a shared anti-pipeline banner. Their 3,800-kilometre rail journey — Freedom Train — began with a first rally in Jasper, Alberta, and ended in Toronto, Canada's financial and population center. Along the way, in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and finally during the Toronto demonstration outside the Enbridge pipeline company's annual shareholders' meeting, they capitalized on local symbols of Enbridge, from office headquarters to nearby leaked pipelines. As well, they rallied and met with local Indigenous groups and supporters. They described this exercise as, "taking our message across the country, but . . . also about meeting and listening to the messages of our friends from other communities" (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012a). Freedom Train thus interrupted nation-building narratives that render new oil pipelines necessary to Canada's economic development and sustainability. By journeying to Canada's largest urban center, Freedom Train participants called upon people across the country to engage with their protest. Throughout their journey, they offered online written, photographic, and video accounts of their movement.

In this process, I argue an alternative media site was also realized. To contribute to how we might broaden the study of alternative media, this chapter — and the article on which it is based (P.H. Audette-Longo, 2016) — surveys the movement's dissemination of messages of protest, its creation of spectacles of opposition, its facilitation of information exchange, and its mobilization of allies across the nation. By analyzing protest as alternative media, rather than analyzing how social movements and protesters use media tools, the media practices of social movement organizers can be studied as we might study the practices of other media makers: as learned, coordinated, and refined with experience. Building on Chapter 7 and discussions of media logics, as well, such an analysis would position social movement organizers as

[80] Significant portions of this chapter have been published here: Audette-Longo, Patricia H. (2016). Freedom Train: Mobilizing alternative media. *International Journal of Communication* 10: 4368-4388. URL: http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/4907/1773

empowered media makers operating within the field of alternative media. Treating the organization and performance of protests as an analytical whole opens possibilities; for example, to adapt questions Chris Atton (2008) has put forward, we might ask how narratives are decided and shaped.

Olga Guedes Bailey, Bart Cammaerts, and Nico Carpentier (2007) argue that political actions, insofar as they "define a collective identity" and communicate to a public, "become a communication medium, which extends our understanding of alternative communication beyond a media-centric perspective" (p. 109). In examining the case of the Brazilian Landless Rural Workers' Movement, Bailey et al. analytically break out the movement's "repertoire of action, communication, and alternative media" (p. 108), to some extent instrumentalizing the alternative media that is produced even as they highlight its contributions. Treating media as among the tools taken up by social movements is a common thread through recent social movement media case studies.[81] As I suggested in Chapter 1, in this thesis I shift the object of analysis from how social movement organizers use media practices to how a social movement — in this case, Freedom Train — can be understood as alternative media. To do this, I primarily focus on documents produced by Freedom Train participants immediately before and during the April–May 2012 event. These include movement descriptions, schedules, and blog entries posted to the Freedom Train website and press releases issued on behalf of the Yinka Dene Alliance. I analyze the workings of the alternative media site by highlighting how its producers related to broader narratives and other media. By centering documentary evidence, I demonstrate how online and off-line efforts communicated a reframing of national issues and introduced ways for communities to relate to one another. I attend to three elements of the Freedom Train movement that contribute to framing it as an alternative media site: the expressed messages of Freedom Train organizers; the train itself as a symbolic meeting point; and continued mobilization of participation and memory outside the time line of the cross-country protest. The following sections are organized first around a brief literature review that brings together alternative media, communications, and social movement theories, and then a discussion of how a protest can work as a site of alternative media and how a movement's (alternative) mediation work carries empowering consequences.

[81] See, as examples: Cammaerts, 2007, 2012; Kidd, 2015; Mattoni, 2013; Poell & van Dijck, 2015.

14.1 Freedom Train as alternative media

To make the link between the symbolic work of protest movements and the extent to which such movements can be perceived as a form of media, alternative media scholars have drawn upon Alberto Melucci's (1996) book, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*.[82] Melucci writes that movements work as media when they illuminate problems and conflicts that are not already being dealt with in public or political spheres (p. 37). In the past, he writes, "social movements were unable to express themselves without the mediation of collective action tied to the social organization or political system," but by the late 1970s and 1980s, there were "the first signs of the transition from movements as organizational or political actors to movements as media" (Melucci, 1996, p. 36). By highlighting otherwise ignored or marginalized issues, protests as media open the possibility for political action and response. This chapter pushes this argument further: If elements of protest actions that articulate social problems by "naming" issues (Melucci, 1996, pp. 36–37) can be viewed as media, can they also be viewed as forms of alternative media? To make this claim demands a flexible approach to alternative media, recognizing its purpose as contesting social and media power (Couldry, 2003) and challenging what media is and how it operates. Such an approach, following Kozolanka, Mazepa, and Skinner (2012), focuses on alternative media's "*structure, participation,* and *activism*," as different from but operating in relationship to the practices of mainstream media (pp. 15–16, emphasis in original). This definition emphasizes *processes* of contestation, opening up possibilities for more participatory or dialogue-driven communication, mobilizing support, and inviting multiple articulations of the issues and problems to which an organization or network is providing alternative responses or solutions. Unlike a protest, such solutions may not include appealing to recognized institutions of power for response or action. Instead, they may constitute alternative framings of issues, education, and community creation as well as mobilization.

Where organizers and participants in the Tar Sands Healing Walk did not make a direct call upon government or industry, Freedom Train 2012 organizers were clearly demanding Enbridge and its stakeholders cancel their plans for the Northern Gateway pipeline. In this sense, they proceeded as a traditional protest, appealing to an institution to reconsider its agenda and take new or different action. However, claims made by Freedom Train participants, and efforts to

[82] See: Atton, 2004; Cammaerts, 2012; Couldry, 2001; Szerszynski, 2002.

connect with a range of communities, also spoke to a longer-term advocacy for and insistence upon different ways of thinking about pipelines, the environment, and Indigenous rights than what fits within the scope of Enbridge's responsibilities. For example, Chief Jackie Thomas of the Saik'uz First Nation is quoted describing Freedom Train's intent as such:

> This is about our freedom to choose our future, our freedom to live according to our culture, our freedom to govern ourselves, and our freedom from the catastrophic risks of an Enbridge pipeline oil spill. We are fighting for our very survival. An oil spill into our lands and waters threatens our health, our culture and our very existence as separate peoples. (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2014a)

While Enbridge is able to change course on the Northern Gateway pipeline project, the company has no real avenue for engaging with much broader questions of decolonization or self-government. Chief Thomas's description of what drove Freedom Train moves beyond an anti-pipeline position into a broader engagement with Indigenous politics of resistance and self-determination in Canada. These long-term engagements are further evidenced in the post-Northern Gateway work that continues today and will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

To read Freedom Train as alternative media, then, we must differentiate how the movement and its members staged some events to invite participation and identification while acknowledging that other events took up a more traditional protest logic of engaging and securing mainstream media attention. Both categories of activity challenge expectations of the extent to which Indigenous peoples might have direct access to creating, negotiating, and managing how they are represented by media institutions in a settler-colonial setting. Examples of how Freedom Train adapted to mainstream media's expectations of protest — "hav(ing) spokespersons, issu(ing) statements, conced(ing) interviews, grant(ing) access to journalists, etc." (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 124) — may test the boundaries of alternative media. These adaptations invite us to think less of alternative media as a parallel and separate pathway for communication and more as a mode that may at times cross or intersect with the mainstream. These moments of invitation also resonate with Roth's (2005) use of the term "cultural persistence" (p. 17) to examine how Indigenous peoples in Canada use and produce media to define and pursue their own terms of engagement in addition to or in excess of resistance. For instance, rather than yielding to the schedule and locations for the government-appointed review of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, through Freedom Train, the Yinka Dene Alliance mounted a media effort that targeted small and large media centers across much of the country

on a time line largely of their own determination. Fresh press releases were issued nationally ahead of each rallying stop, consistently incorporating new comments from members of the movement that drew clear connections between local issues and opposition to the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway project.[83] For example, on arrival in first Saskatoon and then Winnipeg, links were made between pipeline spills reported by Enbridge outside both Prairie cities five and two years earlier, respectively (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012b, 2012c). Drawing out such connections shed new light on spills that took place in isolated areas and worked as a direct counterpoint to media narratives that located opposition to the Enbridge Northern Gateway project in British Columbia's First Nations communities and environmental organizations alone. In a release issued ahead of the Winnipeg rally, Hereditary Chief Tso Dih of Nak'azdli is quoted as saying,

> We are fighting to protect the public too, not just our communities. Enbridge's pipelines and oil supertankers aren't in Canada's interest, and we'll do Canadians a favor by putting a stop to them. (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012b)

Winnipeg is about 2,700 kilometres east of Kitimat, British Columbia. By weaving an interprovincial narrative about pipelines, Freedom Train riders from northern British Columbia were not waiting for someone else to expound upon the national costs and benefits of the project — as would be provided the following year by the JRP in their final report on the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. Nor did they wait for Canadians elsewhere to turn attention to a remote corner of the country. Rather, at four major cities (Edmonton, Alberta; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and, finally, Toronto, Ontario), they endeavored to commandeer media attention with public displays of protest and solidarity.

Where press coverage at the time largely situated opposition to the Northern Gateway project among First Nations communities in British Columbia, Freedom Train organizers argued the fight to be free of oil sands infrastructure extended beyond and east of the Rockies:

> "We can't sit by and watch as our relatives in northern Alberta are harmed by even more unmanaged tar sands development which these pipelines will allow," said Chief Jackie Thomas of Saik'uz First Nation. "This isn't just about us. We are part of an unbroken wall of opposition from more than 130 First Nations from the Pacific Coast to the Arctic Ocean who are saying we will not allow these pipelines to be built. We will use every lawful means at

[83] These press releases, issued via the international distribution website marketwired.com, included contact information for a Vancouver-based communications firm and relayed comments from Freedom Train participants (Yinka Dene Alliance 2012b, 2012c, 2012d, 2012e).

> our disposal to guarantee it. There's no way around us. There's no way to get this oil out." (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012e)

Thomas thus mapped out the entangling web cast by the oil sands and the potential for communities to connect in opposition. Already, oil sands development has had negative health and environmental impacts on First Nations and Métis communities downstream, as discussed previously. If pipelines usher in still more extraction and new sites of oil sands development, those impacts stand to increase *and ripple out from northern Alberta*, pulling in more potential opponents beyond the areas immediately affected by any single pipeline proposal.

It is difficult, years later, to measure their success in capturing mainstream media attention. Newspaper stories, collected in library databases, are easiest to revisit, while radio and television broadcasts are harder to locate via website-based archives. Acknowledging this, but aiming to offer a snapshot of Freedom Train's news coverage, below I briefly assess broadsheet newspaper coverage of the movement in the *Edmonton Journal*, *The Toronto Star*, and *The Globe and Mail*. The stories each of these publications wrote about Freedom Train are retrievable online; though archives of the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* and *Winnipeg Free Press* are available in the same database, there are no archived stories with the terms "Freedom Train" or "Yinka Dene Alliance" from May 2012 in these newspapers.

Before the Freedom Train rallies in Edmonton and Toronto, local city newspapers announced details of planned public events (see Hasham, 2012; Stolte, 2012). A story I wrote as a reporter following the Edmonton rally was published in the "A" section of the *Journal* the next day alongside two photographs (T. Audette, 2012c). In Toronto, the *Star* published two stories related to Freedom Train the day after the rally at Enbridge's annual general meeting. The first, printed with photographs and at the front of the paper's "B" section, detailed the number of supporters to join the rally and included short quotes from a cross-section of parties, including First Nations members, Enbridge's CEO, shareholders, and then-natural resources minister Joe Oliver (Lu, 2012). In its "A" section, news of the Freedom Train was included in a larger piece about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police monitoring the Yinka Dene Alliance's meetings, social media and media presence, and generating monthly intelligence reports (Lukacs & Groves, 2012). Ultimately the alliance was positioned at the fore of a narrative of "legitimate opponents of resource developments like the Northern Gateway" being "demonized" by the government of the day and treated as "radicals" (Lukacs & Groves, 2012). Despite a handful of stories naming the Yinka Dene Alliance as opponents to the Enbridge Northern Gateway plan between 2010 and

2012, *The Globe and Mail* made no mention of the Freedom Train movement until its arrival in Toronto. The day Freedom Train activists and their allies were scheduled to rally outside the Enbridge meeting, the *Globe* published a story indicating Enbridge was seeing growing support among First Nations for the pipeline, with the notable exception of those "nearest" British Columbia's coast, including members of the Yinka Dene Alliance (Vanderklippe, 2012b).

In Canada's national Indigenous media, detailed accounts of the movement can be found in the archives of the newspaper *Windspeaker* at the start of May, including news of when, why, and how the Freedom Train would roll out (Windspeaker news briefs, 2012). After the event, *Windspeaker* published an interview with one of the hereditary chiefs who was part of the movement (Narine, 2012). Searching for the term "Freedom Train," or for the terms "Yinka Dene" and "Toronto," just two stories could be found in the online archives of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network a few years later: a three-minute feature story reported in Edmonton that included interviews and images from the day's protest (Laboucan, 2012) and a story just under a minute long that touched on the movement's arrival in Winnipeg with an anchor's voice-over and a short clip of a British Columbia chief's address to an unseen audience ("Anti-pipeline Freedom Train," 2012).

These snapshots, though varied, offer insight as to why an alternative, or more complete, narrative of Freedom Train was necessary. To this end, I turn now to the messages shared through Freedom Train 2012. Going forward, it is necessary to highlight the now-archived status of the movement's website, originally http://freedomtrain2012.com, and now found online using the Internet archive *Wayback Machine*.[84] While Freedom Train's website served as my primary source of information about the protest's background, intent, and community networking, I do not suggest the website itself could stand alone as an example of alternative media. For example, it offered no avenue for online response or interaction, except for a petition (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012f). This absence challenges key criteria for alternative media — the integration of processes for participation — and invites deeper analysis of Freedom Train's horizontal processes for producing "live," or off-line, events.

[84] At the time of writing, the Yinka Dene Alliance's website is no longer online. A short documentary featuring the Freedom Train riders and their stories, produced by the Yinka Dene Alliance, directed by Ryan Paterson, and filmed by Tiffany Hsiung, remains on the Alliance's YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAjAqtD5LVQ). The *Wayback Machine*'s archive of the Freedom Train website can be found at http://web.archive.org/web/20140107111902 /http://freedomtrain2012.com/.

14.2 Shared messages and protest logics

Freedom Train emerged from an alliance of members of Carrier and Sekani First Nations communities in northern British Columbia opposed to the construction of the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012g). The Yinka Dene Alliance presented the pipeline and associated tanker traffic as illegal should it cross their traditional territories, "threaten(ing) the very survival of First Nations peoples with devastating oil spills" (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012g). The groups described as much as a quarter of the proposed pipeline and tanker route as crossing their territories (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012g), implicitly noted the absence of negotiated treaties in much of British Columbia, and explicitly highlighted the unique cultural aspect of their ongoing protest:

> We have never given up our Title, Rights and legal authority over our lands. As self-governing Nations, we have a legal and moral responsibility to protect everyone from the harms that are sure to result if this pipeline is built. . . . Our entire culture, our language, our way of being in the world, are directly tied to the land and water and the creatures around us. Gathering our foods and medicines is one of the central parts of our culture, our families and our community life. Our very existence as separate peoples depends on this. (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012h, paras. 1, 5)

Through a series of events and press releases, as well as cooperation with other Indigenous peoples (see "We will protect our rivers," 2010), the Yinka Dene Alliance was already a prominent opponent of the pipeline before members organized Freedom Train, and through other public efforts it remains so at the time of writing.

As discussed above, alternative media involves contesting and reframing how issues are approached. This activist ethic includes taking on the very authority of media, government, and industry by naming and challenging the rhetoric that underlies common, or mainstream, understanding of issues of economic, community, and pipeline development. In the case of Freedom Train, we see the construction of counterhegemonic messages, including opposition to the pipeline despite industry and government discourses of nation building and economic growth; refusal to submit to industry-driven and media-reported discourses of consensus building; and recognition of Indigenous ways of life.

At its most explicit level, Freedom Train conveyed a clear message — to the federal government, Enbridge, provincial leaders in British Columbia and Alberta, and Canadians as a whole — that "The Yinka Dene Alliance and other opposed nations make a solid wall of opposition that no pipeline can break through" (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012a). In this way,

Freedom Train participants refused federal government assurances that an independent panel weighing environmental and energy implications could make a final determination on the pipeline that would be suitable for all Canadians. Additionally, the movement cast doubt upon whether the panel could fulfill the responsibility of the Canadian government to consult with First Nations. By drawing attention to recent spills, Freedom Train also challenged Enbridge assurances that the environment could be safeguarded. They and argued "any risk of an oil spill" is unacceptable, regardless of "how much money they are willing to offer" (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012h).

Through messages and actions, Freedom Train participants demanded to be heard and challenged mainstream framings of their issues and concerns. If the promises of alternative media — or, as Downing (2001) calls it, "radical media" — include "trying to disrupt the silence, to counter the lies, to provide the truth" (pp. 15–16), the expressed messages of Freedom Train can also be seen as refusing preexisting narratives. For example, using their blog, Freedom Train members challenged Enbridge's consensus-building rhetoric:

> . . . to Enbridge: you know that we have said no and yet you still say to the newspaper that you intend to engage in further discussions with us "to better understand our concerns and discuss solutions, handling of risks and potential benefits to communities," as the *Edmonton Journal* reported on May 2. This is what you say to the papers to make it seem like you are listening, but in fact it proves the opposite. Your statement makes it crystal clear that you have never been listening. We sat across from your executives and board for an hour last year and laid out, in detail, our concerns. Our answer to your dangerous proposal is no. There is nothing more than that for you to understand. We are travelling across the continent to Toronto to tell your shareholders — and all Canadians — just how much you have refused to listen. (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012a)

Using media to contest how Enbridge had presented its engagement with Indigenous peoples in news coverage aligns with what Downing and others have called the "counterinformation model," though, as Downing writes, this model and its tools are typically put to work "under highly reactionary and repressive regimes" (2001, p. 16). Radical media practiced in "less tense" circumstances questions media presentations, "provide[s] facts to a public denied them," and does so in "fresh ways" that emphasize the public's potential to similarly participate in questioning media every day (p. 16). Movement across the country, as described above and unpacked throughout this chapter, provided avenues for a range of participants to involve themselves in ceremonies, protests, and other alliance-building activities.

The demand for recognition exemplified in the messages of Freedom Train also contested framing of First Nations peoples as consultants or informants to a government process of weighing the pipeline, or as participants in a movement influenced or led by others. Through social media and a mix of media and private events, Freedom Train constructed an image of Indigenous peoples as having the power to stop the pipeline project. This self-representation is in keeping with literature that places protests as "prime agents in contesting old ways of seeing and/or doing things as well as constructing collective identities" (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 119, drawing on Melucci, 1996). In terms of crafting a collective identity, the messages emphasized the agency of the First Nations participants, an explicit counterpoint to a political and media landscape that continually contains Indigenous issues.

14.3 The symbolism of a cross-country train

Arguing that Freedom Train can be understood as alternative media demands an interrogation of how the movement was constructed through shared histories and an acknowledgement of the cultural specificity of First Nations opposition to the Enbridge pipeline. Freedom Train shares its name with other historic and international iterations. However, the cross-Canada journey of 2012 borrows most directly from the similarly donation-funded and cross-country Constitution Express (Hasham, 2012). In 1980–1981, the Constitution Express elaborated Indigenous protests against the federal government's perceived failure to recognize First Nations rights as Canada negotiated its own constitution (Hanson, 2009). During that protest, First Nations members traveled east from British Columbia by train, and "stopped in each community to educate people about aboriginal rights" (Clayton Thomas-Muller, quoted in Yaghmaei, 2012).

To read Freedom Train as alternative media, and to understand some of the context of the Constitution Express, it is important to note that Canada's cross-country railway persists as a symbol of nation building, carrying with it histories of colonialism, European immigration, Indigenous displacement, and east-west domestic trade. Decades after its completion, the Canadian Pacific Railway was "sometimes . . . referred to as 'The Great Colonizer' in recognition of its long-sustained efforts in the cause of western land development" (Hedges, 1939, p. 2). Rail lines also provided a skeleton for telecommunication services (to start, telegraph lines) while linking key industrial areas (Babe, 1990, pp. 42–43), further bolstering east-west community ties. Maurice Charland (1986) has dubbed these lingering narratives "technological

nationalism;" Robert E. Babe (1990) follows, describing the rhetoric of "nationhood through deployment of industrial devices" (p. 5), arguing such rhetoric is mobilized to justify public support for massive infrastructure projects. As exemplified throughout the second half of this thesis, domestic pipelines reaching out from Alberta's oil sands tend to be characterized in similar fashion (see Fig. 12, Appendix 7). Pipelines are framed as being able to safeguard and enhance national prosperity by moving bitumen to international markets on Canada's terms. This was framed as aligning with how goods were moved along the Canadian Pacific Railway, keeping the country's regions economically and culturally connected and building the nation's prosperity and domestic east-west trade. For example, at the start of the pipeline hearings process, then-natural resources Minister Joe Oliver drew a through-line from the 19th-century "western expansion" of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. In an open letter, he wrote:

> Anyone looking at the record of approvals for certain major projects across Canada cannot help but come to the conclusion that many of these projects have been delayed too long. In many cases, these projects would create thousands upon thousands of jobs for Canadians, yet they can take years to get started due to the slow, complex and cumbersome regulatory process.
>
> For example, the Mackenzie Valley Gas Pipeline review took more than nine years to complete. In comparison, the western expansion of the nation-building Canadian Pacific Railway under Sir John A. Macdonald took four years. (Oliver, 2012)

In the public missive, the minister did not once name the Enbridge Northern Gateway project. Rather, he led by noting, "Canada is on the edge of an historic choice: to diversify our energy markets away from our traditional trading partner in the United States or to continue with the status quo" (Oliver, 2012). Given the timing of the release — the night before the Northern Gateway hearings began — the minister nonetheless discursively tied the Enbridge Northern Gateway project to Canada's dominant example of infrastructure-led nation-building. As Sean Atkins (2014) writes, rhetorically linking the two projects "is convenient for crafting consensus, given how well it meshes with various strands of Canada's foundational myths" (p. 149). Freedom Train's counterrhetoric attempted to overwrite the economic promises on which the project had come to rely.

14.4 Cross-country mobilization in the spring of 2012 and beyond

Turning from symbolism to the affordances of the train, to this day, its main passenger stops include some of Canada's largest cities. In turn, the cities where Freedom Train

participants disembarked for events aligned with some of the country's major media markets. This allowed members of the Yinka Dene Alliance to court mainstream media organizations and engage with and connect local communities. Thus, they ensured that easily understood framing mechanisms were in place to communicate opposition to the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, despite its nation-building and self-determining promise for Canada's economy. This conforming to media "logics" of protest (see Cammaerts, 2012; della Porta & Diani, 2006) makes defining Freedom Train as a wholly alternative media site problematic. Rather than consistently contesting media power structures, at times the movement appeared to play strategically to the logics and logistics of legacy media, maximizing the opportunity, at least, for cross-country, multiday coverage. Engaging with this boundary, however, it may be instructive to consider the drawback of alternative media processes that are wholly segregated from other public conversations. Therein lies the risk of reinforcing the values and positions of the "likeminded" rather than influencing or persuading others (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 130).[85]

Having considered how Freedom Train organizers invited mainstream news coverage (and saw a range of responses in print, at least), we must examine how the movement invited participation and fellowship. Building cross-country support is central to understanding Freedom Train not only as a social movement but as a form of alternative media. As touched on above, and in keeping with the work of Kirsten Kozolanka et al. (2012), key characteristics and roles of alternative media include empowering communities and facilitating horizontal production practices instead of top-down ones. Through community feasts and round dances, to which media were explicitly not invited "for protocol reasons" (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012i), alternative, if parallel, spaces for dialogue and powerful links between otherwise far-flung communities could be created. After such a feast in Edmonton (the stop closest to Alberta's oil sands), the author of the Freedom Train blog wrote, "it's a privilege to hear about what life is like in different communities and the challenges you face" (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012a). In Jasper, Alberta, a water ceremony brought together water from bodies in northern British Columbia and area water, connecting those who were present; participants described the ceremonial mixing of water as a "reminder . . . [of] what we're on this journey to protect" (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012a). Inviting prayers over this gathered water also explicitly introduced terms

[85] In discussing the limitations of movement-driven media, Cammaerts cites the work of Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993).

of spirituality to a discussion of water's importance and of the risks presented to water bodies by the pipeline project.

On arriving at the Winnipeg train station, the approximate midway point of the Freedom Train journey, participants reflected on the welcome they received from locals:

> Then, down the long, dimly lit corridor leading into the rotunda at the entrance of the station came the sound of voices. We heard first a lone drum beating, and then many — the rise and fall of a song of welcome traveling towards us. Leaving luggage behind, we began to walk with quickened steps toward the rotunda — chiefs, community members, Elders, children, Yinka Dene and supporters, moving towards a song of welcome.
>
> The arriving Freedom Train riders streamed into the hall, and looked into the welcoming faces of a broad semi-circle of people whose voices were rising to fill the massive rotunda. Our arrival completed the circle, and we stood, the people of this place and those arriving, with hearts full, united in our resolve to protect the land and the water from tar sands oil pipelines and tankers. (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2012a)

This moment can be read as signifying Freedom Train's success in mobilizing action outside the group of British Columbia First Nations belonging to the Yinka Dene Alliance. Additionally, in the above excerpt, the writer brought to life the celebratory and empowering potential of this meeting and its shared energy. By sharing this moment online in such detail, it is kept alive spatially and temporally. The shared writing, which could easily be found online more than a year after the event, and which continues to be externally archived for a much longer period, offers the possibility of keeping the emotions of the movement in some sense tangible well after the journey's end. As "protest artifacts," these online long-living texts have the potential to cement the "collective memory of protest" (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 125) and perhaps foster movement motivation in the future. It is this continued liveness that allows the campaign to be remembered in a way that is different from an archived newspaper article or a six o'clock broadcast news item. Unlike in the previous section of my thesis, wherein I mapped the social media life of the Tar Sands Healing Walk, in this chapter I do not delve deeply into social media use in connection to Freedom Train. However, there were shared photo galleries on Flickr and hashtagged tweets that connected people's personal experiences of Freedom Train, and which have their own, independent media lives separate from the movement's website.

14.5 'Kinder Morgan's next'

The purpose of both the short-term Freedom Train and long-term Yinka Dene Alliance efforts, as organizers have expressed it, is tied to and driven by the politics of the day, upholding

"a powerful and unbroken wall of opposition" (Yinka Dene Alliance n.d., para. 1) and resisting efforts to realize the Northern Gateway pipeline project. However, by stitching local community interests from across the country to the interests of British Columbia First Nations, the Yinka Dene Alliance shared its media spotlight. Arguably, the alliance remains in an antipipeline position for northern British Columbia, on behalf of communities in the province's Lower Mainland, and alongside those as far away as rural Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. As industry and establishment interests in increasing bitumen mobility fanned out to encompass eastbound pipelines through Quebec, southbound pipelines through the United States, and elsewhere, the Yinka Dene Alliance's resistance — facilitated through off-line movements such as Freedom Train 2012 — effectively fanned out as well, as a support network for opposition.

In 2015, the Yinka Dene Alliance announced their members were embarking on a "West Meets East" tour of the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba to share their stories of resisting oil pipelines with Indigenous peoples in eastern Canada. In a June, 2015 press release, they announced:

> "Tar Sands pipelines like Energy East and the inherent risks of a toxic pipeline spill or tanker accident are newer issues for First Nations out East, but we are all too familiar with them out West. We wanted to share our years of experience dealing with such issues as the First Nations in the East seek to understand and take position on such matters," said Geraldine Thomas-Flurer of the Yinka Dene Alliance.
>
> The Yinka Dene Alliance believes that the best way to have Indigenous Rights and Laws respected in regard to such enormous projects is to work in collaboration with other First Nations. (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2015)

Later, the victory of Northern Gateway's cancellation stood as an example to empower growing networks of resistance to tar sands expansion (at the very least, rhetorically). In 2017, Elected Chief of Saik'uz First Nation, Jackie Thomas, a member of the Yinka Dene Alliance, penned an editorial for the *Huffington Post* entitled: "Together, First Nations defeated Enbridge. Kinder Morgan's next."

In Yinka Dene Alliance and Freedom Train discourse, there are concerted efforts to make resistance known, and to name the issues often overlooked when economic development is discussed in connection to the extraction and mobility of nonrenewable resources. There is an activist ethic, firmly rooted in identified Indigenous cultural practices, that challenges the very authority of business and government institutions by unpacking and contesting the rhetoric that is

dominant in mainstream media. Essentially, through Freedom Train, a series of live and online meeting points — alternative media productions — moved outside the limits of institutional issue defining, to mobilize broader participation and illuminate how oil sands entanglements work.

Chapter 15: Ways to disentangle

I close by looking back, briefly, at the work of Canadian communications and economic history scholar Harold Innis, and forward, to an effort begun in May, 2017 that centres oil sands disentanglement. The Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion is led by Indigenous peoples in North America, and it goes after the banks that fund oil and gas pipelines (Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion, 2017). Theirs is a divestment campaign: it draws direct links between how individuals, organizations, or governments spend today and plan for the future, and how those investments enable pipeline projects to be realized. It is also a campaign that maps out a number of oil-carrying pipelines. The Treaty Alliance map out oil-carrying pipelines that are proposed to stretch across North America (see http://www.treatyalliance.org/), mapping out the potential as well for common resistance among communities connected by the encroachment of pipeline infrastructure. The alliance's map tells us little about geographies or the location of communities. Meanwhile, markers for the names of states and provinces, or recognized settler boundaries, are written in such a pale blue against a white background as to be nearly invisible. The accompanying text further overwrites the power of the Canadian and U.S. governments with the power of Indigenous-led governments:

> The alliance is part of an Indigenous Sovereignty resurgence taking place all over Turtle Island where Indigenous Peoples are reasserting themselves as the legitimate governments and caretakers of their territories.
>
> The allied signatory Indigenous Nations aim to prevent a pipeline/train/tanker spill from poisoning their water and to stop the Tar Sands from increasing its output and becoming an even bigger obstacle to solving the climate crisis. The world might not be able to immediately stop using oil tomorrow, but the last thing it needs is more oil, and especially not more of the dirtiest oil on the planet. It is critical that we urgently start building a more sustainable future and signatory Nations want to be at the heart of that building process.
>
> The Treaty's ban includes the following new, converted or expanded pipeline infrastructure projects in Canada and the US, any of which, if allowed to proceed, would lead to a major expansion of the Tar Sands:
>
> - Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain
> - TransCanada's Energy East
> - TransCanada's Keystone XL
> - Enbridge's Northern Gateway
> - Enbridge's Line 3 (Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion, 2017)

Contemplating what this map illustrates, in terms of the entangling routes oil takes across the continent — and the promise of disentangling these routes — Harold Innis comes to mind. Innis studied how Canada's economy, in particular, is structured around the extraction and movement of staples, or natural resources, thus creating co-dependent relationships between "centres" and "peripheries" (cf. Berland, 1999; Innis, 1995; Innis, 2001 [1930]). This is another favorite tale of Canada's history: if we follow the resources, or staples, we find Canadian culture, Canadian independence, and, along the way, Canadian mistakes. This is a history of realizing both a post-and settler-colonial nation, populated by (white) explorer-men and writer-men and survivor-men who led the way to finding Canada's place in the world by looking in some of its most remote corners. Innis zeroed in on the intensely regional, practicing "dirt research," as close to the ground as possible in order to understand how staples moved. Karen Stanbridge (2014) colourfully elaborates his method as "ethnography extreme":

> Want to understand how the fur trade was established and conducted in the Canadian interior? Get in a canoe and traverse the routes of the early traders. Only then will you grasp the kinds of geographic and environmental challenges that faced the trade. … Curious about the fishery in Newfoundland? Go to the outports, talk to the fishers, experience the conditions and the climate yourself. You will begin to understand how and why the industry took the form it did… (p. 390).

Reading Innis, transportation and routes of resources can be understood as determining Canada's economic history, with its ties first to Europe and then to the United States. But these routes also determine futures; as William J. Buxton (2013) writes, realizing a network, or "web" of railway lines beyond the traditional east-west and encompassing major drainage basins was, to Innis, "what made Canadian society possible" (p. 15).

Of course, Innis did not take up questions of settler-colonialism. While he tacitly acknowledged how Indigenous peoples contributed to, for example, the fur trade, his early 20th century project was not to examine how the very same extraction and movement of resources that enabled Canada's economic organization also structured relationships among the state, industries and Indigenous peoples. Matthew Evenden (1999) makes this point very clearly; as an example, studying Innis's 1924 and 1929 field notes from trips along the Mackenzie River and the Hudson's Bay, he writes:

> The view from Harold Innis's canoe was not neutral…. His selection of informants set boundaries of exclusion and inclusion: the views of women are recorded but once; and only three short notes report the observations of Native

> peoples. One of these notes is followed by the terse dismissal: 'but this is difficult to credit.' Métis fare more favourably. At least seven male Métis, or 'half-breeds,' as he called them, had their views recorded … the overwhelming majority of Innis's informants (by my account over 80 per cent) were white men, generally in positions of authority. (pp. 166-167)

Despite these valid critiques, Innis's work does offer a vocabulary for thinking through how resource infrastructures link people, places, and cultures. Read with Indigenous resurgence literature, there is room to further nuance his mapping of history via staples alongside a cross-cultural history. To look at the landscape as routes of trade is to understand how and why contemporary communication and transportation infrastructures are built: canals and railroads and cell phone towers and oil pipelines are not arbitrarily placed. They follow routes already taken; they can secure or interrupt existing flows of power and capital. Cheryl L'Hirondelle (2014) pushes us to think this through further by inviting consideration of how routes known today — along waterways, through the bush, in our cars, in the "cloud" — came to be known in the first place. She writes they were first traced by animals, tracked by Indigenous peoples, made "well-established" as routes of trade between First Nations, shared with European newcomers, and, much later, strewn with contemporary transportation and communication infrastructures (L'Hirondelle, 2014, pp. 152-153).

Here is an opening: building on Innis's and L'Hirondelle's works, to map out the movement of resources allows us to map out potential connections between communities. Oil sands entangle people, connecting, displacing, and holding them through labour, health concerns, environmental impacts, and communications and transportation infrastructures. Mapping out oil pipelines — as industry and governments do — can map out wish lists freighted with big dreams of tapping more markets. Mapping out connections — as the Treaty Alliance, the Tar Sands Healing Walk, the Northern Gateway hearings, and Freedom Train 2012 have done — can also invite contemplation of sites of collaborative persistence and resistance movements among communities that are otherwise disconnected.

15.1 Conclusion

By looking at sites of "cultural persistence" and resistance, this thesis explores oil sands entanglements that begin in northern Alberta and stretch out via pipelines, intertwining politics, media and cross-community connections. Throughout, I have offered methods of investigating these entanglements via media and communication studies, and suggested — following Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999) — that such investigations are best understood as dredging, not

describing. My methods of analysis flowed from traveling with movements: following the Tar Sands Healing Walk in person and then interviewing organizers, and following the messages shared by Freedom Train 2012 participants as they made their way across the country. I also analyzed media coverage of Indigenous movements, the Enbridge Northern Gateway proposal, and the oil sands, and mapped Twitter posts that included the Tar Sands Healing Walk hashtag, to contemplate different kinds of message amplification, and a distinct range of audience interactions. Finally, I conducted archival research, from reading newspapers available in microfilm format at Library and Archives Canada and documents held at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, to analyzing Northern Gateway hearing transcripts held online by the National Energy Board.

Together, these methods map a constellation of oil sands entanglements primarily located in northern Alberta and northwestern British Columbia, and for the most part focused on the period between 2006 and 2016. This is only a beginning, however. The next step is to further analyze how avenues toward disentanglement, such as divestment or further collaborations between communities, are mediated. The media sites discussed here are exemplary of how Indigenous peoples in northern Alberta and northern British Columbia who are at the front lines of industrial bitumen development have generously shared ways of thinking about how communities are connected to each other, and to land and water. These communities are not canaries in coal mines, and they are not signifiers of what has been lost to industrial development. Such a characterization locates those most acutely entangled in the past, and without real agency to make change. It also locks current development in as normal and unavoidable. Instead, we must understand oil sands entanglements as multi-directional, labour-intensive and gendered, affected by settler-colonial and extractivist practices, and geographically situated while also far-flung. This understanding provides a framework for conceptualizing how communities connect *despite* the "mess" of government and industry actions that can isolate them or perpetuate the status quo. In this vein, the concept of oil sands entanglement is meant to be empowering, not just a matter of listing common experiences or mapping stretches of pipeline between points on a map. The work of recognizing and activating connections between people and communities holds out the potential to foster resilience and spur *dis*entanglement.

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Appendix 1: Images

Image 1 *Map of Alberta's oil sands deposits. Source: Norman Einstein, Wikipedia*

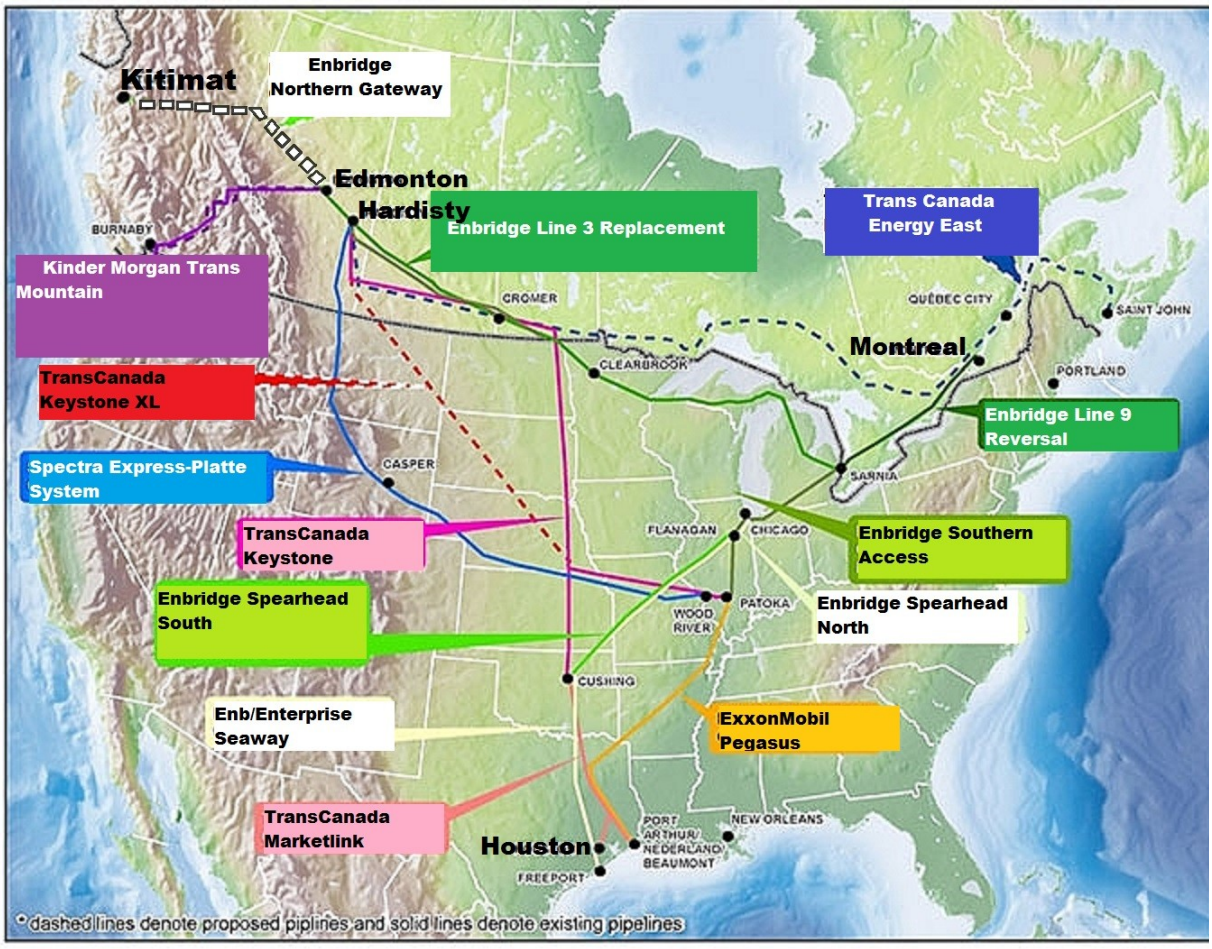
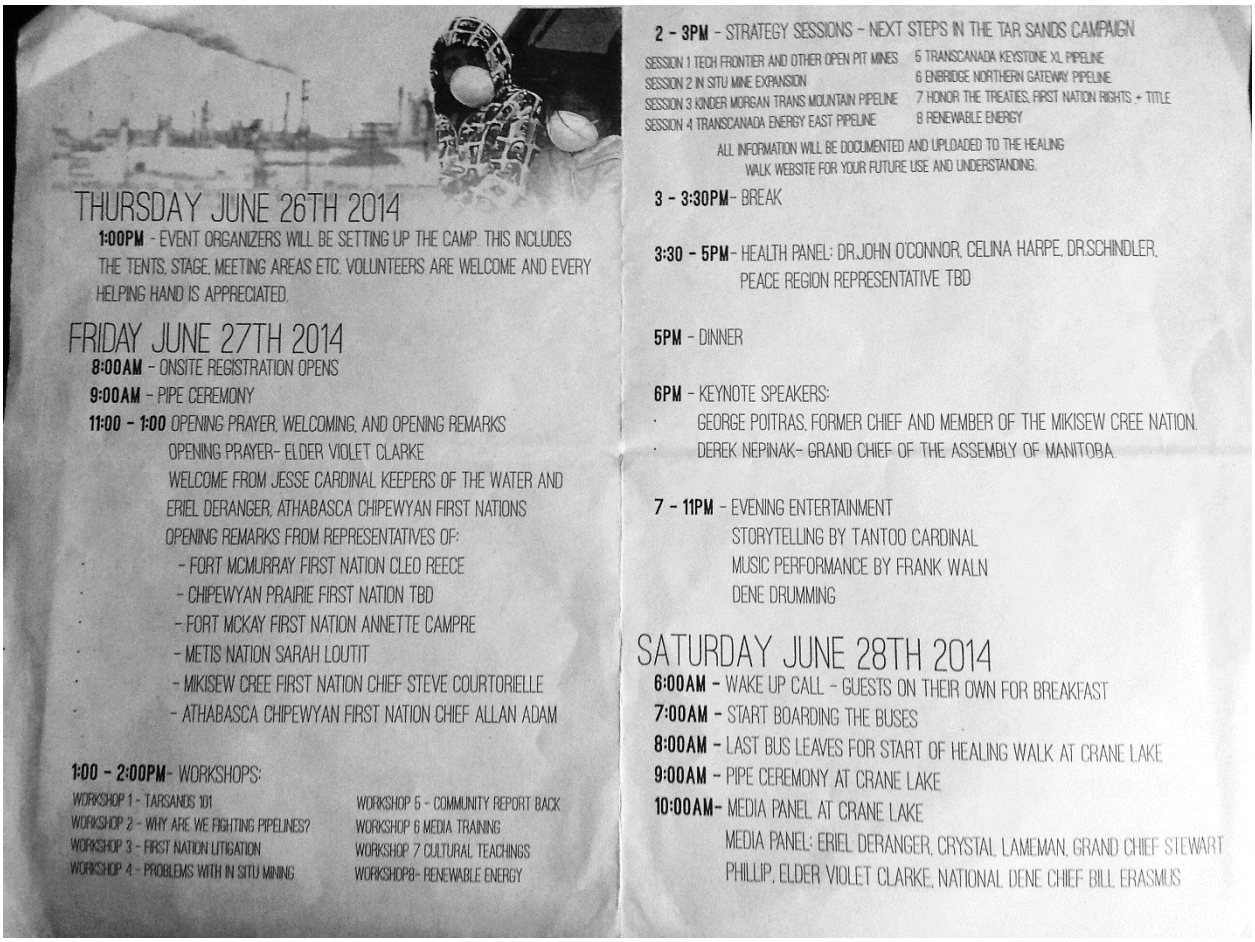


Image 2 *Map of existing and proposed oil pipelines. Proposed pipelines such as the Enbridge Northern Gateway (white, top left-hand corner) are drawn in dashes. Adapted from National Energy Board (2016, see https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/nrg/ntgrtd/trnsprttn/2016/ppln-cpcty-eng.html)*

Image 3 *Images from Canada Action's Instagram account, quoting Fort McKay First Nation Chief Jim Boucher's 2016 comments to the Assembly of First Nations in Gatineau, Que.*

Image 4 *Tailings pond, Tar Sands Healing Walk, June 2014. Source: P.H. Audette-Longo*

Image 5 *Land surrounding Syncrude's Mildred Lake facility as seen from Highway 63 in June, 2014. Source: P.H. Audette-Longo*



THURSDAY JUNE 26TH 2014

1:00PM - EVENT ORGANIZERS WILL BE SETTING UP THE CAMP. THIS INCLUDES THE TENTS, STAGE, MEETING AREAS ETC. VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME AND EVERY HELPING HAND IS APPRECIATED.

FRIDAY JUNE 27TH 2014

8:00AM - ONSITE REGISTRATION OPENS

9:00AM - PIPE CEREMONY

11:00 - 1:00 OPENING PRAYER, WELCOMING, AND OPENING REMARKS
OPENING PRAYER- ELDER VIOLET CLARKE
WELCOME FROM JESSE CARDINAL KEEPERS OF THE WATER AND ERIEL DERANGER, ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATIONS
OPENING REMARKS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF:
- FORT MCMURRAY FIRST NATION CLEO REECE
- CHIPEWYAN PRAIRIE FIRST NATION TBD
- FORT MCKAY FIRST NATION ANNETTE CAMPRE
- METIS NATION SARAH LOUTIT
- MIKISEW CREE FIRST NATION CHIEF STEVE COURTORIELLE
- ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION CHIEF ALLAN ADAM

1:00 - 2:00PM- WORKSHOPS:

WORKSHOP 1 - TARSANDS 101
WORKSHOP 2 - WHY ARE WE FIGHTING PIPELINES?
WORKSHOP 3 - FIRST NATION LITIGATION
WORKSHOP 4 - PROBLEMS WITH IN SITU MINING
WORKSHOP 5 - COMMUNITY REPORT BACK
WORKSHOP 6 MEDIA TRAINING
WORKSHOP 7 CULTURAL TEACHINGS
WORKSHOP8- RENEWABLE ENERGY

2 - 3PM - STRATEGY SESSIONS - NEXT STEPS IN THE TAR SANDS CAMPAIGN

SESSION 1 TECH FRONTIER AND OTHER OPEN PIT MINES
SESSION 2 IN SITU MINE EXPANSION
SESSION 3 KINDER MORGAN TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE
SESSION 4 TRANSCANADA ENERGY EAST PIPELINE
5 TRANSCANADA KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE
6 ENBRIDGE NORTHERN GATEWAY PIPELINE
7 HONOR THE TREATIES, FIRST NATION RIGHTS + TITLE
8 RENEWABLE ENERGY

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE DOCUMENTED AND UPLOADED TO THE HEALING WALK WEBSITE FOR YOUR FUTURE USE AND UNDERSTANDING.

3 - 3:30PM- BREAK

3:30 - 5PM- HEALTH PANEL: DR.JOHN O'CONNOR, CELINA HARPE, DR.SCHINDLER, PEACE REGION REPRESENTATIVE TBD

5PM - DINNER

6PM - KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:
- GEORGE POITRAS, FORMER CHIEF AND MEMBER OF THE MIKISEW CREE NATION.
- DEREK NEPINAK- GRAND CHIEF OF THE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA.

7 - 11PM - EVENING ENTERTAINMENT
STORYTELLING BY TANTOO CARDINAL
MUSIC PERFORMANCE BY FRANK WALN
DENE DRUMMING

SATURDAY JUNE 28TH 2014

6:00AM - WAKE UP CALL - GUESTS ON THEIR OWN FOR BREAKFAST

7:00AM - START BOARDING THE BUSES

8:00AM - LAST BUS LEAVES FOR START OF HEALING WALK AT CRANE LAKE

9:00AM - PIPE CEREMONY AT CRANE LAKE

10:00AM- MEDIA PANEL AT CRANE LAKE
MEDIA PANEL: ERIEL DERANGER, CRYSTAL LAMEMAN, GRAND CHIEF STEWART PHILLIP, ELDER VIOLET CLARKE, NATIONAL DENE CHIEF BILL ERASMUS

Image 6 *Copy of Tar Sands Healing Walk agenda (2014)*

Image 7 *Tar Sands Healing Walk press conference in 2014. Source: P.H. Audette-Longo*

Image 8 *"Stop the destruction, start the healing" banner, Tar Sands Healing Walk 2014. Source: P.H. Audette-Longo*

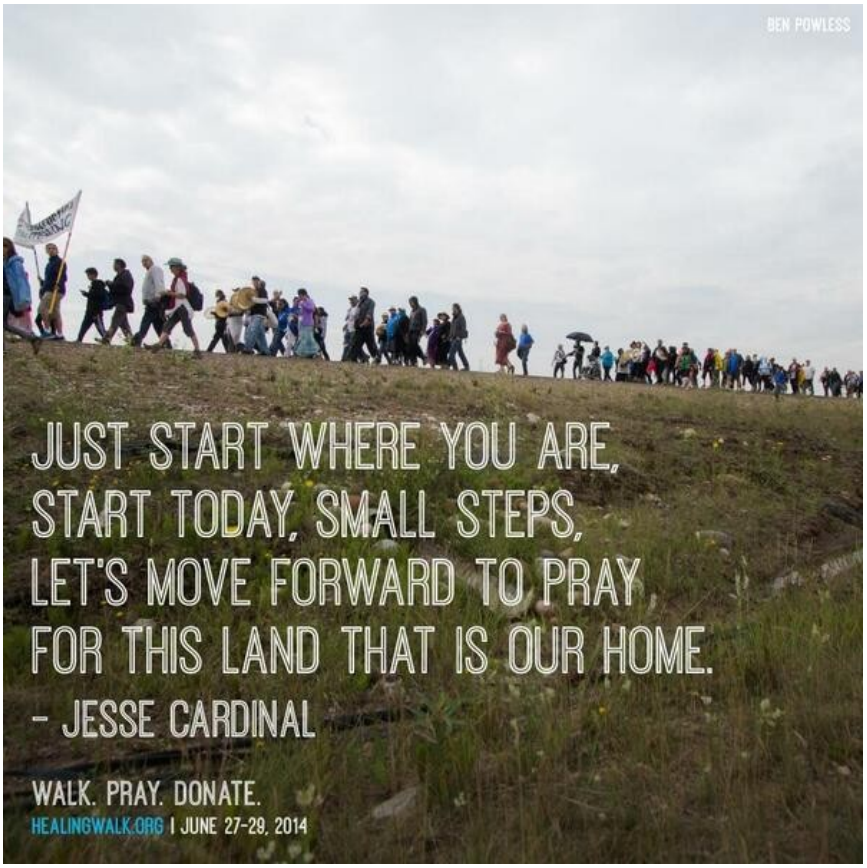


Image 9 *Tar Sands Healing Walk meme (2014)*

Image 10 *Screen capture of a #healingwalk tweet posted by Mike Hudema*

Appendix 2: Mapping #healingwalk

@	Full Name	Date	RT	Message
HealingWalk	Healing Walk	29/05/2014	3	Final "Tar Sands Healing Walk" Simply a New Beginning, Say Organizers http://www.desmog.ca/2014/05/08/june-28th-final-tar-sands-healing-walk-simply-new-beginning-say-organizers … #**healingwalk** #tarsands #rmwb #ymm

Figure 1 *Descriptive characteristics of #healingwalk tweets*

Hashtag	Explanation	Number of times it appeared alongside #healingwalk
#tarsands, #notarsands	Typically used to critique oil sands development.	370
#cdnpoli, #canpoli	"Canadian politics," meant to mark a post relevant to national political debate.	102
#KXL/#nokxl	Referring to the Keystone XL pipeline proposed to move Alberta's bituminous oil to refineries in the United States.	25
#ymm	Fort McMurray	33
#idlenomore/#INM	These hashtags refer to recent Indigenous rights grassroots activism throughout Canada and elsewhere. Idle No More was launched in late 2012 in response to a federal omnibus bill that affected First Nations rights and environmental legislation.	121

Figure 2 *List of hashtags most often used in the #healingwalk stream*

Event	Number of tweets
Solidarity Tar Sands Healing Walk in Montreal, Que. June 28, 2014	30
"Connect the Dots" refinery corridor healing walks in the San Francisco Bay Area, United States Spring, 2014	16
Solidarity Tar Sands Healing Walk in Victoria, B.C. June 28, 2014	10
Solidarity Tar Sands Healing Walk in Okanagan, B.C. June 29, 2014	5
Drums and Dance Party Against the Pipelines in Vancouver, B.C. July 4, 2014	1
Energy East Resistance Ride from Nova Scotia to Ottawa May-August, 2014	1
Tandem Festival in Oxford, England June 21, 2014	1
Detroit Water Brigade Link to video posted July, 2014	1

Figure 3 *Other events mentioned in the #healingwalk stream*

Appendix 3: Top 10 #healingwalk tweets

Twitter Handle	Name & Shared Affiliation	Date Posted	Number of Retweets	Message	Image in Tweet
@MikeHudema	Mike Hudema, Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner based in Edmonton	28/06/2014	107	Grand Chief Nepinak,Grand Chief Phillip,ACFN Chief Adam stand together to stop the destruction #tarsands **#healingwalk**	Yes
@MikeHudema	Mike Hudema	29/06/2014	106	Walk, unite, heal. Nation to nation Coast to coast. We will stop the destruction. #tarsands **#healingwalk** pic @WCELaw	Yes
@MikeHudema	Mike Hudema	28/06/2014	104	Nation to nation. Coast to coast. Walk, unite, heal. #tarsands **#healingwalk**. Pic via @CrystalDawnGee	Yes
@MikeHudema	Mike Hudema	28/06/2014	96	"What destroys the earth also destroys us" ~Tantoo Cardinal #tarsands **#healingwalk**. #cdnpoli #abpoli	Yes

				#idlenomore #ymm	
@MikeHudema	Mike Hudema	28/06/2014	96	Ta'kaiya Blaney next to the desolate moonscape that used to be a thriving ecosystem. #tarsands #**healingwalk**	Yes
@350	350 dot org (350.org), an environmental organization co-founded by Bill McKibben	28/06/2014	93	"This is a global struggle all about climate change and corporate power" - Grand Chief Stuart Phillip #HealingWalk	Yes
@HealingWalk	Healing Walk	28/06/2014	92	The march is led by water the thing we are here to protect. #tarsands #**healingwalk**. #cdnpoli #abpoli #idlenomore	Yes
@MikeHudema	Mike Hudema	28/06/2014	73	#FirstNations hold '#**healingwalk**' through #tarsands: http://fw.to/MCkYJ3i #cdnpoli #abpoli #idlenomore #ymm	Yes

@rabbleca	rabble.ca, a Canadian-based progressive alternative journalism website	28/06/2014	72	A mannequin of a tar sands worker to keep ducks from landing on the tailings pond. (Because they'll die) #HealingWalk	Yes
@CrystalDawnGee	Crystal Greenfeather, Moose clan	28/06/2014	70	Belting out the Strong Woman Warrior song at #Tarsands #HealingWalk #Cdnpoli	Yes

Appendix 4: Key actors using #healingwalk

Name	Shared Affiliation	Total Tweets	Total RT's	Most RT's for One Message	Average RT's per Message	% of Tweets With Images	% of Tweets With Videos
Mike Hudema (@MikeHudema)	Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner based in Edmonton	50	2059	107	41	96	2
Healing Walk (@HealingWalk)		99	792	92	8	21	5
Crystal Greenfeather (@CrystalDawnGee)	Moose clan, based in Winnipeg	26	309	70	12	85	0
350 dot org (@350)	350.org is an environmental organization	9	302	93	34	44	22
rabble.ca (@rabbleca)	A Canadian progressive alternative journalism website	30	250	72	8	53	0
Idle No More (@IdleNoMore4)	A grassroots Indigenous rights activist network	9	215	61	24	67	22
UK Tar Sands Network (@NoTarSands)	A United Kingdom-based campaign to stop the tar sands	53	179	17	3	47	6
Tar Sands Blockade (@kxlblockade)	Texas-based protest network against the proposed Keystone XL pipeline	18	132	15	7	33	0

Name	Shared Affiliation	Total Tweets	Total RT's	Most RT's for One Message	Average RT's per Message	% of Tweets With Images	% of Tweets With Videos
Native Youth Sexual Health (@NYSHN)	A health network taking up issues "of sexual & reproductive health, rights, & justice by & for Indigenous youth in North America."	19	111	16	6	21	11
Caitlyn Vernon (@caitlynvernon)	Campaigns Director, Sierra Club B.C.	11	103	53	9	73	0

Appendix 5: List of analyzed print news articles about the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal

January 11, 2012

1. Pipeline review worries premier; Gateway panel approach called disappointing, Calgary Herald, A1.
2. Some 'intervenors' have never heard of Gateway, Calgary Herald, A1.
3. Pragmatic politics needed in wake of oilsands attack, Calgary Herald, A3.
4. Chiefs raise Northern Gateway concerns; Haisla worried about possibility of oil spills, Calgary Herald, E5.
5. Calling project critics 'radical' inappropriate: Rae; Interim Liberal leader says PM interfering in process, Edmonton Journal, A11.
6. Pipeline parody's unfunny punchline, Toronto Star, A8.
7. Foreign $$$ clogs pipes, Toronto Sun, 24.
8. Usual 'latte liberals' trying to shaft pipeline, The Province, A6.
9. Clash of values surfaces at hearings, National Post, FP1.
10. National briefs, Fort McMurray Today, 2.
11. Our ecological treasure is the issue, Globe and Mail, A15.
12. 'We want to have a voice, and we're going to have a voice'; As review begins for oil-sands pipeline, a warning from wary first nations, Globe and Mail, A1.
13. Leak is reported in Enbridge pipeline, Globe and Mail, A4.
14. Crude defence simply offensive, Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune, A7.
15. First Nations fear proposed pipeline 'will wipe out everything'; Public hearings begin in B.C., Montreal Gazette, B4.

December 20, 2013

1. Perfect gift for pipeline proponents; Joint review panel approves $6.5B Northern Gateway project, Edmonton Journal, A1.
2. Approval 'critical milestone': province, Edmonton Journal, A8.
3. Enbridge aware report 'just one step', Edmonton Journal, A8.
4. Lawsuits likely from First Nations; Environmental groups signal more protests, Edmonton Journal, A9.
5. Canada needs Northern Gateway; For Enbridge, now the real work begins, Edmonton Journal, B1.
6. Pipeline's a go! Sort of. Probably. Maybe. Edmonton Sun, 3.
7. 'Important step forward' Provincial government lauds NEB's recommendation of Northern Gateway pipeline, Edmonton Sun, 4.
8. Northern Gateway? Get on with it, Edmonton Sun, 14.
9. Troubles not over for pipeline; Northern Gateway will surely face more obstacles from heavily financed environmental groups; Edmonton Sun, 5.
10. Report just made things easier for B.C.; Despite Clark's ever-changing five conditions, National Post, A5.
11. Gateway beats back ENGOs, National Post, FP11.

12. ForestEthics' cash pipeline, National Post, FP11.
13. NEB approves Northern Gateway pipeline under conditions, Fort McMurray Today, 3.
14. Panel recommends Northern Gateway, Fort McMurray Today, 8.
15. NEB clears path for Northern Gateway; Enbridge given conditional approval for $6.5-billion pipeline project, but bigger challenge looms in securing aboriginal support, Globe and Mail, A1.
16. A long way yet to cross the Pacific, Globe and Mail, A14.
17. Pipeline opponents promise a fight; With the National Energy Board's tentative approval of Northern Gateway, First Nations advocates are preparing massive protests, Globe and Mail, S1.
18. Conditions for pipeline approval fail to satisfy critics, Globe and Mai, A12.
19. Three very different reasons people oppose Northern Gateway; The decision on Northern Gateway has brought to the forefront those who oppose pipelines on protectionist grounds, or at least purport to do so, Globe and Mail, website.
20. Enbridge seeks common ground with native groups; Aboriginal leaders have pledged to keep fighting the Northern Gateway pipeline project, but the oil company's CEO hopes to allay their fears, Globe and Mail, website.
21. Enbridge's Monaco explains conflicting Gateway cost figures; Enbridge and most of the media have been using $6.5-billion for the capital cost of the pipeline, but government panel in its report on the project published a $7.9-billion figure, Globe and Mail, website.
22. Northern Gateway pipeline approval gives boost to industry, Toronto Star, website.
23. Pipeline opponents allege B.C. concerns ignored by feds; NDP's Dix slams Premier Clark for selling out B.C.'s interest, while First Nations leader believes pipeline project won't go through, 24 Hours Vancouver, 5.
24. A 'go' for Gateway? Don't believe it; Pipeline: With long delays and still unresolved issues, expect industry to seek more attractive alternatives, Vancouver Province, A38.
25. Things to know about pipeline report; Northern gateway: Project construction could still be years away, but recommendations a major milestone, Vancouver Province, A6.
26. Act II in Enbridge's Theatre of the Absurd; Melodrama: There were few surprises in Thursday's comedy, apart from some technical glitches, and this play's far from over, Vancouver Sun, A7.
27. Critics pledge renewed fight, Vancouver Sun, A7.
28. Business groups herald recommendation to build pipeline; National Energy Board report viewed as middle-ground path by council president, Vancouver Sun, A7.
29. Northern Gateway clears key hurdle; Technical green light for pipeline paves way for historic B.C. decision, Victoria Times Colonist, A1.
30. Wariness over pipeline broader than portrayed, Victoria Times Colonist, A3.
31. First hurdle cleared; Challenges for Northern Gateway pipeline are still significant, Calgary Herald, A16.
32. Ottawa praises panel's assessment, Calgary Herald, A4.
33. Conditional OK, Calgary Herald, A4.
34. Ottawa likely to give stamp of approval, Calgary Herald, B1.
35. Northern Gateway pipeline project milestones, Calgary Herald, B1.
36. Approval equals prosperity: Alberta government, Calgary Sun, 4.

37. Return of the Native; Idle No More reminds Canada of unresolved issues with First Nations, Calgary Sun, 35.

November 30, 2016

1. Liberals back projects; Trudeau gives the OK to two pipelines, nixes third, Edmonton Sun, A2.
2. Kinder Morgan expansion OK'd, Edmonton Sun, A44.
3. Pipeline breakthrough; Canada back in oil game, National Post, FP1.
4. Pipeline a go; Grits say yes to controversial Trans Mountain project, despite opposition from chiefs, Winnipeg Sun, A7.
5. Critics speak out against pipeline, Globe and Mail, S1.
6. Approvals won't end pipeline battles, Globe and Mail, B1.
7. PM picks his pipelines, Ottawa Citizen, A1.
8. Opposition prepares to fight Trans Mountain pipeline approval; Protests, legal challenges over aboriginal rights and fate of an endangered population of killer whales are among the hurdles facing Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline project, Globe and Mail, website.
9. Ottawa, Alberta join forces to sell B.C. on Trans Mountain pipeline; 'We will get this project built,' Premier Rachel Notley says, in spite of anticipated protests and legal challenges, Globe and Mail, website.

Appendix 6: Coding form for analyzing print news coverage of Enbridge Northern Gateway

Q1. Article title (full text).

Q2. Publication

1 Calgary Herald
2 Edmonton Journal
3 Toronto Star
4 Toronto Sun
5 The Province (Vancouver)
6 National Post
7 Fort McMurray Today
8 The Globe and Mail
9 Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune
10 Montreal Gazette
11 Edmonton Sun
12 24 Hours (Vancouver)
13 Vancouver Sun
14 Victoria Times-Colonist
15 Calgary Sun
16 Winnipeg Sun
17 Ottawa Citizen

Q3. Date (mm/dd/year)

Q4. Type of text

1 News article
2 Column
3 Unsigned editorial

Q5. First source quoted **Q6.** Second source quoted **Q7.** Third source quoted

1 Member of the federal government (minister)
2 Member of a provincial government (minister)
3 Member of a federal opposition party
4 Member of a provincial opposition party
5 Part of another level of government (i.e. mayor) or otherwise associated with a government agency (i.e. public employee)
6 Identified as an Indigenous person or member of a First Nations or Métis community
7 Member of an environmental non-government organization (ENGO)
8 Other
9 Joint Review Panel member or final report
10 Enbridge
11 Not applicable (no first/second/third source quoted in the story)

Q8. Are the terms "national interest," "national economic interest," or "vital" used in this story?

1 Yes
0 No

Q9. Is the Canadian Pacific Railway mentioned in this story?

1 Yes
0 No

Q10. Are the Berger Inquiry, Justice Thomas Berger, and/or the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline mentioned in this story?

1 Yes
0 No

Q11. Is an oil spill/potential for an oil spill mentioned in this story?
1 Yes
0 No

Q12. Is the Exxon Valdez oil spill mentioned in this story?
1 Yes
0 No

Q13. Are jobs or employment mentioned in this story?
1 Yes
0 No

Q14. Is the Lac-Mégantic explosion mentioned in this story?
1 Yes
0 No

Q15. Are climate change, carbon emissions, or greenhouse gas emissions mentioned in this story?
1 Yes
0 No

Q16. Is a person identified with a First Nations community quoted in this story discussing the prospect of an Indigenous- or aboriginal-led court challenge?
1 Yes
0 No

Q17. Is someone who is not identified with a First Nations community—including the author of the text—discussing the prospect of an Indigenous- or aboriginal-led court challenge?
1 Yes
0 No

Appendix 7: Content analysis findings

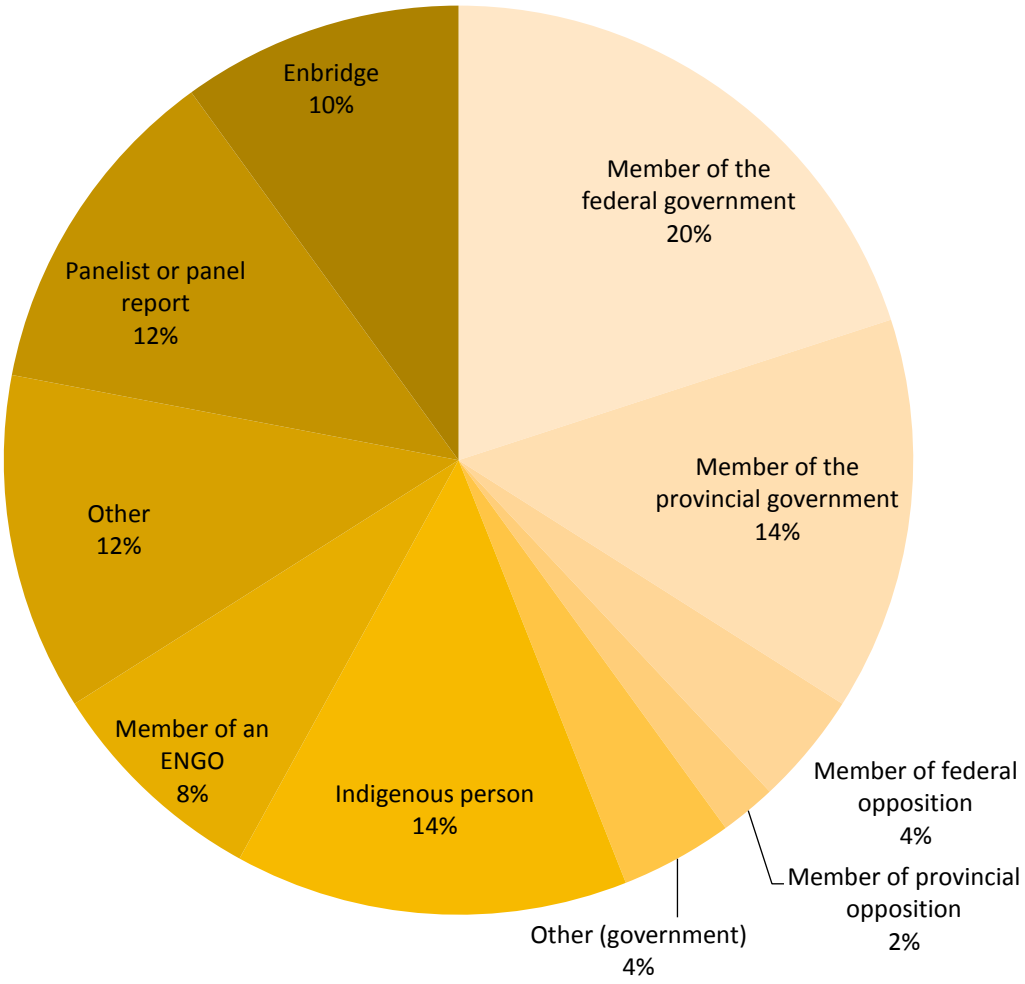


Figure 4 First person quoted

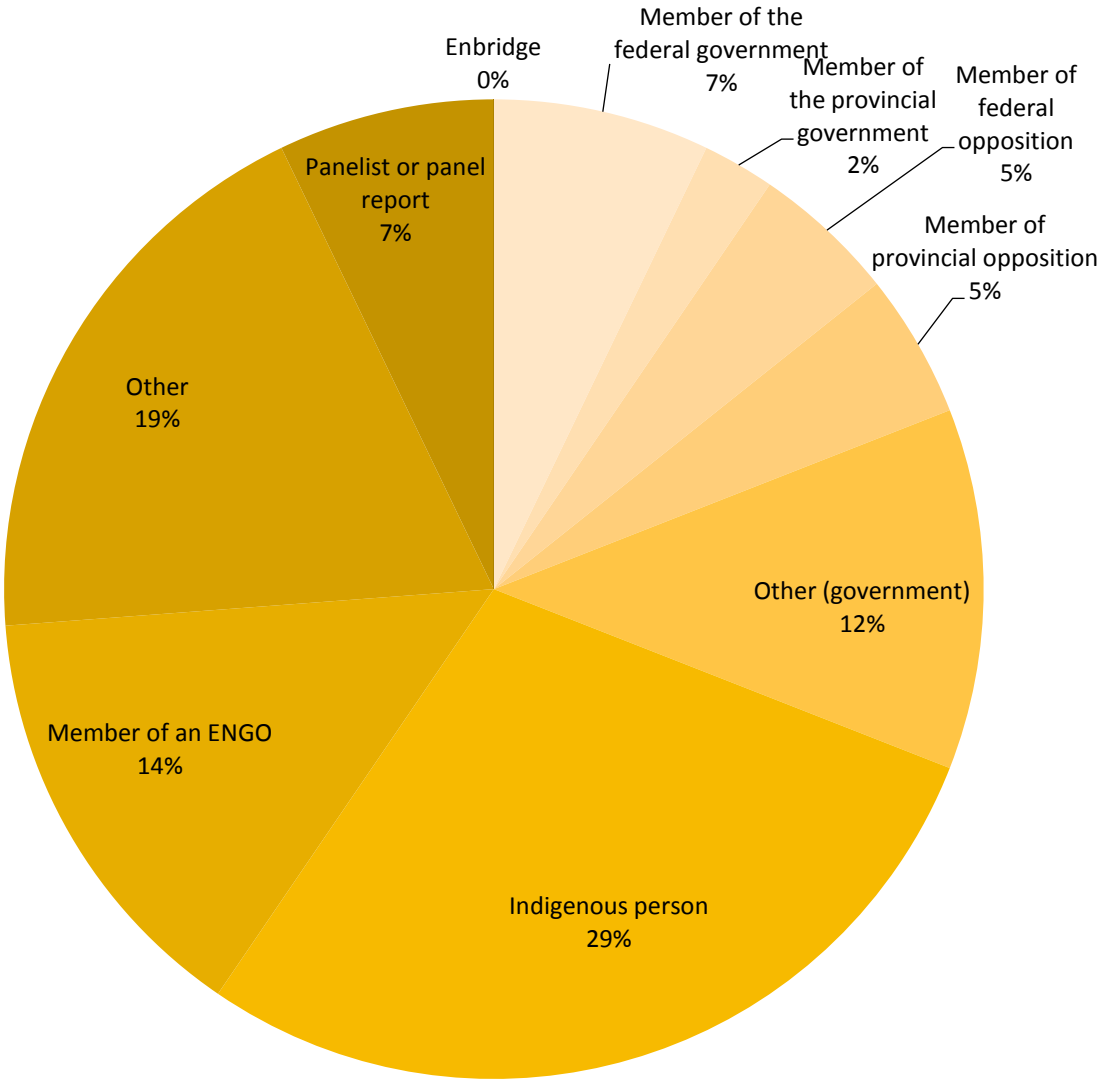


Figure 5 Second person quoted

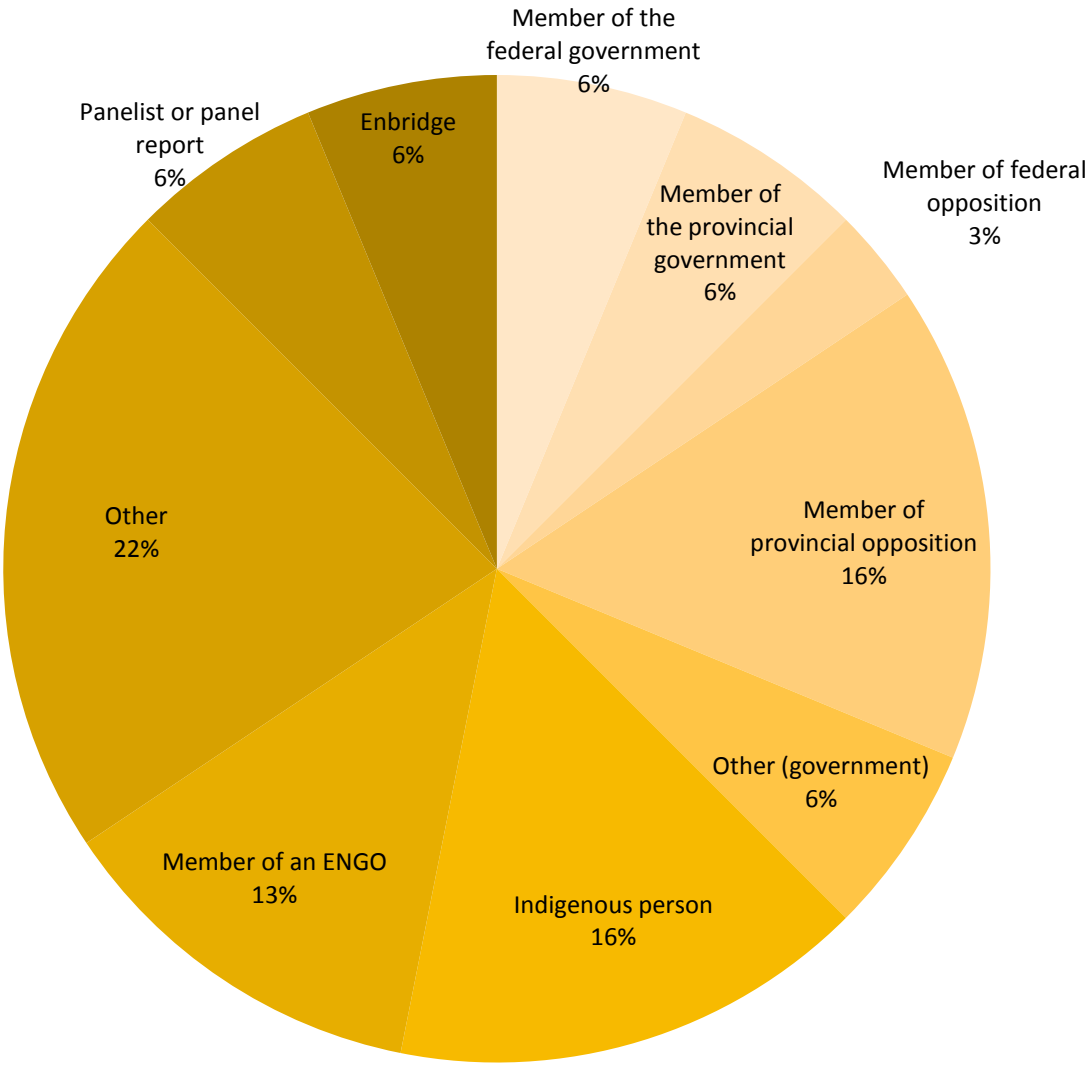


Figure 6 Third person quoted

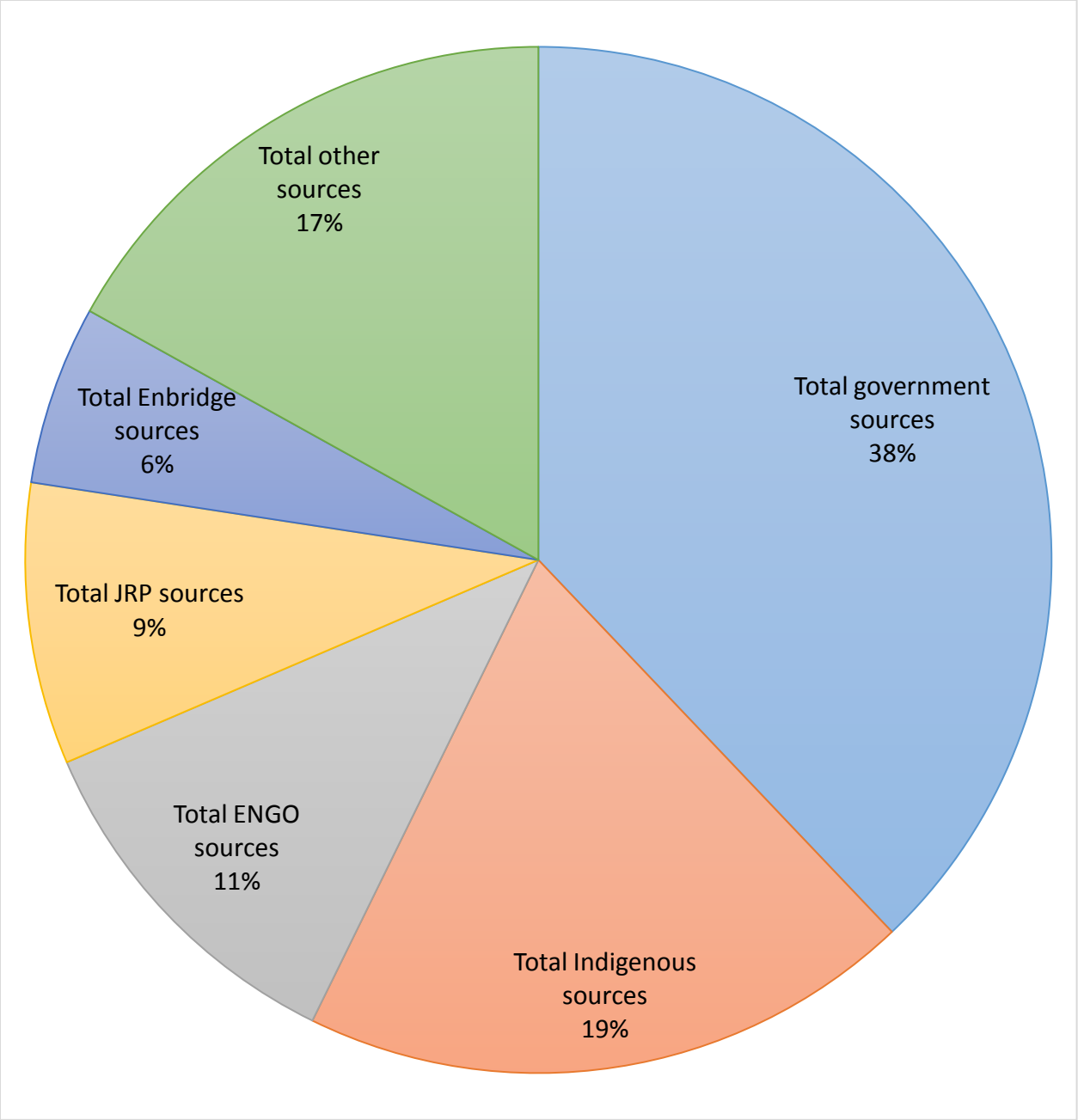


Figure 7 All leading sources: *This chart shows all results (for articles published in 2012, 2013 and 2016) for the first three people quoted in stories.*

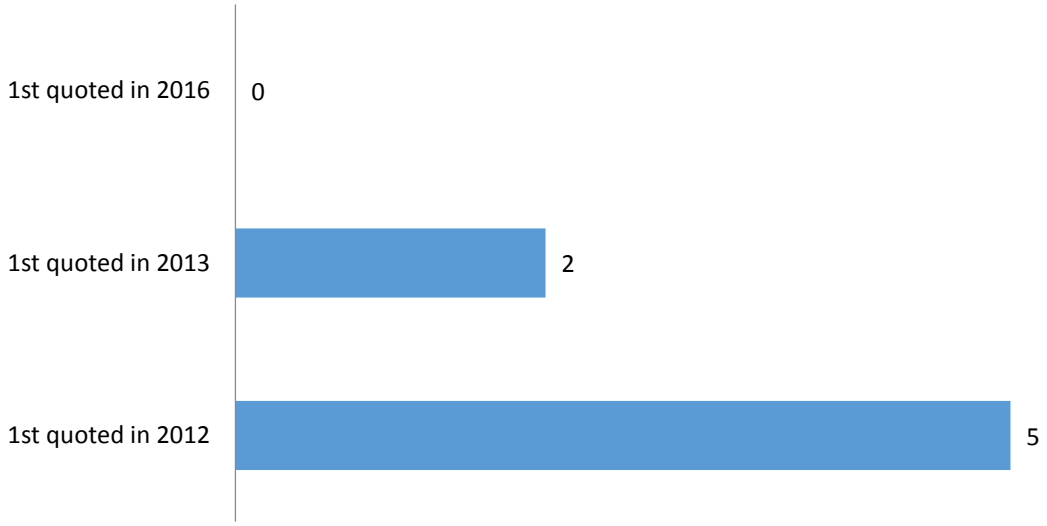


Figure 8 Indigenous sources

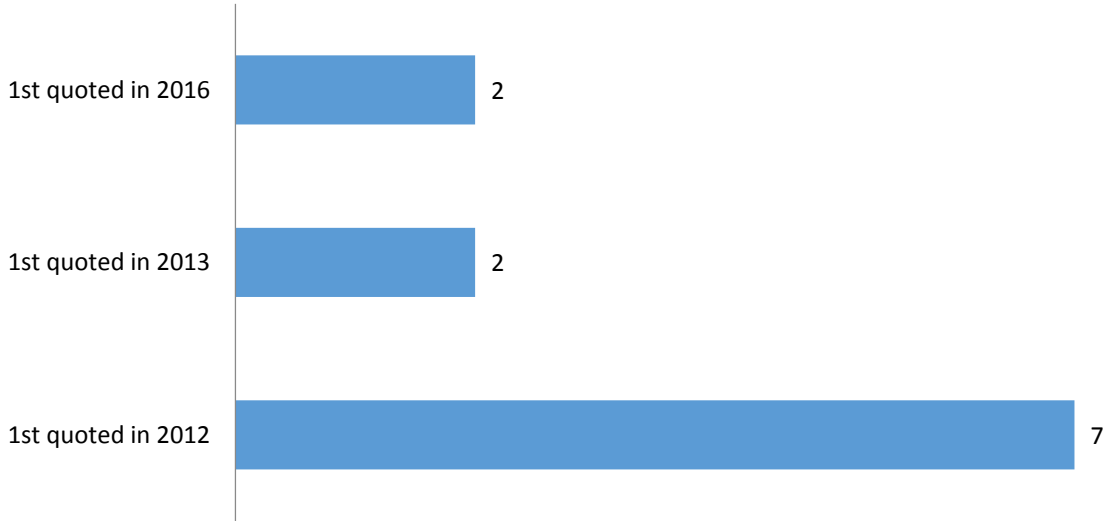


Figure 9 Government and opposition sources

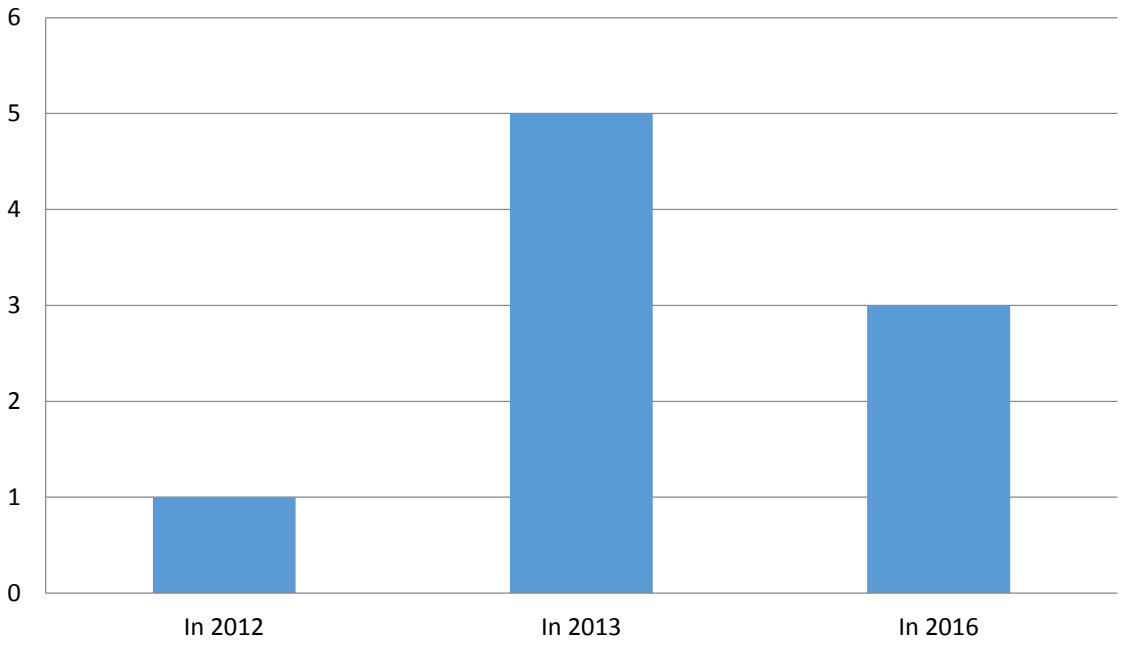


Figure 10 Number of stories wherein an Indigenous person mentions the possibility of a First Nations-led lawsuit.

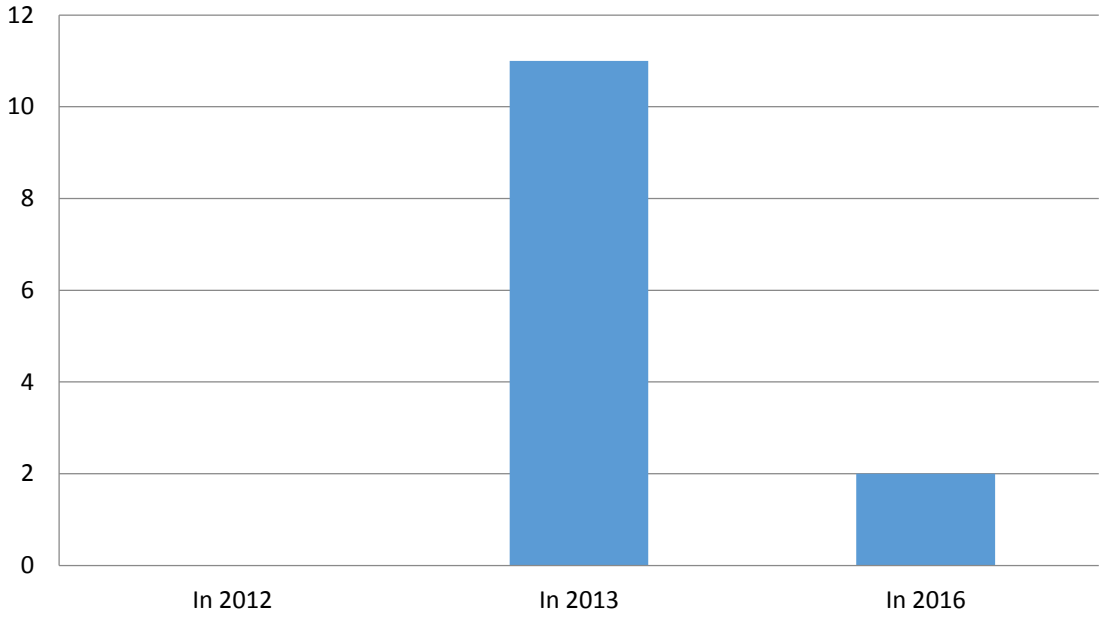


Figure 11 Number of stories wherein a person who is not Indigenous mentions the possibility of a First Nations-led lawsuit

Articles that took up the terms of "national interest"		
January 11, 2012	7	47%
December 20, 2013	4	11%
November 30, 2016	1	11%
Articles that mentioned the Canadian Pacific Railway		
January 11, 2012	1	7%
December 20, 2013	0	0
November 30, 2016	0	0
Articles that mentioned the Berger Inquiry		
January 11, 2012	2	13%
December 20, 2013	2	5%
November 30, 2016	0	0
Articles that mentioned oil spills		
January 11, 2012	7	47%
December 20, 2013	23	62%
November 30, 2016	2	22%
Articles that mentioned the Exxon Valdez spill		
January 11, 2012	1	7%
December 20, 2013	3	8%
November 30, 2016	0	0
Articles that mentioned job numbers or the potential for employment		
January 11, 2012	4	27%
December 20, 2013	10	27%
November 30, 2016	1	11%
Articles that mentioned climate change or greenhouse gas emissions		
January 11, 2012	1	7%
December 20, 2013	6	16%
November 30, 2016	5	56%
Articles that mentioned Lac Mégantic		
January 11, 2012	n/a	
December 20, 2013	3	8%
November 30, 2016	0	0

Figure 12 *Key issues raised in Enbridge Northern Gateway coverage*

February 19, 2018

Patricia Audette-Longo
585 O'Connor Street, Apt 15
Ottawa
Ontario K1S 3R2 Canada

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