

**INDIGENOUS-LED ENVIRONMENTALISM: NEWS FRAMING OF PIPELINE
PROTEST IN THE HARPER AND TRUDEAU ERAS**

By

© B. Quinn Burt

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, news media have widely covered pipeline activism within Canada. Social movements and news media have an intertwined relationship, in which activists benefit from increased public awareness on specific issues while news sources gain access to captivating content. Even though a wide range of peoples and organizations pursue protest efforts against resource extraction projects, academic work has generally distinguished between Indigenous and environmental movements. Similarly, news sources can misrepresent protest issues and make problematic generalizations by grouping individuals into broad categories or by creating divisions between peoples and movements. This study benefits from anti-colonial, framing, and political opportunity theories to understand how news sources cover Indigenous-led pipeline protest over time. I compare coverage across three news types (settler-mainstream, settler-independent, and Indigenous) during the Harper and Trudeau political eras. This study finds clear differences in focus and knowledge production between news types and explains how critical events, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, changed news understandings of resource extraction debates over time. Furthermore, it argues that news work on pipeline protest can benefit from providing more context, rather than generalizing specific issues as if they apply to all Indigenous peoples and communities.

Keywords: social movements, Indigenous environmentalism, pipeline protest, news framing, Canada

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Over the past few decades, Canadian environmental movements have focused on challenging the industrial pursuits of governments and companies, in the hopes of limiting ecological degradation and reducing the impacts of climate change. This opposition includes resistance to extractive projects such as the Alberta tar sands and various oil pipelines. In recent years, a variety of news sources have reported this type of protest widely. Social movement activity involves an intertwined relationship with news media. Movements depend on the news to bring attention to their grievances and the news benefits by gaining access to captivating content (Wilkes et al., 2010; Staggenborg and Ramos, 2016). However, scholars acknowledge that movements rely far more upon media than the media does on social movements (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Successfully communicating movement frames to the media can make the difference between victory and failure for social movements. Additionally, media framing can potentially change public perceptions of issues, which may persuade bystanders to provide support to movements (Benford, 1997).

Indigenous peoples have also mobilized against environmentally risky projects that impact their communities and land. While the Canadian government often portrays oil extraction as a beneficial economic endeavour for all of Canada, Indigenous movements may view these projects as exploitations of traditional land and natural resources, which benefit settler Canada. These Indigenous movements often have had a polarized, strained relationship with mainstream news sources (Wilkes et al., 2010). Indigenous activists tend to be skeptical of receiving positive exposure through settler media sources, and their concerns are warranted. Scholars have shown that mainstream media framing is rarely respectful to Indigenous peoples and issues. Baylor

(1996), for example, analyzed media framing of the 1960s/1970s American Indigenous movement, finding that mainstream news was biased and relied upon stereotypical frames to describe Indigenous protest. Scholars advocate for longitudinal research, noting that these types of media frames change and adapt over time (Benford, 1997). Since positive framing can cause bystanders to sympathize with movement claims, activists must be careful to select tactics that do not work to isolate or alienate media attention (Benford, 1997).

Indigenous protest is often grounded in environmental concerns. Social movement literature, unconsciously or consciously, tends to separate “Indigenous activism” and “environmental activism,” suggesting that, while these two movements are related, they are, at base, fundamentally different (see studies such as Haluza-DeLay and Carter (2014), which make this division). In reality, the distinction between movements is not entirely clear. Indigenous activists can be involved in environmental movements, and Indigenous movements can be environmentally driven. And just as Indigenous movements and environmental movements are framed in particular ways by the news, Indigenous environmental movements have complex relationships with settler and non-settler news sources. These sources can latch onto either the Indigenous or environmental aspects of the protest, creating narratives that favour particular movement grievances. These movements are concerned with both Indigenous and environmental issues; they do not always need to be separated. Furthermore, little research has focused on how environmental activism by Indigenous peoples is often framed as “Indigenous” rather than “environmental” protest. This study seeks to contribute to social movement and de-colonializing literature by describing how news discussions and frames pertaining to Indigenous environmental mobilization on pipeline issues evolve over time, and whether news sources produce content in favour of Indigenous environmental issues.

1.2 Research Intent

I am concerned with the way different forms of news cover Indigenous environmental pipeline activism within Canada – a country that is occupied by settler governments and institutions. Specifically, I want to know how mainstream, independent, and Indigenous media frame environmental issues and protest actions by Indigenous peoples. Indigenous environmentalism primarily includes activism against pipeline-linked issues (extraction and transportation of oil), impacts to Indigenous sovereignty, culture, and health, as well as climate change, environmental degradation, and other related environmental problems. Attention will be paid to the specific critical events in which news sources may ground their framing of protest (Staggenborg, 1993). The events that news workers associate with activism can shape the way the public understands what is important for these movements. Further still, I want to discover whether and how media framing has changed between the past two governmental periods: the Harper era (2006.02.06 - 2015.11.03), and the Trudeau era (2015.11.04 onward) (Liberty of Parliament, 2015). Differences observed between these two periods could point to a shift in the political opportunity structure in which protest occurred. However, this study can only suggest current trends and may not be a representative comparison between the eras. This is due to the fact that the Harper era spanned nearly 10 years while the Trudeau era is not yet finished. As noted throughout this thesis, important events and political situations will likely develop in future years. Revisiting this study after the Trudeau era has finished may provide further insight into how political opportunities change over time.

To sum my research intent, then, I will analyze how different news sources (settler and Indigenous) frame Indigenous environmental activism across different settler-governmental regimes and critical events. Social movement scholars have tended to study Indigenous activism

as distinct from environmental protest; few studies have considered them when they are combined. I aim to fill this gap in the literature.

To this end, my research is guided by the following questions:

RQ1: Does news media coverage homogenize environmental activism by Indigenous peoples as simply “Indigenous protest”? If so, how do generalizations of issues and peoples occur across different types of news media?

RQ2: How does news framing of Indigenous environmental activism differ across political regimes (Harper era vs. Trudeau era) and how do critical events influence coverage over time?

RQ3: What are the differences between mainstream, independent, and Indigenous news framing of Indigenous environmental protest? What environmental issues do these news sources deem relevant to pipeline activism?

To disrupt normative settler perspectives, this study compares Indigenous and settler news coverage on protest. As put by Awâsis (2014; 265), decolonization is not supposed to be “a comfortable process for settlers”: it is intentionally uncomfortable. Regan (2010) suggests that decolonization is “unsettling”. This is a play on words, which emphasizes decolonization as both a process of removing settler control over Indigenous life, while at the same time causing emotional discomfort for those who seek reconciliation. Studies with this kind of focus are essential for moving towards reconciliation within the cultural spheres of Canadian society.

1.3 Position Statement

Before moving forward with this project, there are a few things I must acknowledge. First is the fact that I am a white settler scholar, studying Indigenous protest. Thus, there is an inherent

bias to my work. Tuck (2009) highlights that even though non-Indigenous scholars may have the best of intentions, they can still latently produce work that is colonizing through and beyond academia. I remain conscious to the fact that settler scholars like myself have categorized Indigenous peoples using colonial labels for hundreds of years and have worked to create a “damage-based” narrative that describes Indigenous peoples as fragmented or tainted by colonialism (Tuck, 2009).

Throughout this project, I have chosen to use the term “Indigenous,” to describe the first peoples of Canada. As many argue, this term can indeed be problematic as it combines many groups under one distinct term that can obscure the great diversity of cultures, histories, and peoples on this land (Smith, 2012; Brady and Kelly, 2017). Thus, I also make an effort to use the term “peoples” and to explain specific situations while acknowledging relevant groups throughout my writing (Coburn and Atleo, 2016). Additionally, the diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples (as well as other status and non-status peoples) must be acknowledged. As will be evident in this project, I pay close attention to how news sources generalize situations and issues to all Indigenous peoples in Canada, while disregarding the distinctions between many different specific groups.

I also do not wish to portray all Indigenous peoples as against oil and gas projects. Many communities and individuals have benefited from oil. However, important to recognize the need for companies and governments to seek consent and consultation from specific communities that may be impacted by oil extraction. There is great diversity amongst Indigenous peoples in Canada, and communities make their own choices regarding land use and resource extraction.

Another acknowledgment I wish to make is the fact that many would not describe Indigenous movements as protest movements. As Coburn and Atleo (2016) argue, Indigenous protest is unique from other types of social movements since it is part of the continued resistance against colonial exploitation and oppression. This argument strengthens my focus on the potential news generalizations of Indigenous peoples who take part in activism. This project views Indigenous environmental activism as (but not limited to) a resistance by many distinct groups to assert sovereignty and rights over land and resources and to freely restore and practice culture.

Making these above statements is not enough. To research these issues in a respectful and ethical way, the work of Indigenous authors is cited and engaged with throughout this project. Furthermore, Regan (2010) points out that many well-intended settlers further colonialism by “avoid[ing] looking at ourselves and the collective responsibility we bear for the colonial status quo” (p.11). Thus, I commit myself to questioning my actions as a researcher. I also align my research with the recommendations put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and create research that can be used by Indigenous peoples, rather than creating research that simply uses Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015). This project may help influence future work by highlighting the need for researchers to be continually critical of how settler-colonial sources produce categories, frames, and narratives of Indigenous resistance and protest. These perspectives can negatively or positively influence Indigenous political actions in opposition to the Canadian colonial state.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis includes several chapters, each with its own specific purpose and focus. Chapter 2 presents the literature that will be engaged throughout the thesis. This section includes an overview of literature on the concerns and grievances of Indigenous-led environmentalism; considerations of framing theory, studies of how news media have portrayed Indigenous and environmental activism; a discussion of the use of political opportunity and critical events theory to understand protest; and lastly, how anti-colonial theory is relevant to this project.

In chapter 3, I explain the methods used in my research. Here, I describe how content analysis was used to help understand how news articles frame and cover protest. I discuss how articles on Indigenous environmental activism from settler-mainstream, settler-independent and Indigenous news sources were collected into an archive, and how I drew a sample from this archive. Furthermore, this chapter provides an overview of the coding schedule and process used in the study, as well my attention to ethical considerations and anti-colonial methodology.

Chapter 4 is the first analysis chapter of this thesis, which looks at how actors were covered within news articles on Indigenous environmental activism. This chapter is informed by RQ1 and focuses on how activists are categorized using blanket terms and specific group names, references to “allyship” and solidarity, as well as if protesters were considered “Indigenous,” “environmental,” or both at the same time. This chapter discusses the organizational actors and opponents that were targeted by protesters. Furthermore, throughout this chapter and the following two analysis chapters, I consider how coverage differs from news sources and changes over time, i.e. between political eras.

Chapter 5, the second analysis chapter, focuses on news representations of political opportunities and critical events for Indigenous environmentalism in Canada. In this chapter, I start by outlining how the Harper and Trudeau eras are portrayed in relation to their receptiveness to movement grievances well as how they handle Indigenous and environmental issues. I then argue that previous work has not adequately considered how news sources respond to critical events and the *different stages* at which responses take place (during the event itself, during movement reaction to the event, and after the event) (Staggenborg, 1993). This chapter studies critical political events such as debate and passage of Bills C-38, 45 and 51, (broad bills that impact environmental protection, Indigenous sovereignty and protest rights) and whether the release of the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion (TAATSE) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) changed news coverage and protest opportunities. Lastly, it looks at critical movement events such as the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests and whether they were framed as having potential to foster mobilization in Canada; as well as the Idle No More movement and how it was framed in relation to environmentalism.

Chapter 6 is all about how news media frame environmental problems and protest grievances relating to Indigenous-led environmentalism. It looks at how news frames protesters' concerns for far-reaching environmental problems such as climate change, sudden and dramatic events such as notable oil spills, and how environmental degradation impacts water, land, people, and animals. Furthermore, this chapter looks at how the news considers Indigenous sovereignty over land and resources in relation to oil extraction in Canada, and whether and how different forms of rights (Human, Indigenous, and Treaty) are presented as tools for environmental protection.

In chapter 7, I conclude this project by revisiting my initial research questions and discussing how they are addressed by my data analysis. Here, I summarize the most important findings of the thesis while engaging with key literature. Next, I consider issues that were absent in news coverage and theorize why these absences were apparent. I then return to the methodological limitations of my study and justify my research choices. Lastly, I provide suggestions and advice for future research on Indigenous-led environmental activism.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews several fields of literature that are relevant to this project. As this thesis is about Indigenous-led environmentalism, literature on movement grievances and concerns will be discussed. Many concerns are related to the Alberta oil sands, fuel transportation, as well as resource extraction without the consent or inclusion of relevant Indigenous peoples (Ominayak and Thomas, 2009; Preston, 2013; Awâsis, 2014). Next, I will briefly review framing theory, look at how previous scholars have studied news framing of Indigenous and environmental protest, and consider how Indigenous peoples are portrayed in media in general. As this study is concerned with how news media covers Indigenous-led environmentalism, previous work on how news sources have framed both Indigenous and environmental activism are relevant (Baylor, 1996; Wilkes et al., 2010; Clark, 2014). Third, I will consider other key social movement literature and theories relevant to this project, such as political opportunity (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016) and critical event theory (Staggenborg, 1993). Political opportunity theory helps us understand how movement opportunities change over time as political situations change through new leaders or governments (Ramos, 2008). Furthermore, critical events such as important policies, international declarations, and influential protests can help movements gain traction as these events give movements more reason to protest (Staggenborg, 1993). For example, some attribute Bill C-45 as a critical event that helped spark Idle No More (Palmater, 2015). These theories are important as this project will analyze how news coverage differs between two political regimes, and how critical events change media landscapes and news practices. Lastly, anti-colonial theory is another field of literature key to this project. Indigenous activism is often considered a continued resistance against colonial

oppression (Coburn and Atleo, 2016) and resource extraction on Indigenous lands often creates risks to Indigenous communities while these projects serve to benefit colonial Canada (Ominayak and Thomas, 2009). Additionally, my role as a settler researcher requires me to look inward to question my own work and how it should function to disrupt previous colonial research (Regan, 2010).

2.2 Movement grievances & key concerns of Indigenous-led environmentalism

As suggested in chapter 1, Indigenous and environmental movements are often treated as mutually exclusive in both the literature and the media. For example, when discussing the actors involved in protest events, researchers create an analytical divide between Indigenous groups and environmental groups (Wilkes, 2006; Ramos, 2008; Preston, 2013). While it might make sense to distinguish between movement actors, what is lost in this division is the environmental stakes and aims that Indigenous activists may have. Just because one is Indigenous, does not mean that one is not an environmentalist (or vice versa). Whyte (2016) describes Indigenous environmental movements as diverse multi-level actors (grassroots, institutional, governmental, and non-governmental) who participate in environmental governance, and oppose issues such as pollution, environmental racism, and climate change to name a few. The point here is not to engage in a semantic debate, but to emphasize the leadership that Indigenous environmental activists have taken on environmental issues in Canada and the world (Whyte, 2016). Rather than simply focusing on Indigenous activism in general, this project is concerned with Indigenous environmental activism, and how different news sources portray activism and categorize people involved.

Current Indigenous environmental movements are informed by a variety of environmental and social concerns. This section will provide a brief overview of some of the main grievances of these movements, with key consideration to oil-related issues. This is certainly not an exhaustive list but will serve as an introduction to the types of issues concerning these movements.

Idle No More ignited widespread mobilization and discussion while serving to inspire Indigenous environmental activists throughout Canada. It was based on ideals of inclusivity, rejecting “colonial based lines” of categorization to embrace all Indigenous peoples, as well as settler allies (Palmater, 2015, p.78). While the movement had a variety of larger goals, it had clear environmental ties, mobilizing against climate change, environmental degradation, and the continued effects of the colonial process (Palmater, 2015; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016). The movement was triggered during the Harper era upon the release of Bill C-45, a bill that proposed changes to a variety of existing legislation, including the Indian Act (Wotherspoon & Hansen, 2013). This bill was laden with reductions in the environmental protections governing industrial projects and reduced the role Indigenous people played in negotiations of such projects (Woo, 2013). The Idle No More movement was started on social media by four women who were concerned about how the bill would impact Indigenous peoples and the environment and soon spread throughout the country (Cavin, 2013).

One of the most well-known and controversial industrial projects in Canada is the Alberta oil sands. This massive project spans several areas that are home to many Indigenous communities including Athabasca, Peace River, and Cold Lake (Preston, 2013). The extraction process is energy intensive and requires harvesting two tons of material to create a single barrel

of crude oil (Urry, 2013). Among the more visible environmental issues of the Alberta tar sands, such as increased emissions and land stripping, is the pollution of drinking water for Indigenous communities along the Athabasca River. Large tailing ponds hold excess waste from tar sands operations and pose health risks for Indigenous peoples, such as increased cancer rates for those living in the Treaty 8 area (Huseman & Short, 2012). Scholars point out that such health concerns are often ignored by the federal government and are covered minimally by mainstream media (Haluza-Delay & Carter, 2014).

Environmental impacts are not the only problematic aspect of resource extraction. The exploitation of Indigenous lands and resources for economic gain without properly compensating and including relevant communities is a key issue discussed by many. Ominayak and Thomas (2009) discuss how Lubicon land in Alberta was exploited by oil companies “...without any consultation with the Lubicon people” (p.111). The authors highlight how extraction not only caused serious health issues, the economic gains of extraction were not experienced by community members (Ominayak and Thomas, 2009). Other scholars report similar situations occurring within other Indigenous contexts in Canada. For example, Coburn and Atleo (2016) consider how the colonial-capitalist system excludes Indigenous peoples from participating and gaining economically from industry. They describe how the Nuu-chah-nulth of BC were excluded from their traditional relationships with ocean resources, due to colonial control of the fishing industry. While this example is not related to oil extraction, similarities can be drawn in many other contexts, such as how Veltmeyer and Bowles (2014) describe how Enbridge pipeline projects in BC have occurred without the permission of First Nations groups who have sovereignty over the land and water over which pipelines cross. The exclusion of Indigenous

peoples from both the approval of industry projects and the economic gain from them is a key grievance for many activists.

Oil extraction is not the only matter that concerns Indigenous environmental activists. The transportation of these resources through risky pipelines has proven to be a key problem (Awâsis, 2014). There are several proposed or operational pipelines that transport oil across Canada including Keystone XL, Kinder Morgan, Northern Gateway, Enbridge, Trans Mountain, and Energy East. Many of these projects would or do cross the land of Indigenous peoples and have been subject to considerable protest. For example, there was resistance in relation to the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project when hundreds of people marched in protest in 2010 (McCreary & Milligan, 2014). Another key pipeline protest was the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests. While the main protests occurred in the US, there was support by Indigenous peoples within Canada. The situation in North Dakota is similar to protests in the Canadian context. A pipeline was being built that crossed Indigenous land and jeopardizing water sources (the Missouri River) for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe (Hersher, 2017). In the Dakota case, police responses to the protest were oppressive and violent, involving militarized gear and tactics, and subjecting the self-described “water protectors” to brutalization (Wong, 2016a; Wong, 2016b). Indigenous and environmental protesters gathered throughout several Canadian cities in opposition to the pipeline, the excessive police force, and in solidarity with the DAPL activists.¹ This included gatherings and marches in Toronto, Calgary, Halifax, and other cities (Ballingall & Winter, 2016; Quon, 2016; MacGregor & Castillo, 2016). It is pipeline protests

¹ Important work has been completed on the issue of violent repression tactics by the state to control protest situations. For example, see Barker (2009) and Wood (2014, 2015).

like these that represent the anti-oil sentiments among wider Indigenous and environmental movements in North America.

Above all, the continued resistance of Indigenous peoples should be highlighted, as it would be wrong to simply discuss exploitation or oppression (Tuck, 2009). Indigenous protest groups are among the leaders of anti-oil protest in Canada, with clear stakes of community-wellbeing, environmental health, and land sovereignty (Haluza-Delay & Carter, 2014). Awâsis (2014) focuses on how Indigenous peoples have opposed environmental racism through “legal and practical barriers to tar sands expansion” across Turtle Island (p.253). One of the difficulties in this resistance effort has been creating safe spaces for Indigenous ways of thinking, which is achieved by decolonization, and by promoting Indigenous cultural practices (Awâsis, 2014). Groups can create these spaces in the media and resist pipeline projects by building structures in their direct path, through peace walks and ceremonies, and drawing upon sacred treaties (Awâsis, 2014; Cardinal, 2014). Treaties, in particular, have proven to be a key tool for Indigenous groups to legally draw upon in protest, though historically the Canadian government has disregarded many of these treaties (Awâsis, 2014). Furthermore, what should not be overlooked is the reality of unceded territory in Canada. Much of Canada encompasses land for which land treaties were not signed (Sioui & McLemon, 2014). This is a complex and unique situation, where the historical and ancestral land of many Indigenous peoples remains legally and socially unacknowledged. So not only has the Canadian government failed to respect treaties, they have created divisions between status and non-status peoples.

Some of the most obvious environmental impacts of resource extraction are catastrophic events such as oil spills. These events cause long-term as well as immediate consequences to

water, land, ecosystems, and human health and community well-being. They also provide clear examples of the dangers of oil for activists to reference in their protests. There are several key oil spills that have been studied by sociologists. Stoddart and Graham (2018) point out that the Deepwater Horizon disaster of 2010 has become known as one of the most notorious spills in recent history and has been a key example for oil opponents to mention when discussing the risks of oil. This spill has been studied by Hoffbauer and Ramos (2014), who looked at how news coverage evolved as the event developed. They found that news coverage began to normalize the spill over time, potentially neglecting the long-term impacts of it. Another infamous spill was the Exxon Valdez spill of 1989, which has also been studied relating to how news sources cover it. Widener and Gunter (2007) compared mainstream and independent coverage on the spill in Alaska, finding that mainstream news tended to obscure the perspectives of Indigenous Alaskans, and instead sought opinions from “powerful elites.” Independent news, on the other hand, included a more diverse range of coverage by using quotes from Indigenous persons, as well as a focusing on how the spill caused cultural impacts (Widener and Gunter, 2007). What this study is missing is how Indigenous news sources covered the spill. As my study compares mainstream, independent, and Indigenous news coverage on Indigenous-led environmental protest, it will fill literature gaps related to how different news sources frame oil as a protest issue.

A key organization for the movement is the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), which has acted as an educating and mobilizing resource for Indigenous communities across Turtle Island (North America) since 1990 (Indigenous Environmental Network, n.d). The goals of the network range from promoting environmental protection and sustainable lifestyles among Indigenous peoples, to influencing government policy to help Indigenous peoples across the

world, and more. IEN takes a strong environmental justice stance for the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and seeks to ignite change through “empowering and supporting each other to take direct, informed action and affect our ability to protect our lands from contamination and exploitation.” (Indigenous Environmental Network, n.d). This includes action against many environmental issues such as climate change, resource extraction and pollution of Indigenous lands and communities, and environmental racism in general.

2.2.1 Difficulties in protesting oil systems

Key to this project are concerns about oil-related emissions, production and transportation that pose direct and serious risks to Indigenous peoples, and ultimately wider settler and global societies. But what is it that makes protesting oil such as difficult task? Urry (2013) makes it quite clear that modern societies are ingrained with and incredibly reliant upon oil. He uses the term “carbon capital” to describe the considerable investments societies have made in oil-based systems of business, travel, shipping, and consumerism (Urry, 2013, p.21). This complex has structured our cities and lives in ways that rely on oil, making it difficult to shift our energy reliance to another source. Therefore, oil is connected to all aspects of “modern life,” which makes opting out of these systems quite challenging. While many believe in climate change and the environmental risks oil poses, it *appears* impossible to do anything about these issues without interrupting our daily routines. Protest, by nature, challenges existing power structures and suggests changes for a better future. For Indigenous environmental activists, this not only means fighting against our dependence upon carbon capital but colonial processes that work in subtle ways and undercurrents through this dependence.

Researchers have looked specifically at oil systems in the Canadian context. Haluza-Delay and Carter (2017) explain Canada's deep investments in oil extraction. They explain that billions of barrels remain beneath Canadian soil, with extraction amounting to 1.7 million barrels per day. Countries like Canada have a clear connection with "petro-capitalist political culture" (Haluza-Delay & Carter, 2017: p.344). This means moving away from oil systems would require massive political and social change. According to Carter (2014), the choice of successive Canadian governments to continue oil sands development means the country is complicit in the "political, economic, and environmental" global disasters that will occur with continuing climate change (p.24). Indigenous environmental activists are concerned with limiting these impending tragedies and hope to ignite changes in energy practices, environmental sustainability, and the exploitative relationships between Indigenous peoples and colonial-settler states on the global stage.

2.3 Framing theory and Social Movements

Framing theory has been a key aspect of social movement studies and can be used to help understand how news sources portray Indigenous environmentalism. Framing theory evolved from Goffman's (1974) *Frame Analysis*, which describes how people hold differing perspectives and understandings on a given issue, which are informed by their previous experiences and worldviews. Since Goffman's time, it has been adapted as a tool for social movement studies. Framing is either used to understand how social movement actors express their grievances (Johnston, 1995; Taylor, 2000) or how these grievances are translated through news coverage (Benford, 2005).

Environmental justice (EJ) frames can be useful for individuals who oppose industry projects, as EJ frames link rights violations, racism, and discrimination to environmental harm (Benford, 2005). EJ frames are commonly used by Indigenous and environmental movements to enlist support from the public by portraying pipelines, and other industrial projects as acts of social and environmental injustice (Benford, 2005; Taylor, 2000). When news attention is given to these movements, coverage can include or avoid accusations of injustice, or instead focus on contentious protest actions. These news frames “function by underscoring and embellishing the seriousness and injustice of a social problem” (Benford, 2005: p.38). The information presented in news coverage can potentially change public understandings of a topic; frames can depict a protest as a right of expression, or in contrast, a troublesome disruption of the peace.

Benford and Snow (2000) identify several ways movements can use frames, stating that successful “frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action” (p.614). Movements can utilize “prognostic framing” when they have anticipated solutions to issues, or “diagnostic framing” when they realize a problem exists yet are not sure of the solution (p.616). If frames are not used consistently, protest issues may not be taken seriously (Benford and Snow, 2000).

While frame analysis has been practiced thoroughly within social movement studies, it is not without its skeptics. Conley (2015) provides a critique of the framing perspective. He suggests that the process of constructing frames (as a researcher) is limiting in that it can finalize situations into set categorizations and realities. This, in turn, sways “dialogic processes of justification and critique” by establishing the very tone of social movement analysis. To elaborate this claim, Conley’s (2015) improves the scope of frame analysis by incorporating

“pragmatist sociology” – a view that posits that framing processes occur as “dynamic” negotiations and individual thought processes. Furthermore, agency and the ability of the regular individual to “...exercise a capacity to make cognitive and moral judgements about justice and worthiness in situation of discord” are acknowledged in this perspective (Conley, 2015, p.203).

2.3.1 Framing Indigenous & environmental protest

There have been many empirical studies that look at how news sources frame Indigenous and environmental protest, however, there has been limited work on Indigenous-led environmentalism. On Indigenous activism, Baylor (1996) analyzed television news coverage of the American Indigenous movement from 1968-1979. Baylor (1996) identified and labelled five reoccurring themes within their study, based on close observation of these news segments: “Militant, Stereotype, Treaty Rights, Civil Rights, and Factionalism.” (Baylor, 1996: p.244). Baylor (1996) found that the militant frame was most commonly used (occurring in 90% of the segments), followed by the civil rights frame (56%), the stereotype frame (48%), factionalism (44%), and the treaty rights frame (17%) (p.244). Furthermore, news coverage frequently illustrated bias, and on occasion, was clearly opposed to the goals of Indigenous movements. Baylor (1997) states that the utilization of violent tactics by Indigenous groups discouraged the media from positively framing Indigenous protest, concluding that the use of contentious tactics is a “risky choice” (p.251).

More recent studies have also been conducted. Wilkes et al. (2010) analyzed news coverage by mainstream sources (the *Globe and Mail* and the *Vancouver Sun*) on Indigenous collective action over a ten-year period (1985-1995) and found that protests involving violence were more likely to be covered. While their study included coverage on over 200 protest events

during this period, coverage of the Oka crisis of 1990 was vastly over-represented, “generating almost one-quarter of all coverage” (Wilkes et al., 2010, p.344). These findings make it clear that mainstream media is often sensational and focus on issues that are particularly shocking or exciting to the public. While this type of coverage can bring attention to important issues, it can also foster negative stereotypes of Indigenous peoples.

In another study, Clark (2014) compared the frames used by mainstream news agencies and Indigenous news agencies. The data consisted of 26 news segments from both types of agencies. Clark (2014) distinguished between “colonial stereotypes” and “Aboriginal context” frames. Both agency types employed these frames, though the mainstream news was more likely to use the “stereotype” frame, and Indigenous media were more apt to use the “Aboriginal context” frame (p.42). Clark’s (2014) work also considered Indigenous environmental protest, looking specifically at the protest that occurred against the Keystone XL pipeline. They found that mainstream media tended to overlook the fact that the majority of the protesters were Indigenous, describing them as simply “environmentalists,” while Indigenous media made this quite apparent (Clark, 2014: p.53).

Even when individuals support Indigenous issues, framing practices can still be damaging. For example, Stoddart (2012) discussed protests against the expansion of the Sun Peaks ski resort, which took place on the unceded land of the St’at’imc nation. Many bystander environmentalists were in support of Indigenous sovereignty over this area, though they described the land as “pristine and untouched,” rather than land that was in use by peoples for thousands of years (Stoddart, 2012: p.59). This framing process, though supportive of Indigenous issues, depicted the land as unused wilderness, which ultimately discounted Indigenous uses of

the land. This is an example of movement framing, however, one that showed that even “positive” framing can have unintended negative consequences.

Frame analysis has also been employed to understand perceptions of environmental protest. As mentioned previously, contemporary environmental protest often uses an environmental justice paradigm (EJP) to frame and situate discussions around ethical and legal injustices (Čapek, 1993; Taylor, 2000; Benford, 2005). EJPs suggest a need for swift action to restore or move towards justice (Čapek, 1993), and provide what is known as a *master frame*, which works to organize collective action around a central theme (Taylor, 2000). Čapek (1993) interviewed inhabitants of Carver Terrace, a small town in the southern US, which experienced an environmental crisis stemming from the industrial dumping of toxic waste. Despite the long history of dumping, development companies built homes on these sites. The town was racially districted, and many African-American families moved into houses built on the toxic land. Čapek (1993) found that interviewees often used environmental justice frames and noticed that despite clear evidence of the toxicity of the land (illnesses, deaths, lack of plant growth, etc.), the town council was dismissive of people’s claims and would tell residents that there was “No problem.” Thus, it became clear that the town, and the officials in power, were reinforcing environmental racism by allowing these problems to persist.

As mentioned above, master frames can help activists focus their cause on a central and tangible issue (Taylor, 2000). Some have pointed out that rights-based framing has been a useful master frame for many movements, as issues can be portrayed as a violation of individual and group rights (Valocchi, 1996; Clément, 2008; Thomas-Muller, 2014). For example, Snow and Benford (1992) explained how the master frame of the civil rights movements of the 1960s

“...accented the principle of equal rights and opportunities regardless of ascribed characteristics and articulated it with the goal of integration through nonviolent means” (p.145). Regarding Indigenous and environmental protest, Indigenous and treaty rights have been used as justifications for why oil extraction should be halted (Klein, 2014; Thomas-Muller, 2014), as opponents can make a strong case for how industry projects violate specific treaties and obscure Indigenous sovereignty over land. Additionally, as Baylor (1996) pointed out in his study on news coverage of American indigenous activism in the 60s and 70s, civil rights and treaty rights are very common frames used by the news. This study will provide insight on how contemporary Canadian news sources portray Indigenous environmental activism, and how rights are understood and used by the news to frame protest.

2.4 Portrayals of Indigenous peoples in media

While the focus of this project is on how Indigenous environmentalism is portrayed by the news, context should also be given to how news and entertainment media portray Indigenous peoples in general. A recent major study on this is Brady and Kelly’s (2017) book *We Interrupt this Program: Indigenous Media Tactics in Canadian Culture*. This book primarily focuses on Indigenous media tactics from 2006-2016, and how these tactics differ from settler-mainstream media portrayals of Indigenous peoples. They state that mainstream media often rely on stereotypes that “...reflect a salvaging impulse and an imperialist nostalgia that lament the apparently inevitable extinction of Indigenous people in the face of what settlers called “progress” and “civilization” (Brady and Kelly, 2017, p.6). These portrayals of Indigenous peoples in media have been acknowledged by other researchers as well, such as Coburn and Atleo (2016) who argue that media has portrayed Indigenous peoples as relics from the past. They state, “Mainstream films, books and even fashion often present Indigenous peoples as

archaic, purely historical peoples,” which causes Indigenous peoples to be overlooked as modern and relevant human-beings (Coburn and Atleo, 2016, p.182). Furthermore, Brady and Kelly (2017) suggest that when mainstream news covers Indigenous issues, they often generalize as if all Indigenous peoples are from the same group and that specific issues impact them the same. This is due to the fact that mainstream journalists often exclude opinions from Indigenous individuals and seek out opinions from people who may not actually be relevant to the specific issues (Brady and Kelly, 2017).

This project is interested in how different news sources contribute to generalizations of Indigenous peoples, or how they avoid generalizations by being specific in their coverage. As Coburn and Atleo (2016) suggest, authors often make the mistake of discussing situations far from where they occur and without acknowledging their own role as an outsider. Coburn and Atleo (2016) state that this type of writing causes specific stories to become “decontextualized” from their location and from the people they are about (p. 179). Throughout this project, I pay attention to how stories are written by news sources, and whether or not the proper context is being provided. This will provide much-needed knowledge on how different types of news media cover situations of Indigenous environmentalism.

2.5 Political opportunity

Not only am I concerned with how news frames Indigenous environmental activism, I seek to understand how framing changes over time, and whether framing has the potential to improve the settler-Canadian political atmosphere. A key theory in social movement studies that considers political atmospheric shift is political opportunity, often called Political Process Theory. Political opportunity theory was developed in the 1970s and has been routinely used in

social movement studies ever since (Kriesi et al., 1992). Koopmans (1999) defines opportunity as "...constraints, possibilities, and threats that originate outside the mobilizing group, but affect its chances of mobilizing and/or realizing its collective interests" (p.96). In the political context, this could mean threatening policy implementation, shifts in governmental power, and other structural changes. Political opportunities not only have the potential to increase protest rates, they can influence movement outcomes and tactics (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016).

Kriesi et al. (1992) use political opportunity to address European governmental processes, such as how governments deal with political opposition, or how mobilization changes when left-wing governments come into power. This use of political opportunity is more state-centric. Others have extended the theory to encompass other factors that dictate movement opportunity. In Ramos' (2006) study on Indigenous protest in Canada, factors such as media coverage on protest events, successful land claims, and positive Supreme Court rulings on Indigenous issues were included as shapers of opportunity.

While many see the theory as useful, others are critical of it. For example, Goodwin and Jasper (1999) highlight the overstretching of the theory. They say, "political opportunity" is an incredibly broad concept that has been used by social movement scholars to mean "everything under the sun" (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; p.31). Other critics have pointed to the overly structural focus of the theory, arguing that it excludes the influence of individual agency and actions (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016). Koopmans (1999), on the other hand, believes the theory is comprehensive yet quite specific at the same time. He argues that those who move forward with it should always be cognizant that opportunities are not always created by political processes. Culture can shape opportunity from within the movement itself. In sum, Koopmans

(1999) states that “if taken seriously, then, (political) opportunity structure is a context sensitive analytical tool *par excellence*” (p.102). One must be careful not to lump all protest successes and failures as consequences of political opportunity structure.

Alcantara (2010) researched an environmental resistance in Labrador, when Innu activists occupied a Goose Bay military base (5 Wing Goose Bay) in the 1980s and 1990s (p.21). Innu protestors mobilized over concerns of increased flights, low level-flying, and prospective weapons tests at the base. They viewed these activities as harmful to the caribou, and ultimately the community’s livelihood, health, and wellbeing. Alcantara (2010) combined political opportunity and rational choice theories to explain individual and group reasoning for protest. While individuals weighed the costs and benefits of protesting in relation to their own situation, groups of people can be persuaded to protest when timely political situations arise. Alcantara (2010) suggested that political opportunities improved during the Goose Bay military base occupation through increased media attention that created awareness and support for the Innu and their grievances. As well, many individuals believed that the benefits of protesting outweighed staying idle in the face of environmental harm suggesting that they made a rational choice to participate in contentious collective action. In this example, rational choice complements political opportunity to allow for structural considerations as well as individual agency. Alcantara’s (2010) work outlines the need for more research on Indigenous environmental protest.

Corrigall-Brown and Ho (2015) looked at two environmental organizations – Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – and how their protest tactics and actions changed between political eras in Canada. Comparisons were made between the Chrétien/Martin period

(Liberal) and the Harper period (Conservative), and they found that movements reacted to changes in political receptiveness by changing their tactics to better gain the attention of governments in power. For example, it was found that Greenpeace reduced its research efforts during the Harper governmental period because the Conservative government seemed to ignore research reports (Corrigall-Brown & Ho, 2015). This supports the idea that different sets of political opportunities, or situations, require different strategies. Environmental movements need to carefully choose how they present their goals and grievances, lest they be ignored.

In the context of this project, political opportunity may vary over time depending on which governments are in power. Other researchers have studied media coverage on environmental issues at periods of governmental shift. For example, Stoddart et al. (2017) analyzed news in 2006, paying attention to how the change to a Conservative government affected discussions of climate change within the media. Their findings showed how the alignment of media with governmental parties, or non-government organizations, can suppress or amplify discussions of climate change. For this current paper, the last two governmental periods are key points of analysis as there have been stark differences between how Canadian leaders interact with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous environmental movements. Stephen Harper was unwilling to work with movements and failed to maintain a respectful relationship and dialogue between the Canadian government and Indigenous nations (Palmater, 2015). The Harper government was also criticized for its environmental policies and oil-related endeavours. Justin Trudeau, on the other hand, entered office with promises of a new era in Canada where Indigenous peoples would be respected, and the environment would be protected. While some of the choices during this period may not necessarily reflect these promises, the Canadian government changed its use of language when discussing Indigenous issues and seemed to be

receptive to social movements. Has political opportunity shifted between these two eras? Is the current political climate friendlier to Indigenous environmental activism? If so, it is possible news media framing of Indigenous environmental protest will be more sympathetic to movement claims, and more respectful in language use. However, it is important to again note that comparing the Harper period to the Trudeau period is difficult at the time of this study, as the Trudeau government has not been in power long.

2.5.1 Critical events

While political opportunity is of key concern to this project, critical events are also relevant. The concept of critical events in a social movement context was first conceived by Staggenborg (1993), who considered how movements could respond to, and to some degree, control critical events as a protest tool. Staggenborg and Ramos (2016) describe critical events as “‘signalling opportunities’ that contribute to frame alignment by affecting all actors in a given context simultaneously,” and “can be used to build coalitions with other communities, bystanders, and movements” (p.83-4). These events represent pockets of opportunity, which movements can draw upon as inspiration for protest. These events can allow movements to focus their goals and actions on a specific issue. Events can also be used to reach out to individuals who may not be directly involved in the movement yet: bystander publics (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016). Movements can channel these events in order to direct widespread attention and concern to issues and enlist support from the general population who would have otherwise been unaware of their cause(s). Furthermore, media may choose to focus on certain events rather than others, in order to shape public perceptions of what protest is about.

In a study on Indigenous movements of the 20th century, Ramos (2008) looked at how several key events shaped protest mobilization. Some of these events included: the 1969 federal proposal of “The White Paper,” the changes in the 1982 Constitution Act, and the intense Indigenous protests in the summer of 1990 (Ramos, 2008: p.801). This study suggested critical events for the movement acted as more “immediate triggers” of protest, rather than political opportunities that are more diffuse and “operate as slower structural processes” (p.817). Furthermore, he pointed out that important events like the 1982 Constitution Act were useful because they impacted all Canadians rather than Indigenous people in particular. It is easier to frame and muster support for issues and events that affect majority populations.

Work on the influence of critical events for environmental movements is quite limited. Though as Ramos (2008) notes, Walsh and Warland (1983) made a small comment of the potential of “suddenly imposed grievances” on protest in relation to a nuclear accident at the Three Mile Island power plant in Pennsylvania in 1979. However, critical events as a key concept of analysis were not present in this study.

There was one study that considered how critical events could be used to help explain mobilization by individuals from Walpole Island First Nation against concerns over chemical spills and water pollution from petrol-refineries in the area (VanWynsberghe, 2000). VanWynsberghe (2000) found that as specific events occurred that worsened matters, activists were able to more successfully communicate their grievances due to an increase in public awareness of the pollution. However, this study was in a local context and does not consider wider environmental issues impacting Indigenous peoples throughout Canada. Thus, there are

gaps in critical events literature. Work must be completed to expand understandings of critical events in a national Indigenous environmental context.

Critical events for Indigenous environmental movements could include the announcement of a new resource extraction or transportation project, environmental disasters, changes to environmental and Indigenous legislation, and so forth. Because these types of events are of concern to Indigenous, environmental, and Indigenous environmental movements alike, they may act as rallying points for mobilization. An important event that may prove critical for Indigenous environmental activism is the release of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This declaration states that in order to pursue industry projects that take place on Indigenous lands, governments must obtain free, prior and informed consent from relevant Indigenous groups (United Nations, 2008). While initially resistant to this declaration, the Canadian government officially supported the UNDRIP in 2010 (Papillon and Roden, 2016). The declaration could provide activists with a legal option to oppose pipeline projects, as these projects often cross the lands of hundreds of groups who may not have been properly consulted or compensated for the projects.

2.6 Anti-colonial theory

Central to this work is de-colonizing and anti-colonial theory. When considering the fact that Indigenous protest takes place upon settler-occupied land, an entirely new dimension of analysis emerges. The Canadian government has a history of pursuing what many have classified as cultural genocide through the imposition of residential schools, land theft, environmental racism, and more. Protests focused on environmental issues or industrial projects that could cause land or water degradation are central to Indigenous activism within settler Canada. It is

also important to acknowledge that while colonization was initiated hundreds of years ago in Canada, it still continues to function, despite resistance efforts (Alfred, 2009). As Preston (2013) states, “extraction projects billed as ‘ethical’ economic opportunities for all Canadians obscure and normalize ongoing processes of environmental racism, Indigenous oppression and violence.” (p.43). Thus, while pursuits of resources like oil are often viewed as vital to the economic future of Canada, many see them as manifestations of colonial power over Indigenous peoples and land.

Contemporary anti-colonial discourses also focus on how settler-colonialism functions latently. For example, Tomiak (2016) focuses on how common conceptualizations of urban areas shrinks the space for Indigenous knowledges and culture. While Ottawa is known as the capital of the settler state, its location remains on contested and unceded territory of the Algonquin people (Tomiak, 2016). Tomiak (2016) concludes that we must be critical of cities like Ottawa and consider how colonial history shapes urban areas in the modern day. Without questioning our perceptions of what these areas are and how they came to be, we risk silencing Indigenous histories and ways of knowing.

Yet, others argue that acknowledging theft of Indigenous land by colonizers is not enough. Tuck and Yang (2012) offer a critique of decolonizing scholarship, asserting that most work in this area treats *decolonization* as a metaphor, without any real suggestion to unsettle land. They distinguish between external and internal modes of colonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012). External colonization means the physical “taking” of Indigenous resources and land. Internal colonization, on the other hand, is more about the control and exclusion of Indigenous peoples through institutional processes. These “modes of control” include “prisons, ghettos, minoritizing, schooling, policing” and so on (Tuck & Yang, 2012: p.5). This perspective of

modern colonialism echoes a Foucauldian biopolitical understanding of power relationships in which the physical and social lives of Indigenous peoples are being regulated by an oppressive colonial state (Foucault, 1978).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the scholarly literature relevant to this topic. First, I discussed key movement grievances, environmental concerns, and the difficulties of opposing systems of oil. Next, I outlined framing theory as well as previous scholarship on news framing of Indigenous and environmental activism. Key social movement work on political opportunity and critical events were discussed, with attention to how anti-colonial theory guides this project.

This project aims to make three main contributions. First, limited work focuses on Indigenous environmentalism as a distinct phenomenon, with most studies considering these as two separate movements. Thus, this study aims to contribute to an under-examined research area. Second, it seeks to bridge frame analysis, political opportunity structure and critical event theory into one study. Critical event theory has not been used to understand contemporary events, nor has it been considered for studies on Indigenous environmental activism. Lastly, it expands understandings of news coverage on social movements by comparing settler and Indigenous news sources. While others have produced similar work, few have compared Indigenous, independent, and mainstream news framing.

Chapter 3 : Methods

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I set out the methods that were used during this research project. I start by describing how I used frame analysis to consider thematic patterns in news coverage of Indigenous-led environmentalism. Second, I explain how these news articles were collected and organized into an archive, and then discuss techniques used to draw a sample from this archive. Next, I discuss how software was used to analyze the articles and what attributes of the articles were of interest to the study. I then outline my coding process for the project, discussing the coding timeline as well as my procedures for organizing themes while coding. Lastly, ethical considerations for this project will be highlighted, with a focus on how anti-colonial methodology was considered throughout the research.

3.2 Frame Analysis

This research relies on frame analysis of news coverage of Indigenous environmental protest. Textual analysis helps us “describe, analyze and interpret the meanings that a text or image contains” (Oleinik et al. 2014: p.2704). This method was selected over others due to its cost efficiency, the ability to research in a non-reactive manner, and the capability to analyze “the content of a large amount of material that might otherwise go unnoticed” (Neuman, 2011: p.49).

This project used frame analysis to help understand how different forms of media situate themselves in relation to Indigenous environmental protest, and how news framing changed over time. I coded news coverage from three different news types of online news within the Harper (2006.02.06 - 2015.11.03) and Trudeau (2015.11.04 onward) (Liberty of Parliament, 2015)

governmental eras: settler-mainstream news, settler-independent, and Indigenous-independent news. It is important to note that some journalists from independent and mainstream news sources do in fact identify as Indigenous. Further, the Indigenous news articles used in this project could be classified as being from independent news as opposed to mainstream news sources. I categorized the articles by their organizational affiliation rather than by specific author identification, and often used the terms “mainstream”, “independent” and “Indigenous” as shorthand for these news-types throughout the thesis. I defined Indigenous news as news produced by Indigenous peoples and organizations within Canada. Mainstream news is defined as large-scale, corporate owned media. Independent news is news produced by independently owned sources (non-corporate sources), in which journalists theoretically have a more direct line to readers without having to vet their work through corporate standards and requirements. This does not mean these sources are bias-free. Advertisers, donors, and the norms of individual outlets can still influence news content (particularly for mainstream news outlets). Furthermore, it should be noted that I did not distinguish between “regular” news articles, and op-ed/editorial news pieces. As columnists are paid to express their personal opinions, it is expected that some articles will demonstrate perspectives that differ from the views ordinarily presented by the wider outlet. I chose to include these articles as they still appeared within the press and provided relevant material for debates on Indigenous pipeline activism.

I am interested in media produced during different governmental periods as I hope to find signs of changes in political opportunity structure. Scholars have noted that the willingness of governments and leaders to work with social movements can be an indication of a change in the political opportunity structure facing movements (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004; Ramos, 2006; Ramos, 2008). Different political regimes and parties have differing relationships with

movements, especially in the context of Indigenous issues wherein movements must work with settler governments. Periods of positive interactions and dialogues may cause social change, and perhaps, change the way media subsequently covers events and protest. Furthermore, different news types may create different standpoints and sets of knowledge on specific issues, which is why I wanted to compare settler news sources to Indigenous ones.

3.3 Search Strategy and Data Collection

Articles were found using the news database Factiva, as well as advanced Google searches. Much like Stoddart et al. (2016), I scanned through each article individually and removed those that were not directly related to the project, as well as duplicate articles. For an article to be deemed relevant, it must have included discussion of protest, resistance, or opposition to oil extraction projects led by Indigenous peoples of Canada. Articles about US issues could be included if mobilization also occurred within Canada (e.g. support for DAPL protests within Canada). This article archive served as the population I sampled from.

There were several steps to the search process. Due to restrictions in the number of articles available, as well as limited access to article databases, different methods were used to collect articles from each news source. See Table 3.1 for an overview of the keyword searches.

Table 3.1: Keyword Searches

Media Type	Search Type	Search Terms
Settler-Mainstream	Factiva	(Indigenous AND protest AND pipeline) OR (aboriginal AND protest AND pipeline)
Settler-Independent	Advanced Google searches	(Indigenous AND protest AND pipeline) OR (aboriginal AND protest AND pipeline)
Indigenous-Independent	Individual site searches	“pipeline”

The collection of mainstream media was the most straightforward. I conducted searches using Factiva, a global news database that includes many mainstream news outlets. I limited my searches to two mainstream Canadian news sources: the *Globe and Mail*, as well as the *National Post*. These sources were chosen due to their widespread circulation, national scope, and their differing political standpoints (Stoddart et al., 2016).² Stoddart et al. (2016) viewed both as “establishment” papers, however, they describe the *Globe and Mail* as “centrist in relation to the conservative stance of the *National Post*” (p.221). I used the search terms “(Indigenous AND protest AND pipeline) OR (Aboriginal AND protest AND pipeline),” restricting searches to articles produced during the Harper period, and then the Trudeau period. I chose to search for “Indigenous” and “Aboriginal” as they yielded the most relevant searches. Searches that included “Indigenous AND First Nations AND Inuit AND Metis” yielded too many results that were not related to oil and pipeline protest. The term “pipeline” was used over other words such

² While the *Toronto Star* is a highly circulated news outlet in Canada, I chose other outlets since the *Toronto Star* does not have a national focus.

as “oil,” “environment” or “environmentalism” for two specific reasons. First, this project is most concerned with pipeline dissent and environmental issues related to extraction and transportation of oil through pipelines. Second, searching broader terms such as “oil” and “environment” resulted in many irrelevant results. For example, using “oil” as a key term yielded articles related to economic and financial debates over protest situations. Subsequent searches for Indigenous and independent articles also posed relevancy problems. Thus, the term “pipeline” was adopted as a key issue term. Using this term does pose potential limitations, as it may risk limiting other non-pipeline Indigenous environmental protests. However, following a series of preliminary searches, this term provided the most focused collection of articles.

The mainstream searches resulted in a total of 127 articles in the *Globe and Mail* (68 Harper, 59 Trudeau), and 81 articles in the *National Post* (60 Harper, 21 Trudeau). After manually scanning and removing irrelevant or duplicate articles, I was left with 56 articles from the *Globe and Mail* (33 Harper, 23 Trudeau), and 41 from the *National Post* (28 Harper, 13 Trudeau). Added together, this is a total of 97 mainstream media articles.

I was unable to gain access to an independent news database, so I constructed manual searches using the advanced Google search engine. I chose *Rabble* and *the Tyee* as the independent sources due to their popularity, which was assessed by scanning several independent sources and comparing the number of hits received from each one. *Rabble* and *the Tyee* were chosen as they produced more hits in comparison to other local and national independent newspapers. Other popular settler-independent outlets were considered, such as *Briarpatch* and *Canadian Dimension*, but had too few hits using the keyword searches. For example, keyword searches in *the Briarpatch* produced only 25 hits. I also acknowledge that these sources are likely

considered “left-leaning” and “progressive”. There are many right-wing, conservative news outlets that likely produce work much different from *Rabble* and *the Tyee*. However, I chose the above independent sources for a few reasons. First, I was hard-pressed to find independent sources that specifically identified as “conservative,” with most simply claiming to be “progressive.” Second, I chose sources that have considerable reach, with *the Tyee* and *Rabble* reportedly having 300,000 and 450,000 unique monthly site visitors respectively. (*The Tyee*, n.d; *Rabble*, n.d). Third, I specifically sought out news sources that provided counter-narratives to mainstream sources. Both *the Tyee* and *Rabble* are self described as providing Canadian readers with a “counterbalance” to mainstream corporate news (Beers, 2006; *Rabble*, n.d).

Searches were restricted within specific sites, and times (political periods). For example, to search for articles within *Rabble* during the Harper period, the search restrictions were as follows: site:http://rabble.ca (Indigenous AND protest AND pipeline) OR (aboriginal AND protest AND pipeline). This type of search was completed for both *Rabble* and *the Tyee* during both the Harper and Trudeau periods. The searches resulted in 177 hits for *Rabble* (101 Harper, 76 Trudeau), and 290 for *the Tyee* (179 Harper, 111 Trudeau). After opening relevant links, and scanning through articles for relevance, this left me with 57 *Rabble* articles (37 Harper, 26 Trudeau), and 35 articles from *the Tyee* (17 Harper, 18 Trudeau). In total, this adds to 92 Independent news articles.

Methods again had to be adjusted for the collection of Indigenous produced news articles. I had intended to collect articles from the two Indigenous sources (like mainstream and independent news), however, no two sources produced enough hits. Thus, instead of limiting to two, I chose several. These sources were chosen over others as they easily accessible and yielded

the most relevant results: *Alberta Native News* (local), *Anishinabek News* (local), *First Nations Drum* (national), *Ha-Shilth-Sa* (local), *Kukukwes* (local), *The Nation* (local), *Turtle Island News* (national), *Wawatay News* (local), *Eastern Door* (local), *Windspeaker* (national), and *Two Row Times* (local).³ Some of these outlets were highly recommend by Oscar Baker III, a well-known Mi'kmaq reporter for the CBC (Baker, 2016, July 7th). Furthermore, outlets such as *Windspeaker* and *Wawatay News* were studied in previous research on Indigenous news (Riggins, 1992, 2015). I wanted to gain perspectives from both local and national outlets since the information they report is likely unique to the context of their locations and audiences.

Using the same set of search terms as the previous two news types was also not possible; the terms were too specific and yielded few results. To increase the number of hits, I decided to simply search for mentions of the word “pipeline” on each news site and read each article for relevance. These searches resulted in the following number of hits, and subsequent relevant articles for each source: 55 hits for *Alberta Native News* (relevant: 8 Harper, 2 Trudeau), 83 hits for *Anishinabek News* (5 Harper, 7 Trudeau), 42 hits for *First Nations Drum* (4 Harper, 1 Trudeau), 32 hits for *Ha-Shilth-Sa* (6 Harper, 2 Trudeau), 5 hits for *Kukukwes* (relevant: 0 Harper, 4 Trudeau), 40 hits for *the Nation* (6 Harper, 2 Trudeau), 39 hits for *Turtle Island News* (0 Harper, 4 Trudeau), 11 hits for *Wawatay News* (2 Harper, 1 Trudeau), 13 hits for *the Eastern Door* (0 Harper, 1 Trudeau), 7 hits for *Windspeaker* (0 Harper, 3 Trudeau), and 12 hits for *Two Row Times* (2 Harper, 0 Trudeau). In total, this equals 60 articles from Indigenous news sources (33 Harper, 27 Trudeau).

³ The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is one of the most popular Indigenous news sources in Canada. However, as my protect analyzes text rather than visual media, I did not include the APTN as a news source.

The fact that databases for indigenous and independent news articles were absent or inaccessible is an important side finding. Having these databases would have made this project's methods more consistent across news types and would make similar studies more accessibly pursued by news researchers. Furthermore, it could help less-known news sources to gain traction and reach wider audiences.

My searches resulted in an archive of settler-mainstream (n=97), settler-independent (n=92), and Indigenous-independent news (n=60) produced during the Harper government era (2006.02.06 - 2015.11.03), and during the Trudeau government era (2015.11.04 onward) (Liberty of Parliament, 2015). At the time of writing, the Trudeau era has not ended. The most recent article from the archive is from November 20th, 2017. One could expect that important events will occur in the future, which may influence news framing of Indigenous environmentalism. For example, one event that occurred outside my date-range was the announcement that the Canadian government will purchase Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion in order to guarantee project completion (Harris, 2018, May 29th). Thus, future research should be completed once the Trudeau era has ended. See Table 3.2 for a full breakdown of the article archive.

Table 3.2: Breakdown of Article Archive

Media Type		Harper	Trudeau
Settler-Mainstream (n=97)	Total #	61	36
	<i>Globe & Mail</i>	33	23
	<i>The National Post</i>	28	13
Settler-Independent (n=92)	Total #	48	44
	<i>Rabble</i>	31	26
	<i>The Tyee</i>	17	18
Indigenous-Independent (n=60)	Total #	33	27
	<i>Alberta Native News</i>	8	2
	<i>Anishinabek News</i>	5	7
	<i>First Nations Drum</i>	4	1
	<i>Ha-Shilth-Sa</i>	6	2
	<i>Kukukwes</i>	0	4
	<i>The Nation</i>	6	2
	<i>Turtle Island News</i>	0	4
	<i>Windspeaker</i>	0	3
	<i>Eastern Door</i>	1	0
	<i>Wawatay News</i>	1	2
	<i>Two Row Times</i>	2	0
Total Articles=245		142	107

3.4 Sampling

To make the project feasible, I had to consider sampling techniques since coding all articles in the archive was not feasible given available resources. The archive is stratified by news type and political period. I randomly selected 30 articles per media type during the Harper period and 24 articles per media type during the Trudeau period (total of 162 articles). This was done by separating the articles by media type and political era, and then using a random number generator to choose a sample. For mainstream and independent sources, this meant 15 articles were chosen from each news outlet during the Harper era, and 12 from each outlet during the Trudeau era (Table 3.3). For Indigenous media, 30 articles across all outlets during the Harper period, and 24 during the Trudeau period were sampled. There are some limitations to this

process. For instance, the archive of Indigenous media only included 31 articles during the Harper period, and 27 articles during Trudeau. This means the samples chosen from Indigenous sources will include nearly all of the articles in the archive. Another limitation is the fact that the Harper period spanned nearly 10 years (2006-2015), while the Trudeau period is only in its second year (2015-2017). Thus, there is asymmetry in the sample. I have included more articles in the sample for the Harper period to address this. 90 of the 162 articles in my sample were produced during the Harper era, as opposed to 72 released during the Trudeau era. This proportion was chosen as I wanted to sample between 20-30 articles for each news type (see table 3.3)

Table 3.3: Sampled Articles

Media Type		Harper	Trudeau
Mainstream (n=54)	Total #	30	24
	<i>Globe & Mail</i>	15	12
	<i>The National Post</i>	15	12
Independent (n=54)	Total #	30	24
	<i>Rabble</i>	15	12
	<i>The Tyee</i>	15	12
Indigenous (n=54)	Total #	30	24
	<i>Alberta Native News</i>	7	2
	<i>Anishinabek News</i>	5	7
	<i>First Nations Drum</i>	4	1
	<i>Ha-Shilth-Sa</i>	6	2
	<i>Kukukwes</i>	0	4
	<i>The Nation</i>	6	1
	<i>Turtle Island News</i>	0	3
	<i>Windspeaker</i>	0	3
	<i>Eastern Door</i>	0	1
	<i>Two Row Times</i>	2	0
Total Articles=162		90	72

3.5 Data Analysis and the Coding Process

After a sample was drawn from the archive, the next step was to import the articles into the qualitative data analyzing software NVIVO. Once in NVIVO, I began to create what is called “case classifications” for each individual article. This allowed the researcher to identify each article by a series of relevant attributes, as gave the opportunity to analyze specific codes by these attributes. As seen in Table 3.4, the attributes included in the case classifications were: era (government in power at the time of article’s release), news type (mainstream, independent, Indigenous), Agency (*Globe & Mail*, *Rabble*, *Windspeaker*, etc.), author, gender, and date published.

Table 3.4: Attributes of Articles

Attribute	Description
Government Era	Political regime in which the news article was produced (Harper OR Trudeau)
News type	Mainstream, Independent, or Indigenous produced news
Agency	News agency that produced the article
Gender⁴	Gender of the author (if applicable)
Date Published	Publishing date of the news article

These attributes were used to analyze emerging patterns in the coding. In addition, attributes were coded to help situate my work to broader issues such as author and agency bias. However, most important to this project was how news coverage differed from news type and

⁴ Analysis of author gender did not reveal meaningful comparisons in the data. Future research could look further into gender as well as other attributes, such as race and ethnicity of authors.

political era. I created comparison tables that were divided by government era and news types. These tables served as a form of pre-writing for my chapters and were useful for organizing my thoughts, findings, and key quotations from news sources. I compared coverage on specific issues across news and time period to help build a picture of how news sources operated. As seen in chapters 4, 5, and 6, each news type is discussed separately with comparisons between eras.

The coding process was primarily deductive. Scholarly literature influenced the construction of codes, though I remained flexible to unique and unforeseen patterns while coding (Bernard et al. 2016). I focused on the types of categories used by the media to describe protest actions and participants. The units of analysis were sentences within news articles, while the units of observation were the news articles themselves. Coding was semi-structured and evolved over time, as coding categories emerged throughout the coding procedure. As Van den Hoonaard (2012) suggests, researchers must always be open to returning to the coding process as being limited to a set number of codes can restrict data analysis. Thus, I used latent coding rather than in-vivo coding, as it “gives you the freedom to find themes in the texts, even if certain words are not there.” (Bernard et al. 2016: p.249).

Coding took place between Oct 24th and Dec 7th, 2017. Roughly 27 articles were coded each week. I decided to code a handful of each media type at a time. I would code nearly 10 mainstream news articles, then move on to Indigenous produced articles, and shift again to independent articles. I did this to ensure the different media styles stayed fresh, and to limit my own personal bias and coding exhaustion.

As more articles were coded, thematic categories began to take shape. I continually organized the codes into similar groups. Three main top-level coding categories emerged by the

end of the process: Actors, Political Opportunity/ Critical events, and Issue Framing. These top-level categories became the basis of my three analysis chapters (chapter 4, 5, and 6). Once the coding was completed, I ran hundreds of coding queries, in which the codes were separated by news type and political era. I used these queries to construct my qualitative comparison tables, which greatly helped during the writing process.

Within the “Actors” category, I focused on who was being mentioned in the news articles (social movement actors, specific Indigenous peoples or groups), organizational actors (governments, NGOs, etc.), as well as target organizations (oil and extractive industry). This top-level category also included codes about how individuals were depicted, described, and portrayed. This could include anti-protest framing (which highlights protesters as destructive, negative, or violent), or how individuals were categorized either by blanket generalizing terms or by specific identification groups. These two codes were very common throughout the articles, with “blanket term” appearing across 106 articles, and “specific groups” across 118. Within the “specific groups” code, I noted references to over 120 distinct Indigenous groups. Many of these groups have distinctions within them (groups within groups), and many others are treaty alliance groups. Specific references to groups provided more context to protest and political situations, rather than simply labelling actors as “Indigenous” with no details explaining “who” was involved.

In the “Political Opportunity/ Critical Events” category, I focused on changes to or references to the Canadian political atmosphere. This includes mentions of political leaders (especially Harper and Trudeau), government failures, critical events, legal situations, social movement campaigns, etc. I kept track of how articles portrayed Prime Minister Harper and

Prime Minister Trudeau, either being critical of, optimistic for, or overtly against. References to government failures could be instances of government miscommunication, exploitation or government caused divisions between people. “Critical events” were key in this coding category. I tracked references to specific bills, acts, and treaties that were used by media as anchors to discuss why people were upset or protesting. This includes legislation such as Bill C-51, C-45, C-43, the Environmental Assessment Act, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Other critical events included notable movement events such as the DAPL protests and examples of halting or delaying resource extraction within Canada, references to Idle No More, and government actions such as pipeline approval announcements, apologies, and initiatives like the MMIWG inquiry and TRC. Historical and ongoing injustices such as residential schools, the White Paper, and others were also included. I wanted to know what events media sources used to help explain or frame protest issues. Did they reference Idle No More to suggest a current protest was part of a larger national movement, or did they reference controversial protests of the past to suggest a current protest was violent or illegal?

Another interesting set of codes in the “Political Opportunity” group were codes relating to the need to consult or gain consent from Indigenous peoples before pursuing industry projects. Many of the examples in these codes reference the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, as this declaration states that consent must be obtained. However, there is much debate as to what consent actually means. These codes and considerations became vital in the writing of chapter 5.

Within the “Issue Framing” top-level category, I included all codes relating to how protest issues and grievances were framed. For example, many codes were related to

environmental issues, such as the benefits and risks of oil, climate change environmental degradation (land, air, and water pollution, oil spills, etc.), discussions of environmental protection, fuel transportation, sustainability, and so on. A particularly interesting set of codes were within the “environmental degradation” grouping. I tracked these different forms of degradation to understand how news sources presented different types of problems, and to see which problems were framed as most serious. Furthermore, these codes presented details about how problems were framed in relation to *who* was impacted. I wanted to know if problems were framed as serious for specific Indigenous groups, the wider Indigenous community, all of Canada, or the world in general. Furthermore, I was interested in how long-term issues such as climate change were covered in comparison to immediate problems such as oil spills.

Other key issues within this category included more widespread concerns stemming from contemporary and historical colonialism, capitalism, racism, land disputes, and various forms of politically and socially established rights. Claims about how human rights and Indigenous rights were related to Indigenous environmental protest became key to chapter 6.

3.6 Ethical Considerations and Anti-Colonial Methodology

Bryman and Bell (2016) describe unobtrusive research as research that does not require interaction between the research and the subject being studied. As this research was completed by accessing public news sources, and without interacting with individuals, it is unobtrusive.

Neuman (2011) classifies content analysis as nonreactive because the nature of coding happens in isolation from the producers of the text. Thus, this research did not require ethical clearance.

Although there are no direct ethical concerns for individuals, I had to be careful not to impose my own personal biases and to ensure I did not make deep assumptions outside of the

printed text in news articles. More importantly, I remained aware of my role as a white settler scholar and worked to produce anti-colonial work. As suggested earlier, I took an anti-colonial stance in my methodological considerations. Walter and Anderson's (2013) research text *Indigenous Statistics* highlights how researchers, either on purpose or unknowingly, mark their research with settler and colonial biases. Even though Walter and Anderson's (2013) text focuses on quantitative statistical government or academic work, there are clear parallels to this research project. I was cognisant of how my own work had the potential to create and reinforce stereotypical or colonial categories, groupings, and classifications. This informed how I conducted and descriptively wrote my research; paying close attention to news categorizations as well as my own use of terminology.

Additional anti-colonial scholarship, such as Smith's (2012) highly influential book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, also informed my research objectives and writing strategies. Smith (2012) describes historical and modern relationships between researchers and Indigenous peoples throughout the world. They suggest that the majority of research on Indigenous peoples and issues comes from imperialist standpoints according to which outsiders exploit Indigenous communities and knowledges for academic success, while at the same time producing work that generalizes and judges Indigenous cultures from Western standards. While this thesis did not involve travelling to specific communities and directly interacting with people, I was aware of how my own experiences influenced my perceptions and writings. This research is less about explaining *why* Indigenous people take part in and lead environmental activism, and more about how news sources create knowledge about them, knowledge that may not be true, and that may generalize actions by individuals as representative of all Indigenous peoples. Thus, this project

functions as a critique of news media, and works to improve understandings of how news sources foster settler attitudes and knowledges about Indigenous peoples.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the research strategies used during this research project. I explained how content analysis was used to interpret Indigenous, independent and mainstream news framing Indigenous-led environmentalism. I also discussed how I created an archive of articles relevant to the project and my methods in sampling articles based on news type and political era. Furthermore, I highlighted the main top-level coding categories that became the basis of the next three chapters, and discussed how anti-colonialism informs my research objects. The next chapter is the first analysis chapter of this project and will focus on how actors related to Indigenous environmental activism are represented and framed by news media.

Chapter 4 : Actors

4.1 Introduction

One of the primary objectives of this thesis project was to discover *who* was being discussed when the news covered Indigenous environmental activism, as well as *how* narratives were formed by categorizing and describing individuals. Put differently, I wanted to know which, and in what way, different types of actors were being discussed in Canadian news. When the word “actors” is used, it refers to several different types of agencies and individuals who were included in media coverage of issues surrounding Indigenous environmental protest. Hundreds of distinct groups, peoples, organizations, industry projects, and government representatives were tracked throughout my coding process. I’ve narrowed my analysis to include the most commonly occurring themes and actors.

There are themes on three categories of actors. First, I start with how individuals, and distinct groups of Indigenous peoples throughout Canada, were referenced and discussed by the news. This first section includes how media use specific names, or generalizing terms, to group individuals into perceived categories. This section works towards addressing my main research question, which asks if news media homogenizes Indigenous peoples when they partake in environmental activism. It also shows how the news represented protesters (positively, negatively, or both), how they characterise outsiders and “bystander publics” (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016), and how news media communicated opinions on group divisions and solidarity. In the next section, I look at how and which organizational actors are mentioned throughout media articles. This includes governmental sectors, NGOs, group alliances and other organizations. Lastly, I look at how and which industries were most prominently described. One might consider these companies as another type of organizational actor. However, I chose to

analyze these companies separately as they were often targeted as villains within news articles by other actors. Throughout, commentary on the differences in coverage across news types (independent, Indigenous, mainstream) as well as between political regimes (Harper, Trudeau) is included. I then conclude with a summary of findings.

4.2 Categorizations of Individuals

A main focus during the coding process was how news articles categorized individuals. As Walter and Anderson (2013) explained, this was important to consider because the act of categorization can reinforce stereotypes and obscure individuality by grouping people into categories that may or may not reflect their own identity. Categorizations also describe or lump actors into groups. For example, actors can be described as “allies” to Indigenous peoples (supportive but separate from them), groups can be categorized as having “solidarity” or even “divisions” within, or protesters can be labelled as angry, violent, or radical. Categorizations are theoretically interesting as analyzing them can help us discover how the representation of individuals based on social categories, organizational affiliation, or by specific actions taken. Furthermore, it can shed light on how different media types understand and/or portray Indigenous-led environmentalism.

Categorizations presented in news articles can be negative, positive, or a mix of both. Within my sample, two themes appeared most frequently: “blanket terms,” and “specific groups.” Blanket terms represent how news media used umbrella terms such as “Indigenous,” “Aboriginal,” or “Native,” to describe diverse groups of people without going into detail as to *who* they are specifically discussing. Using names of “specific groups,” on the other hand, showed that the news source was specific in their coverage of Indigenous individuals or nations.

Perhaps the source mentioned the specific name of the group an individual belongs to or mentioned an alliance of groups. Again, these two codes are not necessarily positive or negative. A reporter could discuss environmental activism by a variety of Indigenous peoples without intending to be problematic, especially if context is provided before the use of these terms (e.g. if an article explains that a variety of groups were involved in an issue, then later says “Indigenous activists” rather than restating all the group names). Furthermore, different news sources have distinct audiences, which may or may not be knowledgeable about specific groups throughout Canada. Thus, these sources could use blanket terms as these terms are perhaps more easily understood by mass audiences. However, using blanket terms without proper context can be an issue, as it can cause generalizations to be made of all Indigenous peoples throughout Canada, and further colonial stereotypes that have consistently been established in both news media and entertainment media (Brady and Kelly, 2017).

Using specific terms may not always be the best tactic for news media either. News articles may use the wrong term, an outdated name, or identify individuals as one group when they are in fact another. Additionally, Brady and Kelly (2017) suggest that respectful journalism on Indigenous issues involves interviewing and consulting Indigenous individuals. Without proper research, “Complex issues are often overly simplified and sometimes presented grossly inaccurately when reporters are uninformed about the intricacies of the particular communities, groups, or issues they are covering.” (Brady and Kelly, 2017; p.144) Thus, Brady and Kelly (2017) believe it is important for journalists to take serious effort in understanding a situation, and to present individuals in a respectful, accurate, and meaningful by including Indigenous perspectives and understandings.

4.2.1 Blanket terms and Specific Group Names

Starting with the use of blanket terms, I noted clear differences between news types. For both the Harper and Trudeau eras, I noticed that blanket terms appeared most frequently in mainstream articles, followed by independent articles, and lastly Indigenous articles (Table 4.1). While simply looking at the number of coding references does not tell us anything about the content of these codes, it does provide some insight on which media sources generalize about groups the most. Mainstream articles used blanket terms more than both other news types. This may mean that less context is provided within these articles. In the middle, independent news may have provided more context, especially in the Trudeau era where independent sources used blanket terms far less than mainstream sources. Lastly, Indigenous produced news appears to have provided the most context within their articles.

Table 4.1: News Usage of Blanket Terms and Specific Group Names

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Blanket term	28	24	13	23	11	7
Specific name	17	21	26	16	16	22

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

Regarding political era, the absolute use of blanket terms decreased overall in the Trudeau era, though the Trudeau era is comprised of fewer news articles than the Harper era, so one would expect to see less blanket term usage overall. However, if we look specifically at how the news sources changed between the eras rather than the eras in general, we see that mainstream news usage of blanket terms stayed relatively the same, while independent news

significantly reduced their usage, and Indigenous news slightly reduced usage. This could mean that as the political atmosphere in Canada changed (a change in government, leader, and situation), independent news coverage changed to be more cognisant of the diversity between Indigenous groups in Canada. Another possibility is that movement successes could have shifted the discourse within independent media. As many independent news articles are generally supportive of Indigenous-led environmentalism, it would make sense that authors would want to be as specific as possible in creating non-generalizing narratives.

When considering the actual content of the codes, we gain a more complete understanding of how blanket terms are used by media. In the Harper era, some articles would start with blanket terms, then give more context far into the article. For example, one article started with the phrase: “Last week’s incident is galvanizing native groups, which have been sending statements of solidarity to the East-Coast band” (Taber, 2013, Oct 21st). In this sentence, the author generalizes by saying “native groups,” and then brings in slightly more context by saying “East-Coast band” (though there are many East-coast groups). Furthermore, the term “galvanizing” might insinuate that Indigenous peoples are charged, or even angry. This term frequently appeared when describing Indigenous protesters and will be discussed further in this chapter. In the Trudeau era, there was not much change in the usage of blanket terms by mainstream news. Some articles used identification terms inconsistently. For example, an article might start by describing protest actors as being “Aboriginal,” then later describe them as “First Nations” (with no clear distinctions between the terms). Furthermore, some terms are spelled without capital letters (“indigenous” over “Indigenous”) and articles tend to use “people” rather than “peoples.”

Within independent news, we see a mixed use of blanket terms within the Harper era. Like some mainstream articles, independent articles interchange the terms “Indigenous,” “Aboriginal,” and “First Nations” frequently, without explaining the difference between the terms. While the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal are umbrella terms representing groups across Canada (and even the world), First Nations is used to refer to a specific grouping within these umbrella terms. In Canada, for example, the government defines Indigenous peoples to be First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. We also see independent media switching between “peoples,” and “people.” “Peoples” suggests a wide variety of groups, while “people” implies one group. When using blanket terms in the title or beginning of an article, independent articles sometimes include more details about *who* they are discussing further into the article (much like mainstream news within the Harper era). We see similar uses of blanket terms by independent media during the Trudeau era. Terms are used in an interchangeable and confusing way, though the term “peoples” is used more frequently in this era. In one case, an article referenced opposition by “Indigenous communities” against the Muskrat Falls hydro dam project. In this case, the article is ambiguous as to who was involved in the protest. In reality, it wasn’t simply “Indigenous communities” who were involved, but Inuit from the Nunatsiavut and Nunatukavut, and Innu from Sheshatshiu and Natuashish First Nations, as well as other settler allies. This specificity was lost in this article, which could cause readers to be uninformed as to why these individuals were concerned about the project.

The use of blanket terms by Indigenous media provided more background information than independent or mainstream media. During the Harper era, articles would provide plural terms such as “peoples” or “nations,” as well as identification terms for individuals involved in protest such as “leaders,” “women,” “youth,” “chiefs,” “elders” and so on. While these terms do

not tell exactly who was involved, it makes the content of the articles less abstract, making actions and statements more attributable to specific groups of actors rather than all Indigenous peoples. Other articles name specific individuals involved (high-profile, celebrities, authors, activists, etc.). There were cases that were generalizing, such as one article that stated “Natives... fight the Conservatives’ destructive agenda”, however, these cases were rare. So, while there were examples within Indigenous media in the Harper era that did not provide full context for situations, more information was generally given in comparison to independent media. During the Trudeau era, Indigenous media were still providing identifying information. Positions of individuals and locations of specific groups were provided (For examples, “Nova Scotia First Nations,” or “Native leaders”). Interestingly, Indigenous media were less likely to divide protesters into the categories “Indigenous” or “environmental” like other forms of media often do. Instead, supporters of Indigenous environmental activism who were not Indigenous were identified as “allies.”

Media usage of specific group names followed a different trajectory than the use of blanket terms. By frequency within the Harper era, specific group names were found in Indigenous articles the most often, followed by independent news, and lastly mainstream news. In the Trudeau era, the same order of news types was evident, with Indigenous articles, independent articles, and mainstream articles. These frequencies contrasted with the use of blanket terms, which followed the opposite order. If mainstream media articles used blanket terms the most, we would expect to find that they used specific group names the least. Much like the blanket term code, the use of specific groups also dropped from the Harper to the Trudeau era.

Mainstream articles used specific group names to highlight direct action by individuals. This included protest tactics, political and legal action (blockades, meetings, court battles, etc.). This occurred in both eras. Within the Harper era, I observed examples of mainstream articles using a specific group name to suggest support for the oil industry. For example, one article started by describing opposition to oil sands projects by general Indigenous peoples, and then provided a counter-narrative of support by a specific group: “But Chief Boucher also highlighted his band's financial successes from the oil sands, which transformed the Fort McKay First Nation into one of Canada's aboriginal business powerhouses, and expressed gratitude for its strong relationship with industry” (Cattaneo, 2013, March 23rd). Similar articles within the Trudeau era created a narrative of indecisiveness on extractive projects between specific groups. For example, an article provided a list of several Indigenous groups who approve Pacific NorthWest LNG, followed by a much shorter list of groups who oppose it. While it is true that all nations (and individuals within nations) hold diverse opinions on a wide range of problems, these news articles suggest that Indigenous peoples are especially divided.

For independent media within the Harper era, I found that articles would start with umbrella terms, and then mention specific groups directly after: “Far from consenting, many First Nations, including those represented by Coastal First Nations, the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, and the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, have been vocal in their opposition to the project” (McCreary, 2010, Sept 2nd). This example showed that the news source put in effort to accurately depict who was involved. When specific group names are mentioned, quotations are more likely to be included from notable members or spokespersons, rather than discussing a situation without including opinions from relevant individuals. Lastly, when specific group names are used by independent media during the Harper era, impacts are more clearly tied to

affected groups: “Cold Lake in the Treaty 6 territory of the Beaver Lake Cree First Nation has had a known oil spill ongoing for a year, likely longer” (Stewart, 2014, July 8th). Independent articles produced in the Trudeau era use specific group names in nearly the same way. However, I noticed that more group names were often included (naming three or four rather than one or two). This could mean that Trudeau era articles provided more context as to who was involved in a given situation, though it could also indicate that more groups were relevant in these articles.

For Indigenous produced articles in both the Harper and Trudeau era, naming several individual groups was quite common: “Travelling hundreds of kilometres to appear in court this week are the Haisla, Haida, Kitasoo Xai’xais, Heiltsuk, Nadleh Whut’en, Nak’azdli, Gitga’at and Gitxaala.” (*Alberta Native News*, 2015, Oct 2nd). Furthermore, authors were more likely to identify themselves as members of specific groups, offering insight from their perspectives. They also made it clear that they did not speak on behalf of all Indigenous peoples, or even for the group to which they belonged. Instead, they addressed environmental issues by combining research as well as their own individual experiences. In the Trudeau era, details about communities were more often provided (size, location, history, etc.). Articles explained how industry would impact communities’ day-to-day activities, which could be interrupted by waste from extraction (water, air, and land pollution). For example, an article on protests against TransCanada’s Energy East stated: “First Nations women from Nipissing First Nation and North Bay led an event to protect the water” (Smith, 2016, May 18th). This article situated the protesters as both women, and as members of Nipissing First Nations. It also included what the aim of the event was: to protect water that people depend upon for survival. Thus, the use of specific group names allows for more detailed discussion of specific physical impacts to

individuals, environments, and communities, rather than overarching, broad environmental impacts.

4.2.3 Alliances, Solidarity, and Divisions

Similar to how actors are depicted in relation to a specific group, or generalized term, they are also described by media as being in solidarity, in alliance, or as divided on issues, tactics, and goals. All of these concepts can be applied to in-group and out-group actors to suggest cooperation or conflict between individuals, which is sometimes referred to as “collective identity” by social movement scholars (Staggenborg and Ramos, 2016). Mentions of solidarity appeared most frequently within Indigenous news, slightly less within independent news, and rarely within mainstream news (Table 4.2). Articles also used this concept to describe cooperation between NGOs, cities, specific Indigenous groups, or organizations. While this concept is used as a description for individuals, solidarity seems to be most commonly associated with macro-level actors. Furthermore, the term solidarity seems to be associated with visible actions by people, rather than simply talk or an expression of support. Regarding potential public support during Idle No More events, one article produced by *The Tyee* during the Harper era stated: “Go to the rallies. You might think that doesn’t accomplish anything, but it is a visible show of solidarity and that matters. Participating in (and bearing witness to) ceremony in a respectful way is an important gesture” (Housty, 2013, Jan 19th). This need for overt action was frequently expressed within Indigenous and independent produced news. Solidarity is described as something that builds up over time through interactions and relationships between people. Again, saying one is in solidarity without proof is not seen as legitimate by the news.

Table 4.2: Coverage of Alliances, Solidarity, and Divisions

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Allies	4	9	11	4	2	8
Solidarity	3	10	12	2	5	9
Divisions	7	0	1	2	1	1

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

Mentions of alliances and allies appeared in the same order as solidarity (most frequently within Indigenous, followed by independent, and mainstream news). While “alliance” and “solidarity” are quite similar concepts, they do have a few subtle differences in the way they are used. “Allies” are typically described as non-Indigenous supporters of protest (though the term is certainly not exclusively used in this way). These supporters are not simply “bystanders” (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016), they have a direct stake in environmental and Indigenous issues, as protest often aims to strengthen human rights, while protecting land, water, and air from environmental degradation and climate change stemming from extractive industry. This means that the benefits of protecting the environment, as well as the consequences of failing to do so, is of interest not only to the communities and peoples in which resource extraction is taking place but to people throughout Canada. However, there is much criticism of the term and self-identification of “allies” among activists. Indigenous Action Media (2014) define allies as individuals who claim to be supportive of individuals in “struggles,” though they do so out of colonial-guilt and seek to benefit from oppression. Some activists suggest that it is better to be an “accomplice” than an “ally.” An “accomplice” is someone who is physically on the ground, who is a listener rather than an organizer and is willing to risk their own social standing through

resistance (Indigenous Action Media, 2014). While there is clear skepticism of “allyship,” all media types in my sample mentioned that Idle No More was key to strengthening and increasing alliances between settlers and non-settlers.

There were also examples of media framing groups as divided or suggesting divisions between protesters. This appeared most frequently within mainstream media during the Harper era, with very few occurrences within Indigenous and independent news articles (Table 4.2). While disagreements in opinions are quite common, mainstream media often described these disagreements as a dividing factor within specific groups and between them. This narrative is one that may cause readers to perceive collective action as unfocused and lacking cooperation. Direct references to divisions occasionally appeared within article titles, such as one mainstream article produced during the Trudeau era: “Proposal divides First Nation groups” (Jang, 2016, Oct 1st). When appearing within the body text of an article, narratives can be discouraging towards Indigenous individuals: “B.C’s 200 or so native groups are hopelessly divided, and many on the Trans Mountain route have already struck deals” (Wente, 2016, Dec 6th). This makes it seem like Indigenous peoples are either for or against oil extraction and congruently, discounts the negative economic and social conditions many have experienced from colonialism. Coburn and Atleo’s (2016) work can help highlight this point. They explain the economic and social experiences of the Nuuchahnulth, a case that they describe as “both distinctive and typical of Indigenous experience with colonial-capitalism” (Coburn and Atleo, 2016, p.187). In this example, the authors explain how the Nuuchahnulth were forced into the colonial-capitalist system after being cut off from the natural resources of the ocean. Furthermore, they were excluded from economic wealth and were subjected to adverse conditions of poverty and inequality. The authors also explain that the Nuuchahnulth wanted to be included within industry to improve

conditions, as long as “the projects do not unduly threaten ecosystem health and longstanding Nuu-chah-nulth Principles” (Coburn and Atleo, 2016: p.188). Clearly, this is a specific example, but it provides insight into the experience of many Indigenous peoples throughout Canada. By simply labelling groups as “hopelessly divided,” or for or against extraction, mainstream articles obscure historical and modern-day inequalities, which are at play and create an over-homogenizing narrative that forces Indigenous peoples into a binary of environmental protection or economic gain through resource extraction.

4.2.4 Indigenous, Environmental, or Both?

I was also interested in whether news articles portrayed Indigenous and environmental activism as a combined effort or as two separate and distinct movements (Indigenous and environmental) (Clark, 2014). Definitions of being “Indigenous” or an “environmentalist” appear similarly across media and eras. In general, I found that the term “environmentalist” was often used to describe non-Indigenous protest supporters (in place of “allies”). Indigenous activists are seldom described as being environmentalists; they are simply defined by their heritage as Indigenous individuals. This finding helps to answer my main research question, suggesting that even though Indigenous persons participate in environmental activism, they are labelled as “Indigenous activists.”

As Table 4.3 shows, articles appearing in mainstream news sources most commonly distinguished between environmentalists and Indigenous activists, followed by Indigenous sources, and independent sources. Between the Harper and Trudeau eras, there were only minimal changes in coverage, with mainstream increasing its divisions of the movements, and independent and Indigenous news decreasing slightly.

Table 4.3: Coverage that Separates Indigenous and Environmental Protest

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Indigenous- environmental division	7	6	7	11	4	6

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

There were minimal distinctions between coverage from different news types. In mainstream, independent, and Indigenous news articles, Indigenous and environmental activists are simply listed together as separate types of actors, yet united in cause. Usually, no distinctions were made between different motivations of different groups, nor are specific environmental organizations or Indigenous communities mentioned when this division is made. For example, most articles discussed how Indigenous and environmental groups were opposed to pipeline projects and discussed their concerns and actions as one. Journalists made statements such as: “Indigenous and environmental groups foresee damage to the area’s water, land and animals” (Wheeler, 2013, Dec 9th); “Fishermen and First Nations, as well as environmentalists, have expressed dire concerns about the potential impacts of another such spill on their way of life” (McCreary, 2010, Sept 2nd); “The protest has attracted a swelling tent city of indigenous people and environmental activists” (Wente, 2016, Dec 6th); or “A group of Mi’kmaw and environmental activists have constructed a treaty “truckhouse” next to the Alton Natural Gas Storage Project LP site along the Shubenacadie River near Stewiack, N.S.” (Googoo, 2016, Sept 6th). As previously suggested, most of these statements were distinctions between which groups were involved (except for the third quote from an Indigenous source), or to whom actions or grievances are attributed. So, while these articles distinguished between Indigenous and environmental activists, they presented them as being united on pipeline issues.

The majority of examples listed Indigenous groups first, followed by environmental groups. This suggested that Indigenous activists have taken leadership on these issues, with environmental groups providing support. Some articles made this clearer than others, by specifically stating that environmental groups came to help Indigenous activists, such as an Indigenous article that said: “Several environmental and conservation groups joined the Sipekne’katik Band’s opposition to the project.” (Googoo, 2017, Jan 30th). It is also important to note that there were limited differences between political eras, with most coverage following these general trends.

4.2.5 Positive and Negative Perceptions of Activists

News coverage also presented differing perceptions of protest by actors as advantageous or detrimental to Canadian society. Some articles were clearly favourable towards protest efforts and were supportive of actor claims. However, there were also articles that were skeptical of actors and saw protest as potentially dangerous to Canadian people and industry. Table 4.4 shows three different perceptions of protest actors. There are two main negative narratives that emerged in the coverage: “protesters as violent,” and “protesters as angry.” Positive narratives were placed into one category. It should be noted that most articles were either neutral or positive towards protest actors.

Table 4.4: Coverage of Positive and Negative Perceptions of Activists

		Harper			Trudeau		
		Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Negative	Violence	8	0	0	5	0	0
	Anger	6	4	1	5	0	1
Positive		6	11	10	5	8	9

n = number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

Regarding negative perceptions of protesters, mainstream news presented the most narratives of violence and anger, falling slightly during the Trudeau era. In the Harper era, articles that described protesters as violent discussed confrontations between activists and police, calling these situations “violent clash[es]”, in which police action was said to be “justified because guns, explosives and other weapons were in the native encampment” (Taber, 2013, Oct 21st). It may very well be that violence did occur at this event. However, this is unclear from the article. Some were more ambiguous as to whether violence was actually occurring in protest situations, though they implied violence by suggesting gas projects were “sparking increased conflict with aboriginal groups in British Columbia and Yukon” (Hume, 2012, Nov 27th). Furthermore, mainstream media often makes clear links between violent events of the past to modern protest events (referencing the Oka crisis, Gustafsen Lake, etc.). These references to past events, as well as the portrayal of violence as mutual or caused by protesters, builds a narrative that Indigenous individuals are destructive and violent. When looking at perceptions of “anger” within the Harper era, mainstream articles use the term “galvanized” to describe Indigenous mobilization (Berkow, 2012, May 8th; Hume, 2012, Nov 27th). Other articles used phrases such

as “Native Fury” (Iverson, 2012, Dec 5th) and “outrage” (Cattaneo, 2013, Dec 20th) to describe protest actions. These terms make it seem that protesters are angry, charged, or even volatile, without providing clear evidence that violence took place.

In the Trudeau era, depictions of protesters as violent and angry were still evident within mainstream news. Articles again suggested that Indigenous activists were violent or aggressive towards police. For example, three articles described pipeline protests where protesters reportedly destroyed police vehicles, most referring to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests (Bickis, 2016, Aug 8th; Warnica, 2016, Oct 29th; Simpson, 2016, March 16th). The framing of dramatic events drew attention away from protest concerns, and framed situations as unnecessarily violent while obscuring environmental grievances. Like the Harper era, mainstream articles also used phrases suggesting anger such as “aboriginal outrage” (Simpson, 2016, Feb 24th) and “galvanize” (Baily, 2016, Dec 7th; McCarthy and Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th; Cattaneo, 2017, June 16th). These findings on news narratives of violence and anger support past research on how stereotypes are formed through settler coverage of Indigenous issues (Brady and Kelly, 2017; Clark, 2014). Brady and Kelly (2017) explain how settler media creates false narratives, “reflecting a savaging impulse and an imperialist nostalgia” while furthering colonial perceptions of who Indigenous individuals are. Put another way, Brady and Kelly (2017) suggest that settler media sometimes frames Indigenous individuals as archaic, or uncivilized.

Among articles in independent media, negative framing of protesters included anger, with no direct references to violent actions. Anger on its own is not necessarily a negative description of emotion. Anger can very well be a justified response to a situation. However, emphasizing anger in order to suggest volatility is different from simply acknowledging people were angry.

Similar to mainstream articles, three independent articles produced during the Harper era used the term “galvanized” to describe Indigenous environmental activists as angry and charged (Vigliotti, 2011, Sept 27th; Barlow and Georgetti, 2013, Jan 11th; Fournier, 2013, Jan 11th). Future research should compare news use of the word “galvanized” with other types of social movements in order to fully establish the word as negative in context. The other Harper era article simply suggested that oil sands opponents were “frustrated” that “scientific evidence and strong opposition against tar sands development” was being ignored. Again, this is not necessarily negative framing, but simply describes frustration. There were no depictions of protesters as angry in articles from independent news sources during the Trudeau era.

Lastly, Indigenous news articles had no references to protesters as violent, with only one depiction of anger within each era and neither of these were inherently negative. The article from the Harper era discussed a legal battle between eight first nations groups against Enbridge’s Northern Gateway project, stating that “The nations are growing increasingly frustrated with a federal government, which appears to prefer confrontation to consultation.” (*Alberta Native News*, 2015, Oct 2nd). This quote did not appear to be intended as portraying actors negatively but instead described feelings of frustration due to what the author suggested to be government neglect. In the Trudeau era, an article simply quoted Union of B.C Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Grand Chief Stewart Phillip as stating “We are outraged” regarding the Trudeau governments approval of Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain Expansion and Enbridge’s Line 3 pipeline (*Ha-Shilth-Sa*, 2016, Nov 29th). Again, this example quoted an actor regarding a specific situation and is not intended to portray this actor in a generally negative way.

Positive depictions of protesters were more common than negative coverage overall, appearing most in independent news sources, followed by Indigenous media, then mainstream news (Table 4.4). These included mentions of protesters acting peacefully, for the good of Canadian democracy, as advocates for environmental protection, or as representative of resistance against continued colonial oppression.

In mainstream articles, positive coverage of protest actors occurred most frequently during the Harper era. Most positive coverage during this time focused on how protesters acted peacefully, and that events were arrest-free. Here, the focus seems to be on how individuals were practicing their right to participate in civil disobedience as a means of participating in Canadian pipeline politics. During the Trudeau era, positive mainstream news coverage continued this narrative. Articles again emphasized the right for individuals to protest, with some articles describing Indigenous protest as “resistance” (McCarthy and Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th) and as an effort to “...defend their rights...” (McCarthy, 2016, Sept 12th). Mainstream media seems to be more accepting of protesters when they acted peacefully, even if news tended to sensationalize violence and anger. Furthermore, it is difficult to assess how many protests were truthfully “violent” or “peaceful” without having been there.

In independent news sources, positive perceptions of protesters again appeared most within the Harper era. Like mainstream news articles, independent news articles also discussed protesters as being peaceful actors. However, there were many more examples of news articles describing how the general public was in support of pipeline protesters. For example, an article reported that Indigenous opponents of pipeline construction in B.C have “...gained the respect and support of much of the general public.” (Mair, 2014, Nov 10th). Another article describes a

protest event against Keystone XL, in which “...protesters were encouraged by hundreds of boisterous supporters as they passed the media scrum and calmly hopped over police barricades.” (Vigliotti, 2011, Sept 27th). During the Trudeau era, positive portrayals of activists were more focused on resistance against oppression, similar to mainstream articles produced during this time. One article described a DAPL protest solidarity event in Toronto as a “moment of resistance in Indigenous history...” in opposition to “...the settler-colonial state of Canada” (Forcione, 2016, Nov 15th). Furthermore, articles described protest as necessary for environmental protection and the future of the planet (McKibben, 2016, Jan 23rd).

Lastly, articles from Indigenous news sources that portrayed protesters positively again occurred most commonly during the Harper era (though coverage was nearly as high during the Trudeau era). In contrast to mainstream and independent articles that tended to focus either on peaceful protest or on public support, Indigenous news during the Harper era had a larger variety of positive perceptions of protesters. Articles depicted protesters as non-violent, as environmental protectors (of water and land), as supported by the public, and as resisters to oppression. One article stated “We are stronger than the oppressors. We can be the change we want for our families, communities, and Nations.” (Beaton, 2012, Sept 6th). Another described pipeline protests that remained peaceful, despite violent repression from police: “I watched the RCMP attack the non-violent anti-fracking protestors at Elsipogtog with rubber bullets, an armoured vehicle, tear gas, fists, police dogs and pepper spray.” (Simpson, 2013, Nov 4th). Coverage was similar during the Trudeau era. Articles describe pipeline activists as water protectors, who seek to ensure water remains clean for future generations (Restoule, 2017, Jan 6th; Smith, 2016, Oct 28th). Others (like mainstream and independent articles) described pipeline protest events as inherently peaceful, and as acts of resistance.

4.2.6 Women as leaders in protest

A key point that many scholars and activists acknowledge is the fact that women have often taken leadership in Indigenous and environmental protest (Awâsis 2014; Thomas-Muller, 2014). Thomas-Muller's (2014) work as an activist and academic of Indigenous rights and pipeline protest noted that significant movements – such as Idle No More and climate justice movements in Canada – are led by women. He stated, “I have learned that our movement is very much led by women; this is something I am very comfortable with, given that I am a Cree man and we are a matriarchal society” (Thomas-Muller, 2014, p.252). Palmater (2015) also acknowledged the importance of women in creating a national discussion regarding the Idle No More movement. Furthermore, Awâsis (2014) discussed how pipeline opposition led by women is often “rooted in an anti-colonial” ideology and is accepting of all individuals regardless of sex and race (p.261).

As the theme of female leadership was evident in academic work, I was also interested in whether news media also saw women as leaders in pipeline activism. As seen in Table 4.5, Indigenous news sources most commonly cited women as leaders in activism, followed by independent sources, with only one mention by mainstream news.

Table 4.5: Coverage of Women as Leaders

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Women as leaders	1	4	4	0	1	6

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

Mainstream news only referenced women as leaders once and did so unrelated to Indigenous environmentalism. This article discussed protest as a means for change generally, discussing how the work by women during the suffrage movement changed Canadian society. They make comparisons between how the suffrage movement was important for democracy and rights in ways similar to how pipeline protest is important for Indigenous rights (Renzetti, 2015, March 20th).

When reading independent news, more complex understandings of the importance of female leadership is seen. Coverage was most prevalent during the Harper era, with only one independent article discussing female leadership during the Trudeau era (Table 4.5). Two articles made reference to the Idle No More movement, which highlighted that the movement was conceived by and organized by Indigenous women (Fournier, 2013, Jan 11th; Klein, 2013, March 6th). This isn't necessarily that these articles are "framing" women as leaders, but an acknowledgement of the women who started the movement. Both articles discussed how Idle No More was a period of resurgence for Indigenous women, in which they were able to gain political and social power and were taken seriously. Other articles mentioned specific events that were started by women in protest of oil development. One discussed a protest against Enbridge's Northern Gateway by women of Gitga'at First Nation, who "...pledged to stretch what they're calling a multicoloured crocheted "chain of hope" across the more than 3.5 kilometre-wide Douglas Channel -- a symbolic blockade against oil tankers..." (Ball, 2014, June 17th). This article described Indigenous women as protectors of water and rights, committed to halting pipeline construction and the arrival of tankers in B.C waters. In another, a journalist described a Tar Sands Healing Walk that was organized by the Keepers of the Athabasca. This article highlighted that the event featured mostly Indigenous women speakers, and described these

women as seeking to protect land and people from future oil spills in Alberta (Stewart, 2014, July 8th). So, in comparison to mainstream attention to female leadership, independent news provided specific examples of positive impacts by women, and specific events and movements in which women were vital.

Indigenous news provided even more detail on the importance of women in protest, providing the most overall coverage with coverage increasing during the Trudeau era (Table 4.5). During the Harper era, news articles cited several specific events started, organized, and inspired by Indigenous women. There was mention of an Anishinaabe Water Ceremony started by the Grassy Narrows Women's Drum Group as an act of water protection to raise awareness of the dangers of transporting oil by rail, since railways cross overtop or near bodies of water on Indigenous land (*Anishinabek News*, 2015, April 16th). Another talked about the "toxic tours" that were started by two Aamjiwnaang teenagers to show outsiders the impact of oil extraction and refinement to natural environments within and near their community (Garrick, 2015, Jan 7th). The women who started these tours said that they were "...inspired by a group of women working against the tar sands in northern Alberta" (Garrick, 2015, Jan 7th). Similar to articles within independent news sources, Indigenous news also discusses women as leaders of Idle No More (Beaton, 2013, Feb 8th), and the "Chain of Hope" event by Gitga'at First Nation Women opposing Tankers in B.C. Articles produced during the Trudeau era also discussed several key events that were led by women. For example, an article covers a blockade in which grandmothers from Walpole Island First Nation halted construction of a gas line, which did not have the approval of the community (*Anishinabek News*, 2016, Aug 11th). Women in this article and others are described as taking the initiative to protect the environment, as well as the human rights of individuals living in their communities. In this case, the grandmothers who took part in

this blockade were seen as inspirations for future resistance, and as examples for younger activists.

4.3 Organizational Actors

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, hundreds of non-industry organizations appeared in the articles I coded. These organizations could be governmental, non-governmental, alliance groups, review boards, public or private organizations. Several organizations were referenced more often than others: the National Energy Board (NEB), the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), and the Yinka Dene Alliance (YDA) (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Coverage of Organizational Actors

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
National Energy Board	8	5	2	12	8	3
Assembly of First Nations	3	3	3	3	3	1
Union of BC Chiefs	2	4	6	0	2	3
Yinka Dene Alliance	2	5	4	0	0	1

n = number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

4.3.1 The National Energy Board (NEB)

The National Energy Board (NEB) was founded in 1959 and is the national regulatory agency responsible for environmental assessments of industrial energy projects (Doucet & Littlechild, 2009). The NEB is supposed to take a non-biased approach to assessing projects

based on scientific findings on potential environmental and social impacts and is obligated to ensure consultation occurs between industry companies and communities impacted by development (Graben and Sinclair, 2015).

The NEB was depicted as one of the more controversial organizations in the news. Often, the NEB was discussed as a national political gatekeeper for extractive projects, though critics have argued that this gatekeeping function undermines the Indigenous sovereignty over land and resources (Awâsis, 2014). Mainstream news coverage of the NEB discussed potential controversy but did so in an ambiguous way rather than making accusations of conflicts of interests. For example, an article simply stated that the NEB “has been accused of having too cozy a relationship with the industry it’s meant to regulate” (Mcinnis, 2017, March 29th). While criticisms of the NEB were found within mainstream articles, articles were also sympathetic to NEB members on a few occasions. In both Harper and Trudeau eras, mainstream news mentioned the threat of violent protesters and their actions towards the NEB. These articles also justified RCMP communication and cooperation with the NEB in order to protect its members from violence. This threat of violent protests against the NEB is mentioned even before protests had begun: “The National Energy Board is set to begin public hearings Monday into the Energy East pipeline in New Brunswick, a province where the prospect of oil and gas development has led to fierce, and sometimes violent, protest in the past” (Bickis, 2016, Aug 8th). This article criticized protesters prior to any actual events. Other similar articles mentioned protest against NEB decisions as a serious risk to the Canadian economy and suggested that NEB approvals are “closed cases”, which cannot be challenged by protest. Despite protecting the NEB, and criticizing protesters within mainstream media, all media types suggested that environmental

assessments should be revised, either to make the process quicker for industry or more thorough to ensure effective environmental protection.

The focus of articles in independent and Indigenous news sources in both eras also tended to be on controversy and conflicts of interest within the NEB, although these articles made much more concrete statements regarding the conflicts. For example, in 2014 a few articles mentioned that the NEB gave Kinder Morgan permission to use land owned by the city of Burnaby as part of the Trans Mountain pipeline project without the city's explicit permission. The failure to consult and obtain consent from communities impacted by pipeline construction was a prominent theme in both independent and Indigenous news. Consent was portrayed as more important than consultation within Indigenous news. There were several mentions of the NEB approving Enbridge's line 9 without obtaining consent from Chippewas of Thames, who would be affected by the project. Other articles suggested that the NEBs environmental assessment regulations must change to include close involvement by Indigenous peoples throughout Canada. Controversies mentioned within the Trudeau era often focused on conflicts of interest held by NEB members. For example, independent news often suggested that NEB members were former oil executives, had strong ties to and would benefit from oil development, and even accused members of secretly meeting with TransCanada Corp concerning the Energy East pipeline project.

4.3.2 The Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

Established out of the former National Indian Brotherhood organization, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is self-described as "...a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada, which includes more than 900,000 people living in 634 First Nation

communities...” (Assembly of First Nations, n.d). All media types describe the AFN as a key organizational actor within Canada, with similar frequencies of coverage within all media types and eras (Table 4.6).

Within mainstream media articles, media attention to the AFN included both positive and negative coverage. Starting with positive coverage, mainstream news articles presented the AFN as a protective organization that fights to preserve Indigenous peoples’ rights in Canada. When discussing the 2013 shale-gas protests in New Brunswick, one mainstream article mentioned that the AFN was monitoring the situation to ensure the RCMP were not unjustly harming individuals from the Elsipogtog First Nation (Taber, 2013, Oct 21st). Mainstream news articles also mentioned that the AFN were supporters of Indigenous sovereignty over land and natural resources and that the AFN believed Indigenous peoples should play a more involved role when it comes to environmental assessments for potential industrial projects. These articles appeared to assert that the AFN was an important and relevant actor when it comes to Indigenous environmental mobilization. However, these articles also express skepticism. Articles sometimes presented the AFN as divided on pipeline issues, creating a narrative of “vigorous debate” amongst AFN representatives who either seek to reap benefits from projects or who are avidly against any and all resource extraction (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th). Other mainstream articles even used sarcasm to question the AFN’s proceedings: “The Assembly of First Nations met Tuesday in Gatineau to catalogue the usual litany of how they’ve never had it so bad” (Iverson, 2012, Dec 5th). While Iverson is a columnist and is paid to be provocative, such reporting discounts the diverse experiences affecting many Indigenous peoples and uses “damage centred” framing to suggest that Indigenous peoples view themselves as victims (Tuck, 2009).

Some independent and Indigenous articles highlight that the AFN was outspoken about the dangers of Bill C-45 and changes to the Indian Act, which would allow for easier exploitation of Indigenous land. While this portrays the AFN as concerned with and an advocate for Indigenous rights, this doesn't mean that the AFN is not routinely critiqued; it often is. Much like the NEB, media coverage on the AFN often included mentions of controversy. In an independent news article, Indigenous scholar and regular media commentator Pamala Palmater shared concerns over AFN actions: "When the Former National Chief, Shawn Atleo, chose to go against the demands of the grassroots people in Idle No More and Chief Spence and met with the Prime Minister, instead of hold out for a meeting that included the Governor-General, we knew the AFN had changed" (Palmater, 2015, Nov 20th). Similarly, within an Indigenous article, a journalist was skeptical of a meeting set up between Prime Minister Harper and Theresa Spence during Idle No More, as Harper apparently would only meet with AFN members, excluding chiefs from many groups (Beaton, 2013, Feb 8th). These articles presented reporters' concerns over whether the AFN is too closely aligned with the Canadian government, and not effectively representing Indigenous peoples' interests. This type of criticism appears across both eras.

4.3.3 The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC)

The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) was another frequently mentioned organization in the news articles sampled. The UBCIC's directive is to "work towards the implementation, exercise and recognition of our inherent Title, Rights and treaty Rights and to protect our Lands and Waters, through the exercise, and implementation of our own laws and jurisdiction" (Union of B.C Indian Chiefs, n.d). While the organization's focus is to serve peoples within British Columbia, it has always been a strong advocate for Indigenous peoples in Canada and the U.S. Mentions of the UBCIC appeared most commonly within Indigenous news,

slightly less within independent news, and rarely within mainstream news (Table 4.6). Coverage on the UBCIC also appears to have dropped from the Harper to the Trudeau era.

In general, the UBCIC is portrayed quite positively in all the media types. Mainstream news only referenced the UBCIC twice, then as a prime supporter of the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion.

Within independent and Indigenous news, UBCIC was presented as less aligned with the federal government in comparison to the AFN, and more in tune with Indigenous rights issues and against many pipeline projects. For example, an Indigenous news article quotes UBCIC president Grand Chief Steward Phillip on the organization's support of the Northern Gateway protests: "I cannot emphasize enough the unrelenting and unified strength of First Nations opposition to the Enbridge Northern Gateway project: We are prepared to go to the wall on this one, and it's long past time the federal government listened to our concerns" (*Alberta Native News*, 2014a, June 18th). This depiction of the UBCIC as critical of government decisions was common in Indigenous news. More specifically, articles highlighted the UBCIC's disapproval of Trudeau's controversial pipeline announcement, in which Enbridge's Northern Gateway was rejected, while Enbridge's Line 3 and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline projects were approved. One article again quoted Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, who stated: "We are outraged with Prime Minister Trudeau's cavalier '50/50' announcement, and with the sheer audacity of his refusal to acknowledge the serious erosion of Indigenous rights and the extreme impacts on climate change that will certainly result from approval of Kinder Morgan TMX and Line 3" (*Ha-Shilth-Sa*, 2016, Nov 29th). Such examples demonstrate the way Indigenous media depicted the UBCIC as a key political challenger to Canadian pipeline projects.

4.3.4 The Yinka Dene Alliance (YDA)

The Yinka Dene Alliance (YDA) is comprised of six groups – “Nadleh Whut’en, Nak’azdli, Takla Lake, Saik’uz, Wet’suwet’en, and Tl’azt’en First Nations” (Yinka Dene Alliance, 2014) – and formed in opposition against pipeline projects such as Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline (Preston, 2013). Coverage on the YDA, much like the UBCIC, appeared most frequently in Indigenous and independent news, with rare mentions within mainstream news, most appearing during Harper era (Table 4.6).

The mentions of the YDA within mainstream news are quite brief. A mainstream article portrayed the YDA as one of “Northern Gateway’s most vocal critics” (Berkow, 2012, May 8th), though they described them as an incredibly stubborn group who rejects oil projects even if they have the potential to provide positive economic possibilities for Indigenous interest groups. Regardless of pipeline position, the YDA is known as an Indigenous leader across different news types.

Within independent media and Indigenous news, YDA was often portrayed as an environmental saviour, as a key actor in the Idle No More movement, and as led primarily by women. Indigenous news also described the YDA instead as avid water and land protectors, who take action against unsustainable and destructive oil companies. One of the campaigns the YDA is associated with is the Save the Fraser Declaration, which is described as “an Indigenous law supported by more than 100 First Nations to ban tar sands pipelines and tankers from their territories”, specifically directed against Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline, which was set to cross the Fraser River in B.C (*Alberta Native News*, 2014b, Dec 8th). In coverage on this campaign, the YDA was spoken of as a very successful advocate for Indigenous land rights, with

the rejection of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway cited as a clear victory in which the YDA played a key role.

4.4 Target Industry

Many extractive companies were referenced in the news articles. Three main companies appeared most frequently: Enbridge, TransCanada Corp, and Kinder Morgan. Enbridge was the most discussed company, followed by TransCanada Corp and Kinder Morgan (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Coverage of Target Industry

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Enbridge	25	20	17	14	13	7
TransCanada Corp	11	3	10	15	6	7
Kinder Morgan	3	5	6	17	17	7

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

4.4.1 Enbridge

Enbridge was the most mentioned company across the news sources. Three main Enbridge projects were mentioned in the news: The Northern Gateway pipeline, Line 3, and Line 9(a & b). Coverage on Enbridge was most frequent during the Harper era (Table 4.7).

While mainstream media presents activists’ grievances over Enbridge’s projects, they tend to present issue debates as being between economy and the environment. One article depicted the Northern Gateway project as being highly supported by various industry unions such as, “the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, the Canadian Auto Workers, the B.C. Teachers Federation, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the United

Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union” (Meissner, 2012, Oct 23rd). This makes the pipeline appear to be quite important to Canadian workers and to the economy in general.

On the other hand, mainstream media also mentioned previous oil spills in relation to the Northern Gateway, though usually in reference to non-Enbridge spills such as the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill. Mainstream articles also seemed to accept the compromise of rejecting Northern Gateway and approving Trans Mountain, though some articles were adamant that Trudeau must follow through with the Trans Mountain project or risk compromising the Canadian economy: “The Canadian economy needs the stimulus and the energy sector needs the boost (Findlay and McLeod, 2016, Dec 1st). Mainstream articles acknowledged strong opposition by many Indigenous groups in Canada to Enbridge’s projects, referencing the support of many nations to the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion. However, mainstream media also suggested that protests against Enbridge projects are often violent, illegal, and block potential industrial development. One article suggested that instead of accepting a legal pipeline decision, “These protesters instead took up occupation of Enbridge’s facility by trespassing on private property, changing the locks on the company gates, holding captive company employees, and engaging in bullying behaviour by blogging claims against Enbridge employees with their mobile phone numbers to encourage harassment” (Reid, 2013, July 3rd). This example presented protest as a direct risk to individual employees of the company (through cited proof of these events is not provided). Moreover, it suggested that protest not only presents an unnecessary risk to the Canadian economy but physical risk to Canadian workers in the energy industry.

In contrast to mainstream news, Enbridge is depicted as an industry villain across independent and Indigenous produced news articles. Enbridge is sometimes described as

irrational, greedy, and wholly against the will of the people with mentions of hundreds of protesters showing up to anti-Enbridge events. News targets the oil sands through Enbridge via discursive tactics of political consumerism (Stoddart et al., 2018). Put differently, these articles may seek to take issue against the whole oil sands industry by picking a smaller, more easily reachable target (Enbridge) (Stoddart et al., 2018). Ultimately, this means that the oil sands emerge as the key environmental offending industry. Independent and Indigenous news sources endeavour to tarnish Enbridge's corporate reputation by associating them with previous large-scale oil disasters, such as the Kalamazoo River spill. These media remind readers of Enbridge's previous mistakes in order to argue that the company is not able to safely transport oil and will ultimately create further environmental harm if Enbridge's operations continue. To provide further context as to who would be directly impacted by pipeline failure, the independent and Indigenous media often reference communities who live along pipeline pathways: "The Line 9 crosses the territories of 18 Indigenous nations along its route, including the Six Nations of the Grand River, who have not given free, prior, informed consent to the project." (Bonnar, 2013, June 26th). This quote highlights both the human risks of oil transportation, as well as considering debates about consent. In Indigenous and independent news, the possibility of Enbridge oil spills is presented not as a question of *if*, but a question of *when*. Therefore, pipeline rejections are hailed as clear victories for the environment. Regarding the rejection of Enbridge's Northern Gateway by the Trudeau government, independent and Indigenous news attribute this victory for climate justice to the work and sacrifices of Indigenous activists who created blockades and delayed construction of the pipeline through water and land protecting (though this victory is overshadowed by the approval of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion pipeline).

4.4.2 Kinder Morgan

Kinder Morgan was the second most referenced oil company within the news (Table 4.7). Mainstream media present issues surrounding Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline as complex. However, there is a noticeable difference in how coverage changed after the approval announcement of the project (June 2016). While Indigenous and independent media focused on how movement actors will not yield or abandon their resistance efforts, mainstream media's coverage shifted to discuss the barriers that protest may present to the pipeline's success. The approval of the project was described as a tough but necessary decision made by the Trudeau Government. However, mainstream media mentioned that despite government approval, pipeline construction is still not entirely certain as they believe protest will become more intense.

In articles appearing in independent news sources, the Trans Mountain pipeline was frequently compared to Enbridge's Northern Gateway regarding its potential capacity to increase oil output from the Alberta oil sands. Independent news tended to suggest that projects of this scale should always be assessed primarily in relation the potential of these projects to cause environmental harm through water, land, and air pollution. Furthermore, these sources argued that the decision to follow through with a pipeline project should be based not on its potential to boost the economy and provide advantages to select individuals, but through a weighing of risks to the communities and individuals that will be negatively impacted by pipeline construction and oil transportation. Independent media also presented projects like Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline as representative of only one of many of the potential pathways for Canada's and the world's future in general. They believe the choice is between continuing investments into Canada's oil economy, and carbon capital, or investing in alternative, renewable, and sustainable energy futures (Urry, 2013). The former would mean approving pipelines, increasing tanker

traffic, and contributing to localized inequalities as well as wider impacts through climate change.

In Indigenous news sources, Kinder Morgan's pipeline represented a clear target for resistance, and a flashpoint for creating solidarity among groups who will share its negative impacts, and the general Canadian public. Articles mentioned significant Canadian opposition to Kinder Morgan and suggest it is ironic that the Canadian government – who purports to act on behalf of Canadians - approved the Trans Mountain pipeline extension despite this opposition.

Indigenous and independent news framed resistance as ensuring environmental justice, while mainstream news discusses resistance as a risk to pipeline success. Both views emphasize the impacts of protest, though the potential outcomes of protest are framed differently.

4.4.3 TransCanada Corp

Lastly, TransCanada Corp was the third most mentioned company (Table 4.7). Three TransCanada Corp projects were most important in the media: Keystone XL, Energy East, and the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Pipeline.

Articles in mainstream media seem to be supportive of TransCanada Corp's Energy East and Keystone XL projects, however, they suggest communication between Indigenous nations, pipeline companies, and the federal government must improve. The focus here is on achieving successful but ethical energy projects to boost the Canadian economy. Definitions of ethicality are complex and unclear, since mainstream articles perceive consultation and consent as ambiguous concepts.

Like independent and Indigenous coverage of the previous two pipeline companies, TransCanada Corp projects (particularly Keystone XL) were often associated with Canada's

continuing investments in oil and as insurance that Alberta oil sands operations will continue indefinitely. Independent media was critical of Trudeau's support for Keystone XL, arguing that it contradicts his original campaign promise that his government would pursue renewable energy rather than support the fossil fuels industry. Indigenous media takes this criticism a step further. While referencing Trudeau's interest in cooperating with US President Trump on Keystone XL, one article questioned Trudeau's intentions on climate change and Indigenous rights. This shows how pipeline projects, like TransCanada Corp's, can become controversial political objects in the news. Much like how activists can respond to critical events (Ramos, 2008), reporters can ground their writing around a project or a company's operations that have clear social and environmental stakes. Media can point to an actor as a physical and immediate threat to the environment and Indigenous rights, or conversely suggest activists pose a threat to the economy.

4.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to draw out how different types of media conceptualize, describe, and categorize the individuals, organizations, and target industries involved in Indigenous environmental pipeline activism. I started out with how news articles distinguished individuals using descriptive terms and imagery, blanket umbrella terms, or specific group names. I found clear differences in whether and how context was established between news types, though fewer clear differences between the Harper and Trudeau eras. For example, mainstream media relied on negative depictions of activists – as violent, angry, or engaged in illegal activity – more than other forms of media. This is comparable to findings from previous work on news framing of Indigenous activism (Baylor, 1996; Wilkes et al., 2010). Baylor's (1996) study suggested that mainstream news between 1968-1979 often described Indigenous activists as "militant" and focused most on violent protest acts. Wilkes et al. (2010) also

suggested that violent protests were more likely to be covered, focusing coverage on Indigenous collective action between 1985-1995. My results contribute to work on Indigenous protest situations within contemporary times and provides insight into an understudied type of protest (Indigenous environmentalism). Furthermore, it distinguishes between news types, finding fewer Indigenous and independent news sources presenting violence. This suggests that these news sources are less likely to sensationalize conflict and violence in comparison to mainstream sources, providing credibility to Brady and Kelly's (2017) claims regarding the prevalent use of stereotypical imagery to describe Indigenous peoples in mainstream media.

A particularly salient finding was the fact that independent news increased the usage of specific Indigenous group names during the Trudeau era, becoming more like Indigenous news, which generalized the least out of the three news types. This may indicate that independent news articles became more effective in creating context for protest situations during the Trudeau era. This finding is reminiscent of Clark's (2014) study, which showed how Indigenous produced news stories were more likely to present "Aboriginal context" in comparison to mainstream news. Unlike Clark's (2014) work, this thesis also looks at settler-independent news, which appears to have moved closer to presenting "Aboriginal context" during the Trudeau era. This change in news coverage may be representative of increasing societal knowledge about Indigenous issues, and an increased emphasis on context when discussing *why* activities choose to protest. As general political understandings of issues increase over time, media coverage changes as well. Creating context is needed when presenting issues which impact specific groups. Furthermore, it reduces homogenizing statements that may be interpreted as applying to all Indigenous peoples.

It's important to note that reporters work for news sources that target different audiences and expectations. A mainstream news outlet may not go into deep detail about the specific groups involved in a situation simply because their audience may not recognize the names. This is not an excuse for media that may foster unjust generalizations, however, it may, for example, explain why blanket terms are sometimes used over specific group names.

When analyzing the use of the concepts “alliance” and “solidarity,” I found the former was usually associated with individual actors, while the latter was associated with macro-level actors who took direct actions to support protest. Furthermore, I found support for the idea that Indigenous participants in protest were more likely to be defined as being “Indigenous activists,” even though their goals and motivations may have been environmental. In contrast, non-Indigenous persons who supported Indigenous activists as “allies” were described as being environmental activists. This supports Clark’s (2014) point on how news stories of Keystone XL opposition presented participants as being “First Nations groups and environmentalists” (p.53). My study adds further support that the division between “Indigenous activists” and “Environmental activists” is presented across many news sources in Canada.

When discussing the coverage on organizations, I found that all news types associated organizations such as the NEB and AFN with controversy and conflicts of interest, while other organizations such as the UBCIC and YDA were presented as more representative of Indigenous peoples’ issues. While criticisms of organizations varied across media, all news types generally supported the need to transfer some responsibility for environmental assessments to those who are directly impacted by industry. Researchers such as Graben and Sinclair (2015) agree that

project assessment policies (especially related to the consultation of relevant Indigenous groups) must improve, arguing that the NEB should be held accountable by other organizations.

Lastly, coverage of target companies focused on issues of consultation and consent, as well as environmental harm and economic benefit from oil projects. All news types associated Enbridge with previous oil spills (either caused by Enbridge, or other companies), however, mainstream media also highlighted the dangers that protests could pose to company workers and Canadian economic development. Independent and Indigenous produced media often took a stand against further energy projects from TransCanada Corp, Kinder Morgan, and Enbridge, presenting these projects as supportive of continued oil sands extraction, environmental degradation, and climate change impacts. The association between Enbridge (and other companies) with oil spills is as a clear connection for many pipeline activists (Preston, 2013; Awâsis, 2014; Haluza-Delay & Carter, 2014). This connection is also presented by independent and Indigenous news articles.

In the next chapter, I will look at how changes in news coverage over time may indicate changes in the political opportunity structure affecting Indigenous-led environmentalism. I also consider the critical events identified by the various news outlets as relevant to protest and whether these events can be linked to changes in news coverage arguments and understandings of Indigenous environmental protest.

Chapter 5 : Political Opportunities and Critical Events

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to describe and analyze the political opportunity structure facing (or political processes affecting) Indigenous environmental activism during the Harper and the Trudeau eras. Key to this chapter is the idea of *critical events*, a concept used by social movement theorists to describe key political events and situations, which protest movements can draw upon to ground their protests (Staggenborg, 1993; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016). They can either be positive, such as improvements to environmental policy, or negative, such as events that provoke collectives to protest more seriously. However, I am taking the approach that media, too, draw upon critical events. Critical events are in some ways *frame anchors*, which ground news stories onto specific and tangible issues. Put differently, VanWynsberghe (2000) describes critical events as “focal nodes” that are representative of changing social conditions. Furthermore, these nodes act as central points around which media reports orbit. Tracking critical events can help researchers understand important political incidents, which may have changed perspectives, discussions, and opportunity for media and movements to act.

This chapter works to address my second research question, which asks how news framing of Indigenous environmental activism takes shape over time, and how political opportunities and critical events can help us understand changes in coverage. I will begin by providing an overview of how different forms of news media presented governments and political figures (Harper, Trudeau) in relation to Indigenous environmental issues. This section will highlight the differences in media coverage of these two leaders and governments, by considering which government is more associated with “failure” to improve the environmental and social issues facing Indigenous groups. Second, I will analyze coverage of the critical events

discussed most by media during these two eras, both political and movement-related. I will point out differences in coverage and describe each media type's presentation of the events and will make suggestions for how Staggenborg's (1993) critical event theory can be adapted to consider the impact of news interactions with these events. Lastly, I will conclude with a discussion of how these events can be linked to indicators of social change by considering whether and how news coverage changed in any way once these events occurred. Some events can be more clearly connected to potential social change, though this link is more difficult to make for others. As with the previous chapter, this chapter will include discussions about how news framing differs between news types.

5.2 Perceived changes in political landscapes: From Harper to Trudeau

Many journalists and academics have been interested in the uneasy relationship between social movements and political leaders and their respective governments. In Canada, this relationship is especially complex with respect to Indigenous environmental activism, given the long history of colonialism and government exploitation of Indigenous peoples and lands. Indigenous environmentalism includes resistance against what Indigenous activists believe to be the unjust extraction of resources, projects that risk environmental degradation and the compromise of community health, especially when these happen without the explicit informed consent by affected groups.

I tracked all mentions of the Harper and Trudeau governments by news articles to compare how each government was framed. As Table 5.1 shows, media coverage of both governments was comparable in both mainstream and independent news. Indigenous news, however, mentioned Harper far more frequently than Trudeau.

Table 5.1: Mentions of Harper and Trudeau

	Mainstream (n=54)	Independent (n=54)	Indigenous (n=54)
Harper	13	21	17
Trudeau	14	18	8

n= number of articles in a given category

5.2.1 The Harper Era

The Stephen Harper Conservative government (2006-2015) was criticized in all types of media for not respecting or properly considering the impacts of bills, acts, and resource projects on Indigenous peoples in Canada. Saramo (2016: 205) suggests that during this period, “Canadian social welfare society was undermined and systematically dismantled, Indigenous rights were denied and belittled, and environmental protections were attacked.” These blows to Canadian equality were achieved through such policy initiatives as the changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and to environmental assessment through Bills C-38 and C-45 (Klein, 2015). However, Canadians did not remain silent during this time. The Idle No More movement took hold across the country, often uniting settlers and Indigenous peoples in opposition to the neglect of Indigenous and environmental issues by the federal government.

Criticisms of the Harper government appear in all media types, though they take different forms. Mainstream media articles tend to be less biting. In some cases, criticism is levelled, followed by a balancing statement, which is more forgiving of the Harper government. For example, one article from a mainstream news source starts by describing Harper’s famous apology for Canada’s role in administering Residential Schools (June 2008) as important for moving forward on reconciliation, but then acknowledges the lack of attention the Harper government paid to the problem of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). This same article says later, “Mr. Harper did more on the First Nations front than he

is generally credited with, but he was limited by a reluctant voter base” (Macdonald, 2015, Dec 19th). This article, as well as other mainstream articles, are less critical of Harper government actions. On the Harper government’s approval of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline, one article reads, “The Harper government is damned if it does and damned if it doesn’t” (Foster, 2014, June 24th), suggesting that a decision in either direction was bound to evoke intense debate.

In independent media, we see more overtly critical opinions of the Harper government. One article includes an interview with Leanne Simpson, who comments on various oil sands expansion projects: “To me, it feels like there has been an intensification of colonial pillage, or that’s what the Harper government is preparing for – the hyper-extraction of natural resources on Indigenous lands” (Klein, 2013, March 6th). Other articles reference specific policy outcomes or political statements and link them directly to Harper. For example, Bill C-51 is described as a way for Harper himself to criminalize Indigenous activists; the support of TransCanada’s Keystone XL shows Harper to be “environmentally reckless” (Vigliotti, 2011, Sept 27th). Furthermore, Harper’s infamous comments on MMIWG are often referenced: “Prime Minister Stephen Harper drew broad criticism just before Christmas when he told CBC host Peter Mansbridge, ‘it isn’t really high on our radar, to be honest’” (Braine, 2015, Jan 2nd). These articles differ considerably from the articles appearing in the mainstream presses; favourable coverage of Harper is harder to find, and when something positive does occur (such as an important meeting between the AFN and Harper concerning Bills C-38 and C-45), it is attributed to the persistent work of social movements (Barlow & Georgetti, 2013, Jan 11th).

Lastly, articles from Indigenous media are even more critical of the Harper government than those drawn from independent news sources. Whereas a mainstream article suggested Harper's Residential School apology was a positive event, an Indigenous article describes it as hollow: "Promises made by Harper's regime were never kept; apologies offered were insincere and the word of government was little more than a joke, a bad joke that created more disgust and distrust between Indigenous Canadians and government than ever before" (Copley, 2016, Nov 24th). Although coverage was often concerned with how the Harper government's actions impacted Indigenous peoples, articles were also quick to note how environmental degradation would affect all Canadians. Specifically, the Harper government's steadfast support for the Alberta oil sands was often mentioned, with one article suggesting that the oil sands were '...destroying huge rivers, polluting large tracts of Native and non-Native territories and affecting a way of life that has sustained generations" (Beaton, 2012, June 7th). This example frames the Harper government's environmental decisions as harmful to all Canadians, Indigenous and settler so everyone must oppose these measures.

5.2.2 The Trudeau Era

During the 2015 federal election, Canadian voters turned to Justin Trudeau's Liberal party, who campaigned on a promise to improve the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples, through "nation-to-nation" cooperation. Many important issues were receiving more attention (such as MMIWG and climate change), and a record number of 15 Indigenous MPs were elected. Furthermore, important actions have been taken during the Trudeau era to better secure Indigenous rights. For example, Dubois (2018) describes the signing of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord by Trudeau to be a significant step towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. However, Dubois (2018) also sees great challenges ahead for the

Federal government to achieve a positive nation-to-nation relationship with the Metis, as this requires that government not only listen to the concerns of Indigenous people, but that they work alongside them as equals in creating policy.

Coverage of the Trudeau government by mainstream news sources provides a mix of both criticism and praise. One mainstream article suggests that Indigenous environmental activism is a big threat to Trudeau – suggesting that the events at the DAPL protests will occur in Canada if Trudeau does not honour his campaign promises on tackling climate change (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th). This suggests that Trudeau’s words contradict his actions, as Trudeau says he will be serious when it comes to environmental issues yet is working to approve pipeline projects. In contrast to the articles that describe Trudeau as hypocritical, a few journalists praise Trudeau on his pipeline approvals, saying that “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has shown Canadians that he is willing to make and defend tough decisions” (Findlay & McLeod, 2016, Dec 1st), in relation to the approval of Enbridge’s Line 3, and Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline.

Other articles suggest that Trudeau has good intentions when it comes to working with Indigenous peoples: “Mr. Trudeau’s heart and mind are open – the aboriginal issue is one of the more important challenges he wants to address” (Macdonald, 2015, Dec 19th). While obscuring the seriousness of reconciliation, and countering Canada’s colonial and exploitive relationships (labelling these problems as “the aboriginal issue”), the article does suggest that Trudeau will work better with Indigenous nations than the previous government. This same message appears in several other articles, which comment on Trudeau’s declared hope to achieve nation-to-nation relationships with Indigenous peoples throughout the country.

Coverage of Trudeau by independent news sources is similar to their coverage of Harper, in that articles reference Trudeau in relation to policy and political statements. On occasion, articles describe similarities between Trudeau and Harper, especially when it comes to Trudeau's support for Bill C-51 (often referred to as the Anti-Terrorism Bill). One article states: "Trudeau and Harper seem interchangeable: while Harper didn't vote for his own party's bill, Trudeau did" (McLaren, 2015, May 20th). Another article goes further, suggesting that Trudeau's government "runs roughshod over Indigenous rights... and defends a state security apparatus that continues to be deployed against anyone who objects" (Behrens, 2016, Nov 23rd). Both of these articles mention that Trudeau is much better than Harper at using "politically correct" terminology, but he falls short when actions need to be taken. Regarding environmental actions, articles further question Trudeau's ability to make positive shifts towards sustainability and meeting emission targets: "For a prime minister who vowed to make both indigenous rights and the environment a priority, Trans Mountain was a symbol used by some to argue Trudeau was pursuing the same policies as the Conservatives" (Munson, 2017, Jan 2nd). Many journalists who write for independent news sources seem to question Trudeau's intentions and suggest that many voters feel betrayed after believing Trudeau's appeals to environmentalism and commitment to Indigenous rights. Furthermore, the fact that Trudeau is often compared to Harper may be viewed as representative of the continuity of settler colonial capitalism in Canada (Barker, 2009). So, while Trudeau appeared to be more in tune with language surrounding Indigenous rights and environmentalism, political actions may be seen as coming from the settler government in general, rather than from individual political parties or leaders.

Indigenous news sources, too, are quite skeptical of Trudeau. There is some support when it comes to Trudeau's enactment of the MMIWG inquiry, however, articles suggest that he hasn't

paid attention to other key concerns: “Where Trudeau has failed is defending native rights when it comes to land and environmental concerns” (Larue, 2016, Nov 7th). Disappointment is a common theme in these articles, with several referencing Trudeau’s approvals of Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain and Enbridge’s Line 3 pipeline. One article describes these pipeline approvals as “act[s] of betrayal” and includes quotes from UBCIC Grand Chief Stewart Phillip who stated, “I’m deeply disappointed but not surprised. We anticipated this decision was going to be made in terms of approving the project despite enormous opposition” (Narine, 2016, Nov 29th). This article suggests that Trudeau is unwilling to listen to the voices of the many who oppose these pipelines and is simply following in the footsteps of the previous government despite campaign promises that suggested otherwise.

5.2.3 Government Failure

In addition to criticisms of political decisions, I paid close attention to any mention of a “failure” by a government or political leader. This could be anything from breaking a campaign promise, failing to properly communicate with people, or a perceived failure through bad policy or government action. Coverage of failures by government was much more common during the Harper era than in the Trudeau era (Table 5.2) Government failures also appeared most in Indigenous news sources, followed by independent and mainstream news sources.

Table 5.2: Coverage of Government Failure

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Government failure	6	6	9	3	5	5

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

Articles appearing in mainstream news sources during the Harper era tended to focus on a lack of proper and effective government communication. Specifically, articles mention that pipeline opponents believe that the government excludes Indigenous communities from pipeline discussions. One article states: “Ms. Clifton Percival... accused the government of acting in bad faith by trying to go around the Gitxsan Treaty Society and resume talks directly with chiefs.” (Hume, 2014, July 21st). This suggests that government failed to consult members of a group properly and bypassed concerned individuals to talk directly to Indigenous leadership. Other articles also highlight government’s failure to listen to pipeline opponents. An article quotes Chief Ruben George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, who stated regarding Northern Gateway: ““Our government is not standing behind the people who are here saying, ‘No more’”” (Meissner, 2012, Oct 23rd). Chief George argues that the government has failed by ignoring the concerns of people who will be impacted by the proposed pipeline.

During the Trudeau era, mentions of government failures decreased, though attributes of what was reported as a “failure” were similar (Table 5.2). Two articles focus on failures to consult with groups. One quotes Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit, who believes “the conflict over pipelines and resource development is rooted in government's failure to address the inherent land rights of indigenous people” (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th). This is critical of government’s communication efforts. While these articles contain similar criticisms to those levelled during the Harper era, one article has a different perspective on how the government has failed: “No longer does the country have the capacity to make decisions about major projects that cause the slightest controversy. No matter what scientific review or regulatory process is put in place to examine projects, its credibility is attacked from the get-go by those who oppose the projects, full stop” (Simpson, 2016, Feb 24th). In contrast to the others,

this article suggests that the government is paying *too much* attention to pipeline opposition and must make decisions based on science. In other words, it represents the government as too easily swayed by controversy.

Mentions of government failure by independent news sources during the Harper era focus on failures of policy, as well as of communication. Specifically, there are several references to faulty environmental policy initiatives put in place by the Harper government: “The protesters wanted the chance to air their grievances with the environmentally reckless policies of the Harper-led Conservatives inside Parliament but were blocked from entering by fenced barricades and over 50 RCMP officers.” (Vigliotti, 2011, Sept 27th). This exemplifies two types of failure. First, failure of environmental policy, and second, failure to listen to concerned individuals. Another article also comments on the failure of environmental policy, stating that “As climate legislation, politicians, and environmental regulations continue to degrade, people are taking direct action to protect their communities” (Adrangi, 2013, July 31st). In this case, it is government failure that has caused people to speak out in protest.

During the Trudeau era, mentions of government failure in independent news sources dropped slightly (Table 5.2). Coverage focuses on problems in government communication, as well as failing to obtain consent from communities impacted by pipelines. On the failure to obtain consent, one article states: “Look for the failure of the Trudeau Liberals to obtain consent from all the 133 Indigenous nations affected by pipeline expansion (40 have signalled support) to be decisive in however many court battles it takes for B.C. Indigenous Nations to stop the Trans Mountain project” (Cameron, 2016, Dec 6th). Other articles cite the government’s failure to obtain consent for other pipelines, such as Enbridge’s Northern Gateway: “It [the approval]

signals that the government did not do its job when it consulted with First Nations. It shows that the cabinet did not do its job by determining whether consultation had been carried out properly before approving the project” (Sayers, 2016, July 1st). While this attention to consent during the Trudeau era could signal that the Trudeau government has failed uniquely in comparison to the Harper government, it is likely a result of increased public awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which focuses a great deal on the idea of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) (Awâsis, 2014).

Coverage of Harper government failures is greater in Indigenous media than in the other media types (Table 5.2). We see similar discussions of environmental policies, the government’s inability to listen, as well as their ignoring Indigenous rights, however, coverage in Indigenous presses goes into much more detail about how the government has failed. Regarding failures in environmental policy, articles not only point out how policy needs to be strengthened, but they also mention how deficiencies in policy are directly affecting people. For example, an article mentions that many Indigenous communities within Canada and the US are “...facing a series of environmental challenges that are being introduced through industrial waste and government bodies that seem to care little for North America’s wilderness regions and the Aboriginal communities that live within them.” (Copley, 2014, Sept 22nd). This article then goes on to describe what these environmental challenges are, including access to food, health impacts, as well as land and water degradation. These comments are made not only in relation to pipelines but to the potential of large tankers travelling through B.C waters, which pose a risk to wildlife and the environment in general. Regarding failures to listen, one article suggests that the Harper government has no concern for “disadvantaged, marginalized, and otherwise underrepresented” peoples in Canada, and that “Without critical discourse we have no hope of creating a better

society or meeting our most basic goals, such as realizing human rights for all citizens” (Lazore, 2013, June 12th). Thus, proper communication and a government that will listen to its citizens are linked to human rights in this example, suggesting that the Harper government disregards all dissent no matter how overt.

During the Trudeau era, mentions of government “failures” decreased (Table 5.2). Like the other media types, articles appearing during this era are more concerned with consent. Furthermore, a few articles highlight apparent contradictions by the Trudeau government in relation to the approval of Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain and Enbridge’s Line 3 pipelines. They suggest that these approvals represent government betrayal, considering that Trudeau campaigned on strengthening environmental policy and properly communicating and working with Indigenous nations in Canada. Regarding consent, one article quotes Mohawk Council of Kanesatake Grand Chief Serge Simon, who questions the intentions of the government even when consultations occur, and consent is considered: ““If the Government wants to consult with us and accepts the possibility of ‘no’ we might have a legitimate process on our hands”” (Rowe, 2016, Sept 8th). Thus, there is skepticism amongst some who believe that consultation efforts by the government are simply political formalities rather than real attempts to consider perspectives from communities.

5.2.4 Summary of general coverage of government eras

In comparing coverage of the Harper government and the Trudeau government, several patterns emerge. First, media of all types seemed to suggest that the Trudeau era had the potential to create more political opportunities for Indigenous environmental activists, as Trudeau seemed much more receptive to grievances than Harper. An example of this can be seen

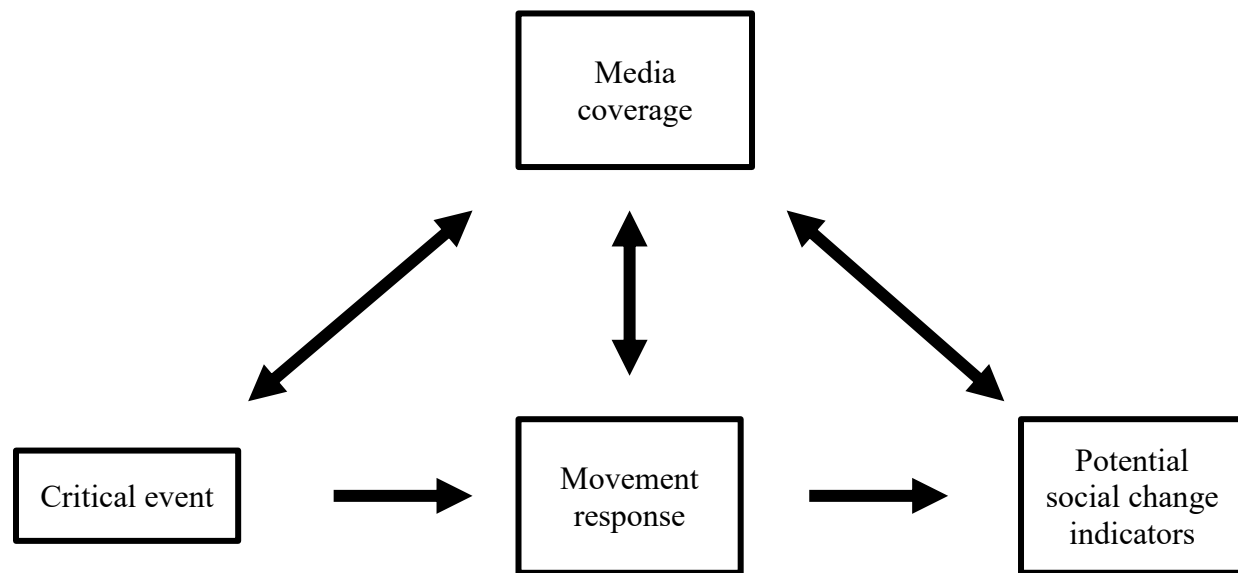
in the coverage related to leader responses to MMIWG. Harper was often criticized for ignoring this issue, while Trudeau was praised for enacting an official inquiry into the matter. While this may not directly be an environmental issue, MMIWG was often discussed in the articles I reviewed alongside environmental problems like resource extraction and pollution of Indigenous lands. As put by activist and author Leanne Betasamosake Simpson: “The dispossession of Indigenous peoples from our homelands is the root cause of every problem we face whether it is missing or murdered Indigenous women, fracking, pipelines, deforestation, mining, environmental contamination or social issues as a result of imposed poverty” (Simpson, 2013, Nov 4th). So according to some observers, while many of these issues seem unrelated, they often bundled together as symptoms of continued colonialism in Canada. On environmental issues more directly, articles were critical of both leaders. Harper was especially discussed in relation to cutting environmental policy, though Trudeau was charged with hypocrisy by appearing to be environmentally minded while approving new pipeline projects.

Political opportunity theorists often discuss how the presence of receptive political leadership can create a friendlier atmosphere for social movement activity (Corrigall-Brown & Ho, 2015; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016). Canadians expected the Trudeau government to be more receptive to matters pertaining to Indigenous people and the environment. Can we see clear differences in media narratives that reflect this? Looking at mentions of government “failure,” there is indeed a lower frequency of references during the Trudeau era than the Harper years. Furthermore, media sources did tend to present Trudeau as having a better attitude when it comes to communicating with people, though actions such as pipeline approvals have caused people to question his motives. It is difficult to say which era has provided movements for more opportunity for protest.

5.3 Critical Events

It is not simply the government in power that dictates whether political opportunities for movements arise; *critical events* also change people's perspectives and highlight political, social, and environmental flaws in Canada. Critical events theory focuses on the different types of events that can occur, and the "extent of movement control" over these events to ignite social change (Staggenborg, 1993). The role that news media has in either publicising or obscuring critical events is missing in this conceptualization. The amount of attention that news sources give to certain incidents results in increased or decreased public awareness of these events (Wilkes et al., 2010). While the influence of news media may have been absent in Staggenborg's (1993) theorization of critical events, they specifically mention the need for scholars to consider "the organizational structures and framing activities that mediate between events and their impact in order to develop a theory of the role of critical events in social movements" (p.341). Media coverage can be a mediator between events and responses to these events (Figure 5.1). This can happen either by news coverage increasing awareness of events, and fostering mobilization against the event, or by news coverage focusing on the response to an event. Furthermore, based on how language and perspectives evolve following an event, news coverage can be representative of social change.

Figure 5.1: News Coverage of Critical Events



5.3.1 Critical Political Events

New laws, bills, and acts can be considered a type of critical event known as a “policy outcome,” which can either increase protest activity if the outcomes are seen as negative by movements or decrease protest if the outcome is positive (Staggenborg, 1993). While several pieces of legislation were mentioned in the articles studied, three bills were covered more often than the others: Bill C-38, C-45 and C-51. The word “omnibus” was used quite often by all media types to describe these bills.⁵ This suggested that the bills were hard to understand, complicated, and broad. And though specific attributes of each bill were of key concern, journalists often commented on the possibility that these bills were too politically and legally powerful and could be used in overarching ways. Bill C-38 was covered most frequently, followed by C-45, and lastly, C-51 (Table 5.3).

⁵ Many authors have acknowledged the potential of omnibus bills to cause harm, as they are seen as too robust and undermine environmental protection and Indigenous sovereignty in Canada (Klein, 2015; Palmater, 2015). Furthermore, omnibus bills often bundle too many policy changes into one document, making it difficult for MPs and journalists to understand the potential impacts of the bills before they are voted on.

Table 5.3: Coverage of Critical Political Events

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Bill C-38	2	6	1	0	2	1
Bill C-45	0	7	3	0	1	0
Bill C-51	1	2	0	1	5	0
TAATSE	--	--	--	1	2	6
UNDRIP	2	3	3	4	5	5

n = number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

5.3.1.1 Bill C-38

Bill C-38 was discussed in relation to the changes it proposed in environmental assessment as well as in the Fisheries Act (though articles often associated C-38 with C-45 and were unclear about which Bill did what). It was most widely reported on during the Harper era, and less often discussed in the Trudeau era (Table 5.3). Discussion most frequently occurred in articles appearing in independent media, followed by Indigenous media and mainstream media.

References in articles appearing in mainstream sources were usually in relation to how interviewees perceived the bills. One article claimed the bill was “adding fuel to environmentalists’ fire...” due to the changes to “environmental assessments for pipeline” projects (Campeau, 2014, May 1st). It suggested that these changes would make it easier for TransCanada Corp’s Energy East project to be approved and would ultimately lead to fierce protest by concerned individuals. Another article quoted Nikki Skuce, a representative of the NGO ForestEthics, who said the bill would contribute to “climate change, Harper bullying, cutting environmental legislation, First Nations rights and title, shipping raw resources and the jobs that go with it overseas” (Meissner, 2012, Oct 23rd). The same article suggested that protest

would increase, and that protest and civil disobedience were a “threat” that could result in violence (Meissner, 2012, Oct 23rd). Thus, both articles focused not only on the environmental changes the bill would result in, but the protests that would follow its passage.

Articles in independent news were much more specific when it came to bill impacts. Three articles said that the bill had the potential to damage Indigenous communities. UBCIC president and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip was quoted saying that “Without Question, Bill C-38 is going to impact Indigenous peoples to a greater degree than ordinary Canadians.” (O’Keefe & Ball, 2012, June 15th). Another article was more specific about what this bill meant to Indigenous peoples: “Resource development projects on traditional lands of Indigenous peoples will be much less likely to be subject to rigorous public environmental impact assessment” (*The Tyee*, 2013, Jan 4th). Other articles also mentioned how Bill C-38 would function with other broad bills to further environmental risk. Thus, while independent media opposed the bill, the focus of these articles was to acknowledge the environmental impacts of this bill on Indigenous peoples’ land.

The few articles in Indigenous sources that specifically referenced Bill C-38 focused on how the bill represented another “failure” of the Harper government, as well as the strong resistance against this bill (as well as C-45) by the Idle No More movement. On these bills, the article stated: “He [Harper] surely must have known there would be a reaction, though it is doubtful he was ready for Idle No More turning into a movement” (Beaton, 2013, Feb 8th). Here, the bills are linked directly to the emergence of Idle No More. During the Trudeau era, an article criticized Trudeau for not doing enough to restore environmental assessment policies that were impacted by C-38 (Narine, 2016, Nov 29th). In both eras, Bill C-38 is portrayed as a government failure.

5.3.1.2 Bill C-45

Bill C-45 – known for its changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act – is often cited as being the primary catalyst for the emergence of the Idle No More movement (though of course, the objectives of this movement were much wider than simply rejecting the bill, and the movement was more than just a reaction against it). The frequency of references to C-45 in media followed the same order as C-38, with the greatest number of mentions in independent media, a few references in Indigenous articles, and no mentions in mainstream news sources. There was only one reference to the bill during the Trudeau era, with all other references occurring during the Harper era (Table 5.3).

Independent news articles often linked C-45 to the loss of protection over many rivers and lakes in Canada. Specifically, one article mentions that Northern Gateway is set to pass several rivers, which are no longer protected due to C-45 (Barlow & Georgetti, 2013, Jan 11th). The suggestion is that the project would be more easily approved since the bill weakened environmental restrictions over these rivers. Again, what makes this bill problematic for many is its breadth. Many articles note that there was no input sought from Indigenous groups on this bill, even though it ultimately impacts them.

Articles in Indigenous media associated C-45 with weakened environmental protections as well as changes to the Indian Act that would result in fewer restrictions on government use of reserve land. One article highlights the importance of resistance as a means for increasing awareness of such bills: “Idle No More...demonstrations across the country brought attention to the Canadian Government’s Bill C-45, an omnibus and controversial bill that is having an adverse effect on First Nations communities across the country” (*Alberta Native News*, 2014, Jan 8th).

5.3.1.3 *Bill C-51*

In all articles that referenced it, Bill C-51 appears as particularly problematic for its potential to criminalize Indigenous protesters. Coverage of this bill was most common during the Trudeau era, appearing most often in independent media, followed by mainstream media. The bill was not referenced in the Indigenous articles I sampled (Table 5.3).

Mainstream media coverage of Bill C-51 focus on the bill's breadth. The one article that referenced the bill during the Harper era stated that under Bill C-51, "...legitimate protest is under threat once again. Not just overseas, in some far-off dictatorship with cockroach-infested prisons, but here, where the divide is economic and political and increasingly bitter" (Renzetti, 2015, March 15th). This article continues, describing how the bill could easily be stretched to outlaw any form of dissent that threatens the federal government, especially pipeline-related protest. These concerns are echoed during the Trudeau era, with another article suggesting that the bill is representative of how the government views pipeline protest more generally: "Government security forces... have sometimes been accused of blurring the lines between peaceful protest and civil disobedience on the one hand, and extreme criminal activity on the other" (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th). Furthermore, while this article was produced during the Trudeau era, it is more critical of the Harper government, attributing ownership of the bill to the Conservative government who created "...an open invitation for security agencies to spy on Indigenous 'extremists' who are prepared to break the law in order to oppose development" (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th).

Independent news sources are also concerned with the breadth of Bill C-51. During the Harper era, the articles that mention the bill are critical of it, with one saying that "All of the

rights, freedoms and liberties upon which Canadian democracy rests will be suspended under Bill C-51” (Palmater, 2015, Feb 12th). Another article mentions concern for Trudeau’s support of the bill during the 2015 federal election. It states that: “It seems ironic that Justin Trudeau would support Bill C-51 that undermines the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that his father is known for.” The article continues, saying how the proposed bill would criminalize Indigenous individuals, as well as Muslims. Independent media attention to Bill C-51 increased during the Trudeau era, with similar concerns expressed by journalists. Again, breadth of the bill’s scope is emphasized, with one article including quotes from the bill: “Under C-51, land and water protectors are likely to be the first to be considered for ‘Undermining the security of Canada,’ which speaks to any ‘interference’ related to government operations including ‘intelligence, defence, border operations, public safety, the administration of justice, diplomatic or consular relations, or the economic or financial stability of Canada.’” (Behrens, 2016, Nov 23rd). Several other articles also refer to the broad scope of the bill and describe how it will specifically target Indigenous activists. The independent press presents the bill as a government safeguard for future pipeline expansions, as it has the potential to reduce Canadians’ legal right to oppose them.

5.3.1.4 Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion (TAATSE)

Political critical events are not simply federal policy events; they can be events created by Indigenous nations throughout Canada. The Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands is one such event that occurred during the Trudeau era in response to continued development of the Alberta oil sands. Looking at news coverage of this treaty, we can see the number of Indigenous nations that signed it increased rapidly over just a few months. Articles discussing the treaty in September 2016 reported that 50 nations had signed it. By October, this became 70 nations, in November it

was 100 nations, and by early 2017, it had been signed by over 120 nations throughout Canada and the US. And while news coverage on the treaty was limited (9 articles), all media types acknowledged the broad support the treaty received from many groups. The treaty was discussed most in Indigenous news, followed by independent and mainstream sources.

Mainstream media only referenced the TAATSE in one article (Table 5.3). This article references the treaty in relation to the number of nations and organizations who support it, including members of the AFN. The article states: “The alliance pledges to ‘bar’ oil-sands pipelines from crossing its members' traditional territories, and specifically mentions Trans Mountain and Line 3. But it also targets TransCanada Corp.'s proposed Keystone XL project ... and Energy East... (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th). Thus, the treaty is described in relation to its potential to provide the means to challenge current and future oil sands expansion projects. It is presented as a political tool and proof that many groups and individuals oppose oil pipelines. This article also sees an inherent link between the DAPL protests and the creation of the TAATSE, suggesting that similar protests will occur in Canada using the treaty as a justification for protest actions.

Independent news coverage on the TAATSE is similar to mainstream news coverage, as articles also describe TAATSE as a challenge to extractive projects, as well as a political obstacle for Trudeau to navigate. An article suggests the treaty is blatantly “Calling Trudeau’s bluff, and leaving no room for ambiguity” in relation to the opposition by many to projects related to the oil sands (Hornick, 2016, Oct 5th). This same article describes the treaty as a historic alliance and says that it “...could be Trudeau’s worst nightmare,” as it could make it difficult for him to continue supporting the oil sands. Another article shares this perspective,

stressing the number of groups who have signed the treaty, and quoting UBCIC president and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip who stated: “Ultimately, as the Trudeau government is well aware, these projects will not succeed... the opposition is too great, and we will remain united, strong and determined” (MacLeod, 2016, Nov 29th). Thus, independent sources represent the treaty as a document that will unite people in opposition to pipeline projects.

Indigenous media dedicated a lot more coverage to the TAATSE (Table 5.3) Not only do these articles mention the number of specific groups who support the treaty, but they also report that many environmental organizations have also affirmed their support. One article also suggests that the treaty is more significant than a signed document, that it is part of Indigenous law and is demonstrative of the overt refusal to accept any project that supports oil sands expansion (Copley, 2016, Nov 24th). This article also mentions that there is a real need for Indigenous people to be further included in economic projects. However, as outlined in the TAATSE, these projects must not support oil sands exploitation of the environment and of Indigenous lands and resources. Another article frames the TAATSE as not only being about protecting Indigenous lands but honouring Canada’s commitment to limiting climate change (*Ha-Shilth-Sa*, 2016, Nov 29th). Other articles expand on the reasons why the TAATSE is necessary: to protect the land, water, environment, and respect Indigenous sovereignty, and so on. Whereas independent and mainstream media simply acknowledge the Treaty’s political power, Indigenous media go into greater detail concerning its scope and potential.

5.3.1.5 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

One of the most significant international laws to arise in the past 15 years is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The declaration was first

proposed in 2006 but officially published by the UN in 2008. It has 46 distinct articles that re-affirm the rights of Indigenous peoples throughout the world (United Nations, 2008). It primarily focuses on how states should interact with Indigenous groups in ways that are not exploitative or destructive to Indigenous cultures, resources, lands, and knowledge. It also says that states must provide restitution and compensation for past colonial actions that were inherently harmful to Indigenous individuals.

Before the UNDRIP, Indigenous law in Canada had been shaped by several key events in recent history, including the Delgamuukw and Haida court cases that strengthened Indigenous land rights (Papillon and Roden, 2016). Many scholars are optimistic about these cases, and furthermore, see the potential for the UNDRIP to better relationships between states and Indigenous peoples not only in Canada but throughout the world (Gilbert, 2007). Papillon and Roden (2016) describe how the UNDRIP has allowed indigenous peoples in Canada and the world to gain agency in environmental review processes for extractive projects. Specifically, they cite the declaration's requirement of obtaining free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from groups impacted by resource development. Papillon and Roden (2016) also point out that Canada was slow to accept the UNDRIP, only officially supporting it in 2010. Canadian attention to the declaration became much more apparent during the Trudeau era, with Trudeau specifically referencing the UNDRIP in relation to his commitments to improving the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples (Saramo, 2016). However, despite increased discussion of consultation and consent, the UNDRIP is yet to be fully accepted into Canadian law (Papillon and Roden, 2016)

There was an increase in coverage on the declaration from the Harper era to the Trudeau era (Table 5.3). Coverage was most prevalent in independent media, followed by Indigenous media and mainstream media.

Mainstream media during the Harper era reference the UNDRIP most often when reporting on the possible environmental impacts of pipeline projects. The UNDRIP is mentioned in 2 articles regarding its potential to require governments and companies to properly consult with specific groups who could experience negative impacts from industry. However, in the Harper era, the strength of the UNDRIP is only seen as a possibility, as it wasn't implemented into law. One article mentions that protesters of Enbridge's Northern Gateway were advocating for government implementation of the declaration, but again, the declaration was only discussed in theoretical terms. In the Trudeau era, mainstream articles seemed to take the declaration more seriously. However, articles reflect the difficulties of integrating the declaration into the current Canadian legal framework. An article mentions that "...governments are struggling to recognize" the UNDRIP, and that Trudeau's government "...is guarded with regards to the issue of consent and whether it essentially confers on aboriginal communities a veto over resource projects" (McCarthy, 2016, Sept 12th). A few months later, another article mentions that the Trudeau government had officially signed the declaration but would not implement the declaration as the UN intended. This article paraphrases a statement from Natural Resource Minister Jim Carr, stating that signing the document does not mean Indigenous groups have an ultimate veto on pipeline projects, however, it "...does require companies and governments to work closely with Indigenous communities to ensure they are partners in the evaluation and monitoring of projects, are properly consulted, and have their concerns accommodated" (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th). This article is not overly critical of the declaration. However, it does assert that the

declaration will not be as useful as pipeline opponents hope since the declaration does not provide Indigenous peoples with a true “veto” on extraction projects.

All independent articles that mentioned the declaration did so in relation to the problem of properly attaining consent from groups prior to pursuing project construction. First, one article on Northern Gateway protests in Kitimat, B.C, suggested that Enbridge had failed to gain “free, prior and informed consent for developments that would alter their [First Nations] territories” under the UNDRIP (McCreary, 2010, Sept 2nd). The author says this is necessary, since “much of the pipeline route crosses through unceded First Nations territories and would impinge on their inherent Aboriginal rights and titles” (McCreary, 2010, Sept 2nd). Another article also used the UNDRIP in relation to protests against Northern Gateway, with the third suggesting that Canada must fully integrate the declaration into law in order to achieve true reconciliation. In the Trudeau era, coverage of the UNDRIP within independent news increased to 5 articles. These articles suggest that the Canadian government is starting to take the UNDRIP more seriously. Much like mainstream news coverage, one article mentions that the Trudeau government made a big step in 2016 when they officially signed the declaration. However, the author is quite skeptical of this event, as they say “... no sooner was the ink dry on the document than Trudeau’s regime started adding in qualifications. Tellingly, when NDP MP Romeo Saganash introduced Bill C-262, (An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), no liberal would co-sponsor it” (Behrens, 2016, Nov 23rd). Thus, while there is some optimism for Canada moving forward on the document, skepticism of the government’s intentions is still evident. Other articles mention the same situation, hoping that Bill C-262 will eventually move forward and that the Trudeau

government will honour promises to strengthen relationships between Indigenous nations and the federal government and pursue reconciliation.

Indigenous articles had similar coverage as independent articles. In the Harper era, all articles that reference the UNDRIP state the government should be doing more to integrate the declaration into Canadian law. However, they specifically state that this process should be done in partnership with Indigenous peoples, rather than constructing policy without the individual groups whom the policy would ultimately impact. An article quotes AFN Quebec/Labrador Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, who states: “The federal government should be working with First Nations now on appropriate approaches for genuine, meaningful consultation based on the principles of free, prior and informed consent as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and our rights, title and Treaties” (*Alberta Native News*, 2014, June 18th). Other articles also mention the lack of government attention to implementing the declaration. Within the Trudeau era, coverage on the UNDRIP increased. These articles use the declaration to suggest that the Trudeau government’s approval of Trans Mountain pipeline and Line 3 is illegal. One states: “Today’s approval is in direct contradiction to Canada’s commitment to fully implement...” the UNDRIP, “It has been made very clear to the government that all impacted Indigenous Nations have NOT provided their free, prior and informed consent” (*Ha-Shilth-Sa*, 2016, Nov 29th). Coverage in the Trudeau era is thus focused on how the government has violated the declaration, while coverage within the Harper era is more about how the government needs to officially sign the declaration.

I also tracked media attention to issues of “consultation and consent” to see how the UNDRIP may have influenced coverage more widely. As Table 5.4 shows, media attention to issues of “consultation and consent” increased significantly during the Trudeau era.

Table 5.4: Coverage of Consultation and Consent

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Consultation and Consent	6	6	10	10	11	9

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

Not surprisingly, the number of news reports in Indigenous media on the need for governments and others to consult and seek consent from groups affected by resource extraction projects was high during both eras. But mainstream and independent news “caught up” to Indigenous media in this regard as time went on, and as the UNDRIP seemed to become more politically relevant (see Table 5.3). Staggenborg (1993) states: “Whether the policy outcome is positive or negative, new strategies and tactics and goals are required as a result of changes in the political environment” (p.332). The UNDRIP provided new strategies and opportunities for Indigenous environmental actors in Canada. The tactics of opposition groups changed in that they could now draw upon articles in the UNDRIP to argue that Canada was violating international law by pursuing development without properly gaining consent from or pursuing meaningful consultation with relevant Indigenous peoples. The UNDRIP can also be interpreted as strengthening understandings of environmental justice (EJ). EJ frames are used to acknowledge examples of environmental degradation as causing “unjust social conditions” based on categories such as race (Taylor, 2000, p.511). The UNDRIP proposed that governments must obtain consent prior to pursuing Industry or disposing of waste on Indigenous lands (United Nations, 2008). If the consent is not obtained, governments must provide compensation. Thus, increased attention to the UNDRIP means increased awareness of new ethical requirements for resource extraction so injustices do not occur.

5.3.1.6 Summary of Critical Political Events

Policy events such as the debate and passage of Bills C-38, C-45, and C-51 provided many news sources material to help their audiences understand and ground movement grievances. Coverage of Bills C-38 and C-45 took place primarily during the Harper era, with only the odd reference to them in the Trudeau era. The media generally associated these bills with undermining environmental assessment, as well providing an easier route to acceptance for pipeline projects. In independent and Indigenous media specifically, the focus was often on how they would impact Indigenous peoples by making it easier for governments and private interests to exploit land and resources. Bill C-51 was discussed in both eras and was often described as overly broad, and capable of criminalizing otherwise legal activism. This characterisation is evident in all of the media types, with independent media mentioning specifically how the bill could have the most impact on Indigenous peoples by limiting their ability to oppose industrial projects that take place on their lands. News coverage on bill events related to both the release of the bills, and movement responses to the bills (Figure 5.1). Specifically, these bills were reported to have caused significant protest mobilization, especially through Idle No More and particularly during the Harper era. However, Bill C-51 was most relevant during the Trudeau era, during which news sources directly discussed the bill directly in relation to its potential impacts on the rights of Canadians to demonstrate their opposition to government decisions via collective protest.

Although the bills caused concern for many, other legal documents and treaties inspired optimism and provided activists the means to legitimate their claims. The TAATSE was clearly seen as a significant document, with news articles highlighting the large number of groups who supported and signed it. The creation of the TAATSE provided clear proof of opposition to oil

sands projects. Furthermore, the TAATSE resonated most in Indigenous and independent news articles, which discussed how the treaty created alliances and fostered solidarity between Indigenous groups and their settler allies in environmental organizations.

The UNDRIP was likely the most significant critical event for Indigenous-led environmentalism. Being a widely accepted international declaration, it became a tool for legitimizing the requirement of governments and companies to seek the consultation of, and obtain free and prior, informed consent from impacted groups before constructing projects. Coverage on the UNDRIP increased during the Trudeau era, however, criticisms of the government's willingness to fully accept the declaration are evident in articles. There are conflicting reports, particularly within mainstream media, as to how the declaration would be integrated into Canadian law. Furthermore, articles in independent and Indigenous sources frequently cite violations of the declaration (governments and companies failing to properly and fully consult groups).

In the final section of this chapter, I will show how the UNDRIP, as well as other critical events, can be linked to indicators of social change. The UNDRIP was covered widely across all news types and may have contributed to changes in the language used in reports on Indigenous environmentalism, as well as bolstering the argument that oil extraction is problematic in Canada.

5.3.2 Critical Movement Events

In this section, I consider how media covered social movement activity throughout the Harper and Trudeau eras. Specifically, I am looking at high profile movement events, and how news sources assess the impact of these events. Staggenborg (1993) may define some of these events as “critical encounters,” in which “face-to-face interaction... or physical contact between

authorities or other actors...” occurs (p.327). Movements can use these encounters to focus attention to specific issues or to create “...a desired image, particularly through the mass media, and the maintenance of internal unity and discipline” (Staggenborg, 1993: p.328). Events, which are properly publicized, can encourage others to lend their support through other events.

Two movements were most prevalent within the articles: Idle No More and the DAPL Protests (Table 5.5). While the DAPL protests occurred within the US, there were many events within Canada that showed support to the resistance effort. The movement inspired those across Canada and the US alike to stand up against pipeline expansion. Lastly, general efforts to directly stop extraction was a third type of movement event, which was covered widely across all news types. These types of events were sometimes portrayed as dramatic and serve as exciting material for news agencies to cover.

Table 5.5: Coverage of Critical Movement Events

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Idle No More	2	9	7	0	3	1
DAPL protests	--	--	--	7	8	11
Halting extraction	6	4	7	3	3	5

n= number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

5.3.2.1 Idle No More

Idle No More is one of the most significant movements in recent history. Idle No More was and is more than simply one event. It was an intersectional movement that had a wide scope for social change. John (2015) considers the movement as a feminist and anti-colonial response to bill C-45, yet Idle No More is also inherently environmental, and rights-based. Wotherpoon

and Hansen (2013) describe Idle No More as “...a vision to protect the land and water that leads to sustaining rather than exploiting the environment; values that promote peace and social harmony; and the attribution of a social justice dimension that includes rather than excludes the community” (p.27) Furthermore, public awareness on these issues – concerning the environment, treaties, colonialism, broad federal policy, Indigenous-settler relations, feminism, and more – was greatly increased by the effort of Idle No More (Clark, 2014).

Idle No More was discussed most widely within the Harper era, with independent media providing the most attention, followed by Indigenous articles, and far less by mainstream media (Table 5.4).

Mainstream media only discussed Idle No More within the Harper era, and only within 2 articles (Table 5.5). This was surprising and confirmed through a text query throughout all the articles. The low level of coverage on Idle No More may be due to the way in which articles were sampled (only Idle No More events that were related to environmentalism and pipeline protest would have been sampled). One of these articles only briefly mentions the movement as being reported by Iranian news agencies as part of a story on Canada’s colonial oppression of Indigenous peoples (Idle No More is only mentioned once, with no specific details on the actual movement) (Hopper, 2013, Jan 19th). The other article mentions Idle No More in a more direct way. This article discusses how the RCMP keeps a close watch on Indigenous protesters and were suggesting to “exclude activist groups from regulatory hearings [on Northern Gateway] that could result in protesters ‘targeting NEB panel members’” (McCarthy, 2013, Nov 22nd). According to the article, this suggestion by the RCMP was informed by undercover “informants” within the Idle No More Movement. This article suggests that the RCMP sees Idle No More as a threat to Canadian safety, and perhaps as a threat to the economy, through the NEB board

reviews on pipeline projects. Besides these two mentions, there were no references to actual Idle No More protest events within mainstream news.

Idle No More was mentioned far more often within independent news, with more articles during the Harper era than the Trudeau era (Table 5.5). During the Harper era, news coverage on Idle No More often concerned how the movement worked to bring people together. One article mentions: “In a world where Canada used to pit environmentalists, scientists, doctors, teachers, and even birdwatchers against First Nations who peacefully defended their lands, Idle No More helped bring us together” (Palmater, 2015, Feb 12th). Environmental activists and Indigenous activists accordingly became less divided, and began working together due to Idle No More, according to this article. This is reaffirmed in other articles. For example, in an interview with Naomi Klein, Leanne Simpson says, “I think Idle No More is an example because I think there is an opportunity for the environmental movement, for social-justice groups, and for mainstream Canadians to stand with us. There was a segment of Canadian society, once they had the information, that was willing to stand with us” (Klein, 2013, March 6th). Again, this statement suggests Idle No More brought otherwise obscured information forward in order for the general public to understand *why* people were protesting, and *why* they should join in. A third article mentions that Idle No More activism, such as the famous hunger strikes by Chief Theresa Spence and Elder Raymond Robinson, brought much-needed awareness to “...concerns common to many Canadians about dangers posed by unilateral government actions to the natural environment and the state of our democracy” (Barlow & Georgetti, 2013, Jan 11th). It is quite clear that independent media was confident that Idle No More was more than simply an Indigenous movement, it was a movement that required the attention of, and was relevant to, *all* Canadians. During the Trudeau era, independent articles on Idle No More see the movement in a

similar light. They believe that Idle No more functioned to “empower” peoples throughout Canada (Palmater, 2015, Nov 20th), and was formed to protect people, water, and land from “Harper’s attack on environmental legislation and ongoing colonization of Indigenous territories, epitomized by the tar sands” (McLaren, 2015., Nov 25th). Coverage of Idle No More by independent media is far more complex than the coverage within the mainstream articles. Rather than simply mentioning the movement offhand, the importance of the movement for Canadian culture is expressed much more thoroughly.

Lastly, Indigenous media articles mentioned Idle No More much more within the Harper era in comparison to the Trudeau era (Table 5.5). Within the Harper era, Indigenous articles also describe Idle No More’s relevance in bringing awareness to issues, and in challenging colonial governance. What distinguishes Indigenous media coverage on Idle No More from independent articles, is that protest tactics are described more in-depth. An article mentions awareness bringing “flash-dances,” uses of the “#IdleNoMore” hashtag on Twitter, protests that directly targeted oil extraction, and public “rall[ies]” that took an overt stance against policy such as Bill C-45 (*Alberta Native News*, 2014, Jan 8th). Other articles mention hunger strikes, boycotts, “blockades as well as legal battles” (The Nation, 2013, April 1st). These tactics are described in conjunction with the importance of the movement. Thus, actions taken and grievances felt are discussed in relation to each other, rather than discussing them separately. Other articles discuss how quickly Idle No More gained traction, spreading from location to location until it was a national movement. An article quotes AFN Chief Shawn Atleo who states: “There is no going back to the way it was before. This country will be forever changed because of what is happening” (Beaton, 2013, Feb 8th). The importance of Idle No More is made quite clear; as a movement that will cause social change throughout the country. The article that mentions Idle

No More during the Trudeau era highlights that Idle No More has not finished and that individuals who resist against oil extraction sometimes “...ally themselves with the Idle No More Movement.” Therefore, Idle No More is not only depicted as an important movement of the past; it still has relevance for Canadians today.

5.3.2.2 Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) Protests

While occurring primarily in North Dakota, the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests had significance throughout both Canada and the US. This event occurred in 2016-2017 and was the result of a pipeline being built through the traditional land of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation, which many believed would jeopardize both land and water through oil spills. The frequency of coverage on the DAPL protests was similar throughout all news types, though it occurred most commonly within Indigenous media articles, followed by independent and mainstream media.

Mainstream media mentioned the DAPL protests within several separate articles (Table 5.5). Mainstream articles make connections between DAPL protests and future pipeline protests within Canada. The DAPL protests are seen as an inspiration to pipeline activists, as well as a message to the Canadian government about the possibilities of protest against similar pipeline projects in Canada. For example, one article highlights the solidarity that many groups throughout Canada share with the DAPL protesters and suggests that, “As the Liberal government weighs later this fall whether to approve the expansion of the Trans Mountain project, ministers will have to consider the precedent of Standing Rock” (McCarthy, 2016, Sept 12th). This means that this journalist believes that the events of the DAPL could influence pipeline decisions in Canada, as the government may want to limit similar pipeline protests.

Three other articles make connections between the DAPL and Trans Mountain, with one stating that: “Activists have predicted that Burnaby, B.C., could see months of protest similar to those against the Dakota Access Pipeline...” Hunter et al., 2017, June 3rd). Another suggests that protests against Trans Mountain, Energy East, and Keystone XL “...will look a lot more like what's happening now in the States with Dakota Access - a moral struggle featuring Indian rights, sacred sites, and clean drinking water. Down there, activists scoff at jail time while they face water cannons and rubber bullets” (Libin, 2016, Dec 1st). Therefore, many see the events of the DAPL protests as likely to reoccur in Canada.

The DAPL protests were discussed slightly more within independent articles (Table 5.5). Independent articles focus on how many Canadians support protest efforts in Dakota. Articles mention that solidarity events have occurred across the country, and have created alliances across the US and Canada (Reuss, 2016, Sept 9th; Behrens, 2016, Nov 23rd). Furthermore, an article attributes the DAPL protests as sparking the creation of the TAATSE, which has support from hundreds of groups within both Canada and the US (Hornick, 2016, Oct 5th). All these articles point to the theme of aligning Canadian and American pipeline politics, since the oil economies of Canada and the US are closely connected and many pipelines transport oil across the border. The DAPL protests are also said to increase Indigenous-settler relations as solidarity events within Canada see united groups of both “...Indigenous and settler activists” (Forcione, 2016, Nov 15th). In comparison to the mainstream articles, which frame the DAPL protests as potentially creating similar dangerous situations for activists in Canada, independent news instead focuses on how the events are bringing people together.

Lastly, Indigenous media covered the DAPL protest more than any other media type (Table 5.5). Like the independent articles, several Indigenous articles highlight how the DAPL protests have inspired individuals in Canada to stand up against pipeline projects. For example, we see an account of how seeing the DAPL protests unfold, and speaking to an individual who was actually there, deeply impacted a journalist who decided to pursue activism in Canada: “I was inspired; listening to him talk about how he turned something he cared about into a reality changed something within me. I couldn’t be a bystander any longer – I felt compelled to act. From there, I dove headfirst into pipeline protesting and environmental activism” (Restoule, 2017, Jan 6th). This author then explains how they then took part in a protest against the Enbridge Line 3 as well as the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipelines. Other articles mention the DAPL protests as again an inspiration to pipeline activists in Canada (Googoo, 2016, Nov 6th), as well as the main reason so many wanted to sign the TAATE (*Ha-Shilth-Sa*, 2016, Nov 29th). The DAPL as a trigger for increased alliances between people is quite evident throughout these articles.

5.3.2.3 Halting Extraction

While the previous two movements created events used specific examples, this next type of event is more general. I tracked every time an article mentioned individuals were disrupting oil extraction in some way. This could be either through direct action (blocking pipeline pathways) or through legal actions (court battles). There were more references to halting extraction during the Harper era. Overall, Indigenous articles referenced halting extraction most often, followed by mainstream and independent articles.

Mainstream news articles during the Harper era focused specifically on road blockades as a way to disrupt industry activities. Not only are these blockades seen as halting extraction, but they are also seen as a concern for the economy. For example, one article describes blockades against Enbridge's Northern Gateway as one of two "...legitimate causes for investor concern" (Berkow, 2012, May 8th). The other risk to investors is said to be the court cases against the National Energy Board. Thus, the article defines protest as nearly equal to the law in being able to stop energy projects. Other articles also discuss blockades against Enbridge projects, such as an article about the Line 9 blockade. The article says that protesters believe that the project will be environmentally destructive, which is why a blockade has been set up. The article also states that "The federal government has said Enbridge's project will protect high-quality refining jobs in Quebec, open new markets for oil producers in Western Canada and replace more-expensive foreign crude" (Clancy, 2014, Aug 6th). Much like the previous example, blockades represent a struggle between the environment and the economy, in which pipeline supporters believe that protest is the problem, and opponents believe that the pipeline is the problem. During the Trudeau era, articles still discuss how blockades could harm the economy. An article about Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline stated, "Investors were spooked by a prospectus that listed public blockades, legal challenges, the risk of not obtaining land rights and the failure to resolve aboriginal-rights issues as possible reasons why the pipeline may not be built." (Hunter et al., 2017, June 3rd). Similar to the articles in the Harper era, this article attributes pipeline opposition as causing economic uncertainty for project investors. However, some articles also consider environmental concerns, as is the case with one journalist who describes how the true problem is an environmental review process that causes concern amongst both protesters and pipeline supporters alike. This article states that "there appears to be an ever-increasing need to

get projects that pass scientific and environmental muster moving quickly to help spur growth.” (Fekete, 2016, Dec 17th). Thus, they suggest that a more efficient and effective review process would theoretically discourage pipeline blockades and better fuel the economy.

Independent articles on halting extraction have a different focus than mainstream news. In the Harper era, these articles focus on how blockades are often the last option available to those against extraction once court battles fail. Blockades are also described as risky for those who take part, as they could risk being hurt by police. For example, one article discusses opposition against Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline in B.C, stating, “There is little doubt that Gateway’s approval, and failure to block the project by other means, would spark protests in a province with a long history of direct action, blockades and mass arrests” (MacLeod, 2014, Jan 24th). The article then continues, describing how difficult protest policing would be at a large-scale blockade without causing harm to individuals. Other articles, too, describe blockades as a last resort, though they highlight that activists are willing to risk themselves rather than allowing a pipeline to be constructed. During the Trudeau era, coverage of halting extraction was minimal within independent news. However, the articles that did mention it described the success that many protests had in halting projects: “Idle No More emerged in December of 2012 to challenge Harper’s attack on environmental legislation and ongoing colonization of Indigenous territories, epitomized by the tar sands. Since then the climate justice movement has delayed every major pipeline proposal” (McLaren, 2015, Nov 25th). Like articles in the Harper era, this article highlights that when the law is perceived to have failed, then protesters become a legitimate line of defence for Canada’s environment.

Indigenous news articles discuss halting extraction more frequently than the other news types. In the Harper era, halting extraction is mentioned as a response to failures by companies and governments in properly consulting and including groups into project review processes. For example, regarding a blockade against Enbridge, an article states: “The protest on Sunday, Sept. 28th, was staged over the building of oil and gas pipelines on what the chiefs of Treaty Four First Nations consider their traditional land. The protesters say they haven’t been consulted and are demanding a share of the revenues” (Dolha, 2008, Oct 18th). This example focuses on how groups were excluded from pipeline negotiations, despite construction taking place on Indigenous land and the potential impacts to individuals who live there. And similar to some independent articles, the risks of participating in a blockade are described, though in much more detail. An article describes how police violently responded to an anti-fracking blockade by the Elsipogtog Mi’kmaq in New Brunswick, suggesting that “On Oct. 17, the East Coast nation people were attacked by heavily armed RCMP, after what had been an extended, peaceful blockade of shale gas exploration near the small community of Rexton” (Morrow, 2013, Oct 21st). This article, too, mentions that the blockade was formed after a failure to consult the group about the project. During the Trudeau era, coverage on halting extraction declined, though these articles still discussed blockades occurred due to failures of communication. An article discusses a blockade by a group of grandmothers from Walpole island, who opposed the construction of a new gas line. The article mentions, “The gas line excavation was starting “without the people’s knowledge,” Grandmother Corinne Tooshkenig, the first of the blockaders, told Chief Dan Miskokomon and councillors the evening of Tuesday, August 9” (Graf, 2016, Aug 11th). Thus, news articles frame blockades as necessary due to a restriction of knowledge on project construction.

5.3.2.4 Summary of Critical Movement Events

The critical movement events given the most attention in the media included the various Idle No More events, the DAPL protests, and the incidents when extraction was halted through blockades and legal action. Idle No More is often cited by scholars as being one of the most important movements in modern history (Preston, 2013; Wotherspoon & Hansen, 2013; Palmater, 2015; Coates, 2015). The importance of Idle No More is also evident in news articles, especially in Indigenous and independent media during the Harper era. However, there were distinct differences in how the movement was portrayed by different media types. Mainstream media attention to Idle No More was minimal. This is an interesting finding as Idle No More was known as a peaceful and significant movement in Canada. Yet, mainstream coverage focused less on the potential of the movement to change Canadian social and political life, and more on how the movement was subject to RCMP surveillance to minimize the threats posed by the movement. Much like the coverage on the DAPL protests, the contentious and “exciting” aspects of protest is converged more frequently with less focus on peaceful protest. In independent media, the focus shifted to what the movement meant for improving Indigenous-settler relationships in Canada. Thus, the movement was seen as relevant to all Canadians, not just Indigenous peoples. Indigenous news articles discussed these impacts as well, however, they went into much more detail about how the movement used innovative tactics, such as social media to increase awareness, and creating nationwide rallies by means of peaceful protest.

The DAPL protests helped create awareness and alliances between environmentalists and Indigenous groups throughout the US and Canada. Mainstream media portrayed the protests as highly influential, especially for movements opposing similar projects in Canada. Furthermore, mainstream media saw the DAPL protests as a sign of what is to come in Canada, suggesting that

similar high-profile events will soon occur against pipelines such as Energy East and Keystone XL. In independent media, the DAPL protests were credited for bringing together Indigenous and settler activists in common cause. Furthermore, the DAPL protests are discussed as igniting the TAATSE, which is an important representation of new alliances. The DAPL protests were credited for bringing together Indigenous and settler activists in common cause. The DAPL was discussed most by Indigenous media. Coverage looked at how the DAPL protests inspired various solidarity events that took place in Canada and created support for the TAATSE.

Lastly, coverage of incidents where extraction was halted by various means often presented the blockades as alternatives to legal court action. Mainstream articles considered how protest might impact the Canadian economy, as when project delays were portrayed as diminishing investor confidence. Independent news articles reported that protesters who participate in blockades often do so as a last resort, as they put themselves at risk depending on police response. Blockades were also discussed in terms of their effectiveness in delaying projects. Indigenous media coverage focused on the reasons blockades were necessary. Failure of the legal system, as well as failures by the government and companies to consult affected groups, were all cited as key concerns. Communication is seen as incredibly important for these projects to be considered ethical.

5.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to work towards answering the second research question of this thesis. In doing so, it discussed a wide variety of critical events taking place during the Harper and Trudeau eras that may have caused shifts in the political opportunity structure facing Indigenous environmentalists. While political opportunities are difficult to pinpoint accurately,

there were some meaningful differences in news presentation of leader and government receptiveness. For example, the Harper government was more likely to be associated with cutting environmental protection policy, while the Trudeau government was more connected with pipeline approval (albeit while trying to appear environmentally minded). Corrigan-Brown and Ho's (2015) work illuminated how government leader receptiveness can change movement tactics. Changes in protest tactics cannot be pinpointed in this study. However, news articles did present Trudeau as using environmental and Indigenous rights rhetoric distinct from the Harper era. So, while protest during the Trudeau era may not necessarily have been easier to pursue, changes in language provided news sources new avenues for communicating movement grievances.

Both leaders and governments faced criticism, though Trudeau was often praised for acting on issues such as MMIWG, whereas Harper was accused of not taking this issue seriously. Issues like MMIWG may not be "environmental" per se, however, they often appeared alongside environmental issues as reminders that colonial influences persist in Canada.

It is also important to note that different types of news produced different types of knowledge, helping to shed light on the third research question of this thesis. For example, there were clear differences in how mainstream and independent news discussed the Harper government. Mainstream media tended to praise Harper for taking positive actions, while independent media would attribute positive changes to social movement actions. Another example is how different news sources characterised different events as "critical." Mainstream news tended to focus most on high-profile movement events, such as the DAPL protests and other examples of people halting extraction (such as blockades). In contrast, Indigenous and

independent news paid more attention to events such as government bills, the TAATSE (Indigenous news in particular) and the UNDRIP. Drawing on Staggenborg (1993), mainstream news paid most attention to *critical encounters*, which they describe as instances of direct contact between authorities and activists. On the other hand, independent and Indigenous news instead emphasized *policy outcomes* and *large-scale socioeconomic and political events* (Staggenborg, 1993, p.322)

Critical events help movements direct their actions and pursue social change. Drawing direct links between specific events and social change is a challenge, however, some events seem to change political atmospheres, especially as they manifest in news discussions and media reporting of issues. For example, many scholars have associated Bill C-45 with encouraging Idle No More activists (Preston, 2013; Wotherspoon & Hansen, 2013; Palmater, 2015; Coates, 2015). This is clearly presented in news articles from the Harper era, where several drew clear links between specific government bills (C-38, C-45) and Idle No More mobilization. In the Trudeau era, the DAPL protests were similarly depicted by articles as a milestone for pipeline activists. Specifically, the DAPL protests were presented as creating alliances between settlers and Indigenous peoples, as well as being a potential indicator for similar protests in the future. While literature on the DAPL protest movement is still emerging, academics see this protest as a theoretically rich case study of pipeline approval, Indigenous sovereignty, and protest policing (Paskus, 2017; Finley-Brook et al., 2018).

This chapter provided a new way of analyzing critical events, adding to previous work on an understudied concept (Staggenborg, 1993; Ramos, 2008; Wilkes et al. 2010; Staggenborg and

Ramos, 2016). In Staggenborg's (1993) interpretation, critical events were theorized in relation to movement control over them. Ramos (2008) took the concept further, measuring the role critical events had on increasing movement action. Neither studied the relationship between critical events and news, though Wilkes et al. (2010) considered the types of events most likely to be covered during the mid 80s-90s. This study distinguished the rates of coverage on each event but did so quantitatively without discussing *how* news interactions with events occurred. My study made steps towards a more thorough strategy of critical event analysis than previous work.

The event that appeared to have been most critical for Indigenous-led environmentalism and provided the clearest indication of causing real change was the release of the UNDRIP. Specifically, this declaration caused clear shifts in language regarding the need for governments and companies to consult with and to seek free and informed consent from specific groups who are impacted by resource extraction.

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that critical opportunity theory must consider how news coverage interacts with events at different stages: during the event itself, during movement responses to the event, and by indicating social change that ensues (Figure 5.1). With respect to the UNDRIP, news sources reported on the declaration itself, while others showed how the declaration caused change by fostering discussion around issues of consultation and consent. By analyzing news coverage of critical events, we gain insight on how such events can change the ways the news frames movement grievances.

Chapter 6 : News Understandings of Environmental Problems and Protest Grievances

6.1 Introduction

Whereas chapter 4 investigated how news media portrayed actors, and chapter 5 focused on how news coverage changed over time and reacted to critical events, this chapter asks the following questions: What do different news sources position as the key protest grievances of Indigenous environmentalists? What types of environmental problems associated with pipelines are most covered: long-term, widespread, problems such as climate change, or dramatic, more circumscribed crises such as oil spills, or the harms caused by pollution on people living in a particular place or region? Are rights violations linked to environmental problems in the news? And lastly, how are issues of Indigenous sovereignty, land, and resources framed in relation to oil extraction? These questions are necessary for understanding the issues news media associate with Indigenous-led pipeline activism, as well as how they frame pipeline debates.

These questions inform both the content and the structure of this chapter and relate to my third research question. First, I start with analyzing how news articles cover climate change as an issue relating to Indigenous-led environmentalism. This section is informed in part by Callison's (2014) work on climate change news coverage, which considers why climate change is such a difficult topic to discuss in the media. I then look at how the news handles protests and grievances around oil-related environmental degradation. I will start with coverage of the grievances pertaining to the more dramatic environmental events such as large-scale oil spills, then move to their coverage of grievances around less dramatic environmental problems, such as water and land pollution, and the impacts of oil extraction on human and animal health. Next, I explain how themes of land, resources, and sovereignty are relevant to Indigenous environmentalism, and how these issues are used as discussion points in the news regarding oil

extraction in Canada. Since oil projects often take place on or cross Indigenous lands, issues of Indigenous sovereignty and colonialism through land and resource theft are relevant here (Awâsis, 2014; Barker, 2014; Haluza-Delay & Carter, 2014). Lastly, I discuss how news outlets and activists use rights as a master frame for all of the above protest issues (Snow and Benford, 1992). Activist-scholars such as Thomas-Muller (2014) and Klein (2015) have explored how Indigenous rights frames are used as tools by activists to leverage government action on environmental issues. Others such as Clément (2008) have argued that rights framing has become central to social movement activity in Canada more generally over the past several decades related. While chapter 4 showed that news coverage can create a false divide between Indigenous and environmental activism, this chapter shows how these movements are inherently linked.

6.2 Reporting on Climate Change

Climate change is often described as a difficult problem to communicate through the media. One of the difficulties that journalists deal with is the long-term nature of climate change. Since impacts are not always instant or visible to the human eye, it becomes a difficult and abstract topic to cover (Callison, 2014). Furthermore, Callison (2014) acknowledges that it can be challenging for journalists to link perceived environmental impacts to climate change since this requires understanding complex climate science. This is easier said than done since journalism is often characterized by hasty research to produce timely material (Brady and Kelly, 2017).

Similarly, climate change can be a difficult concern for activists to communicate. More overt and episodic environmental issues, such as oil spills, pollution, and health impacts can be

easier to explain to outsiders. Climate change is a general and decentralized issue. While local people feel climate change impacts, it may be difficult to prove these impacts to others.

Table 6.1 shows an overview of climate change as a protest issue within my sample of articles. As seen in this table, coverage on climate change increased from the Harper era to the Trudeau era. Independent news paid the most attention to climate change, and remained relatively the same throughout each period, with mainstream and Indigenous article coverage increasing to nearly match independent coverage in the Trudeau era.

Table 6.1: Coverage of Climate Change

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Climate Change	3	10	4	9	11	7

n = number of articles in a given category (media type within era)

Mainstream attention to climate change in the context of Indigenous environmentalism was minimal during the Harper era, though it increased significantly in the Trudeau era. Mainstream articles acknowledge that public attention and concern to climate change has increased in recent years, due in part by the work of activists: “The link between fossil fuels and climate change is no longer a dotted line for the majority of Canadians. How big a problem this poses for the energy companies depends on how large and how vocal anti-oil activists become. What was once a fringe movement is now much more mainstream” (Campeau, 2014, May 1st). This article suggests that oil opposition is a serious threat to the industry, as the general public are starting to support protest efforts. Another article also portrays the NEB and industry as perceiving activism as a threat to pipeline progress, stating that “In providing a ringing endorsement Thursday of Enbridge Inc.’s Northern Gateway pipeline, a National Energy Board

panel sent a clear message to environmental activists: climate change and anti-oil campaigns don't belong in regulatory processes" (Cattaneo, 2013, Dec 20th). The article continues, suggesting that the NEB believes Northern Gateway to be net-positive for Canadian society. This article does not take a stance on the issue, but there are some who agree with the idea that pipeline projects are not relevant to discussions of climate change. An article produced during the Trudeau era, in particular, follows this perspective. This article states: "...can we drop the charade about pipelines driving climate change? Pipelines are not a proxy for climate action. The narrative is false and has outlived its usefulness" (Findlay and McLeod, 2016, Dec 1st). These authors then argue that climate change has less to do with the transportation of fuel but the consumption of it. However, they do not outline a clear argument for this perspective and fail to explain how approved pipelines would reduce oil consumption. This article is perhaps an outlier, as no other make such a bold claim.

Moving to independent news, climate change coverage during the Harper era was less connected to protest actions and concerns. However, a major theme evident is the link between the oil sands and climate change. When climate change was cited within independent news, references to the oil sands was not far to follow. Articles started by talking about either climate change, or the oil sands, and quickly moved to talk about the other. In academic literature, scholars discuss how Canada is often shamed by social movements as a climate change contributor through its investment into the oil sands (Stoddart, Smith, and Tindall, 2016). This was evident in these articles. For example, an article was critical of Canada's energy policies regarding climate change and the oil sands: "If Canadians had taken our climate commitments several years ago, we would have put in place measures that would have seen us instead aggressively take advantage of the huge renewable energy potential we have across the country

instead of scaling up the tar sands and wanting to build more pipelines” (Price, 2011, July 16th). However, some journalists worried that people miss other serious environmental problems because they assume climate change is the most serious one. So, while they suggest climate change is a widespread problem, they acknowledged that other smaller problems were not being paid attention to. In the Trudeau era, coverage was much more oriented around climate change as a protest issue. Articles discussed how halting extraction projects is a way to limit Canada’s contributions to climate change: “The climate justice movement in Ontario and Quebec have delayed the Line 9 and Energy East pipelines, and the movement south of the border pushed Obama to stop the Keystone XL pipeline” (McLaren, 2015, Nov 25th). Thus, protest successes against climate change were discussed by independent news articles as proof that shifting away from fossil fuels is possible. Regarding key pipeline protests such as the DAPL protests and Enbridge protests, an article stated that these actions “...showed a generation of environmental activists that the only way to stop climate change is to put your body between a capitalist and his money” (Stewart, 2016, Dec 20th). Journalists also discussed how activists sometimes indirectly attacked climate change by highlighting other types of environmental pollution: “Everywhere the opposition is forced by statute to make its stand not on climate change arguments, but on old grounds” (McKibben, 2016, Jan 23rd). The article continued, suggesting that pipeline opponents used concerns of water and land pollution as a way to limit extraction while also curbing climate change.

Lastly, Indigenous news during the Harper era focused on how activists view climate change as a global issue that Canada is contributing to through the oil sands. An article proposed an indefinite moratorium on oil-related projects, suggesting that Harper is not listening to activists and scientists: “Nothing seems to bother the Prime Minister of Canada pertaining to

changing climate, global warming, or countless communiqués by scientists, academics, or doctors about the quality of earth, air, and water. We are, in fact, in a super crisis!” (Beaton, 2012, June 7th). Another article written by a participant in protests against the Energy East project suggested that science proves that such pipelines will contribute to climate change, which will impact all living things on the planet: “The project is proposed by TransCanada, the same company behind the infamous Keystone XL Pipeline, a project that NASA scientists say would mean game over for the Earth’s climate” (McDonnell, 2014, June 13th). Coverage within Indigenous news sources nearly doubled during the Trudeau era, with similar themes being considered. One article explained demands for an oil sands moratorium, stating that the West Coast Women Warriors “...took part in a four-day demonstration in Ottawa to demand that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau take bold action on climate change, including committing to a freeze on tar sands expansion.” (Morrow, Nov 10th, 2015). Others cited notable individuals from organizations such as the UBCIC and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs who condemned Trudeau’s announcement to approve Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain expansion and Enbridge’s Line 3, due to the potential of these projects to contribute to climate change (*Ha-Shilth-Sa*, 2016, Nov 29th; *Alberta Native News*, 2017, Jan 11th). Furthermore, like those within the Harper era, articles stressed that protesters believe that climate change will impact all peoples of the earth, though local Indigenous communities will face particularly harsh climate change consequences: “Indigenous Peoples are also suffering intense impacts from climate change in the form wildfires and floods...” (Turtle Island News, 2016, Sept 22nd). So, climate change coverage remains focused on similar themes throughout both eras: the failure of governments to make a positive change towards climate justice, the need for a moratorium on oil sands activity, and the likely possibility of climate change impacting both local and global communities alike.

6.3 Environmental Degradation

In contrast to Canada's contribution to the global impacts of climate change, this section focuses on news coverage of protest concerns regarding the more visible and direct impacts of oil. This includes risks that oil extraction presents to people living in communities where the industry is occurring, as well as how extraction can harm water and land.

6.3.1 Oil Spills

Starting with perhaps the most dramatic environmental risk of oil extraction, oil spills present immediate and long-term dangers to environments in Canada and constitute a clear fear for many activists. Other scholars have researched how news media cover oil spills, mostly paying attention to how risks are negotiated. Hoffbauer and Ramos (2014), for example, studied how the famous 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster was discussed by different social actors (newspapers, NGOs, and governments), focusing on how levels of discussion change over time. Their results suggested that social actors engage in normalization of such events, in which discussions slowly dissipate after the peaks of excitement, and long-term environmental impacts are overlooked. Another study, by Widener and Gunter (2007), instead focuses on the differences in coverage on the Exxon Valdez spill within mainstream and independent Alaskan newspapers. They found that mainstream articles mostly included statements from government officials and "powerful elites"; neglecting to include perspectives from Indigenous Alaskans. Independent articles were more thorough in their coverage, as they included viewpoints from Indigenous persons who were directly impacted by the spill (Widener and Gunter, 2007).

My approach to researching oil spill coverage differs from these previous studies in a few ways. First, I am looking at news coverage on oil spills as it pertains to protest, not necessarily

simply on the spill itself. Second, I make comparisons across mainstream, independent, and Indigenous news sources, rather than simply mainstream and independent sources.

I discuss two different types of discussions regarding oil spills: discussions of oil spills in a general hypothetical sense, and references to previously occurred spill events. Overall, Indigenous sources referenced oil spills the most, followed by independent and mainstream news (Table 6.2). Coverage from all news types declined during the Trudeau era.

Table 6.2: Coverage of Oil Spills

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Oil Spills (general)	5	6	12	4	5	3
Specific Spill Events	3	7	5	1	1	0

n= number of articles within a given category (media type within era)

In mainstream news, oil spills are often discussed relating to pipeline safety concerns as well as spill cleanup plans. Most of these articles relate to Enbridge’s Northern gateway, such as one that says: “First Nations say they fear the consequences of a spill from the pipeline, which would pass through some of Canada's most spectacular mountain landscape” (Ljunggren and Jones, 2011, Dec 2nd). Assessments of potential risks to the environment is a common theme relating to oil spills, though at least one article expressed confidence about cleanup protocols: “In its two-volume, thoughtful report, the NEB panel was clearly impressed with Enbridge's technical evidence and its mitigation measures in case of a spill” (Cattaneo, 2013, Dec 20th). During the Trudeau era, there was more discussion of spill risk and cleanup strategies. An article cited TransCanada’s inadequate spill mitigation plans as part of the reason individuals opposed

energy east (Bickis, 2016, Aug 8th), and another said that the province of B.C rejected previous pipelines due to pipelines not having “...a world-leading spill response...” (Cattaneo, 2016, April 2nd). Since the focus is placed more on cleanup than prevention, mainstream media articles seem to accept the fact that pipelines will ultimately leak in some capacity.

Mainstream media mentioned three specific spill events: the 1989 Exxon Valdez and the 2010 Kalamazoo River disasters, and the 2011 Rainbow Pipeline spill. On Exxon Valdez, articles describe how opponents of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline reference the Exxon Valdez spill to outline the possible impacts of Northern Gateway’s construction. An article states that protesters highlighted that Exxon Valdez spilled “...11 million gallons of oil into Alaskan waters...” and “...caused the deaths of 2,800 sea otters, 900 eagles, and 250,000 sea birds and several species have not recovered” (Dhillon & Hume, 2014, June 19th). The focus here seems to be on animal health, rather than human health impacts of the spill. Regarding the Kalamazoo River spill, an article features skeptics of Enbridge who “often refer to Enbridge’s spill in Michigan, where 20,000 barrels of crude leaked into the Kalamazoo River in 2010” (Clancy, 2014, Aug 6th). This article suggests that pipeline protests demand accountability for previous spills, and responsible parties should not be able to continue their operations due to safety and unreliability concerns. Lastly, the one article to discuss the Rainbow Pipeline spill described it as “the largest oil spill in Alberta in 26 years”, with 28,000 barrels of oil being spilled (McCarthy & Hunter, 2016, Dec 10th). All references to oil spills often mention numbers – either regarding the volume of spillage or the number of animals impacted – in order to provide context as to how damaging they were.

Within independent news, oil spills were discussed in a similar way. Like mainstream coverage, attention to oil spills decreased during the Trudeau era. In the Harper era, Enbridge was again discussed most often relating to potential oil spills. One article describes the area that Enbridge's line 9 covers and what a spill event would mean to the environment and people who live along the pipeline: "Line 9 crosses dozens of major rivers draining into Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, including Beverly Swamp in the headwaters of Spencer Creek, Hamilton's largest watershed, putting the drinking water of millions of people at risk of an oil spill." (Bonnar, 2013, June 26th). Another article describes opposition to Northern Gateway, similarly describing threats a spill would cause to people: "Chief Ken Hall said the pipeline project points a double-barrelled shotgun at the Haisla people, with the threat of a pipeline break and oil tanker spill." (Meissner, 2012, Jan 11th). In the Trudeau era, discussions of spill risks continue, though specifically referencing tanker spills relating to Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline. Articles provide an overview of what a spill in B.C waters would mean for whale populations, fish, as well as First Nations communities who use and live on the coast. In comparison to mainstream media attention to spills, independent coverage seems to be more focused on spill risks rather than cleanup plans.

Five specific spills were referenced within independent news: Exxon Valdez, Kalamazoo, Rainbow, the Mount Polly Mine spill, and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Exxon Valdez and Kalamazoo were the most discussed spills, with one mention of each other spill. All but one article describing a specific spill occurred within the Harper era. An article on Exxon Valdez estimated the volume of spillage to be between "...260,000 to 750,000 barrels of crude oil" (McCreary, 2010, Sept 2nd). This estimation of spillage has a much larger margin than the mainstream article to reference Exxon Valdez. Other articles focused not on the volume of oil

spilled, but on the impacts spilled oil had on the environment. For example, an article quoting the NGO Environmental Defence Fund said that Kalamazoo "...caused hundreds of people to permanently lose their homes and severely impacted many people's health." (Bonnar, 2013, June 26th). Or on the Rainbow spill, an article states: "'It was a changed landscape forever,' said Melina Laboucan-Massimo, Climate and Energy campaigner for Greenpeace Canada about her Lubicon Cree community's struggle with the Rainbow Oil pipeline leak this past spring" (Vigliotti, 2011, Sept 27th). The one article to reference a specific spill during the Trudeau era simply said, "No Deepwater Horizons," as a clear reason why the oil industry is destructive to the environment (McKibben, 2016, Jan 23rd). Thus, like mainstream coverage, specific spills are referenced in order to outline how they can seriously impact the environment.

Indigenous articles referenced oil spills the most, however, there is a sharp difference in coverage between the eras, with the vast majority of coverage occurring during the Harper era. Like other news coverage during the Harper era, spills were most commonly discussed relating to Enbridge. One quotes Mi'kmaq lawyer, activist and scholar Pam Palmater who questions Enbridge's ability to prevent and clean up spills: "The Enbridge pipeline project, company, and managers have proven that time and again that they cannot follow their own safety standards, cannot prevent massive spills, and try to focus instead on how well they work on clean up and remediation" (Beaton, 2012, Sept 6th). Another quotes David Suzuki, a famous television presenter and environmental activist, who believes that "Northern Gateway would move us all in the wrong direction by exposing ecosystems to the risk of heavy oil spills, while ensuring that emissions from the oil sands continue to grow" (*Alberta Native News*, 2014, Dec 10th). There was also skepticism of Enbridge to hiding oil spills, with an article suggesting that Northern gateway activists "...stated that 'smaller' leaks of under 1500 litres don't even have to be

reported by Enbridge” (Reynolds, 2014, Dec 23rd). Thus, Enbridge is portrayed as an unreliable company, whose projects will ultimately lead to spills. Similar themes appeared during the Trudeau era, with the focus being on how spills from pipelines are unavoidable. One article described how “TransCanada’s leak-detection system is designed to detect high-volume spills, but it has reported that its sensors are not able to detect leaks beneath 1.5% to 2% of the pipe’s flow rate” (Smith, 2016, May 18th). Another quotes National Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde of the AFN who stated, “there will be spills, but how do you mitigate that? Can you quickly stop it so it has very little impact on land and water?” (Copley, 2016, Nov 24th). So Indigenous news on oil spills tends to focus on not whether or not spills will happen, but how serious they will be when they do.

Indigenous news discussion on specific spills all occurred during the Harper era. There were four spills mentioned: Exxon Valdez, Kalamazoo, Deepwater Horizon, and Enbridge’s 6B spill. Spills are discussed relating to their long-term impacts, with an article highlighting protesters’ concerns about how the impacts of both Exxon Valdez and Kalamazoo are still being felt today (Steel, 2012, Oct 24th). Another article says that protesters of Keystone XL are worried about another spill like Deepwater Horizon, which again, had impacts that are evident today “The spill was devastating to the local ecosystem and it will take years, if ever, for the area to recover” (Belhaars, 2011, Oct 7th). Furthermore, like other news types, Indigenous news was sceptical of Enbridge’s ability to safely build pipelines, citing an event that highlighted “...35 pipeline ruptures over 40 years of Line 9’s existence, or Enbridge’s pipeline 6B spill in July of 2010” (Reeve, 2015, May 13th).

6.3.2 Specific Environmental Impacts

Oil spills present a clear story for news reporters to draw upon when understanding Indigenous environmentalists. However, the specific impacts of oil, in general, are also drawn upon to describe why people are concerned about the environment and pursue activism. There were four specific environmental impacts that were most covered throughout the articles: water pollution, land pollution, human health, and animal health (Table 6.3). Water pollution was most commonly discussed as a protested concern, followed by land pollution, animal health, and human health. These impacts were referenced most in the Harper era, with coverage dropping during the Trudeau era. Furthermore, Indigenous news articles highlighted these impacts most, followed by independent and mainstream news articles.

Table 6.3: Coverage of Environmental Impacts

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Water Pollution	5	22	22	6	5	18
Land Pollution	5	17	16	3	10	12
Human Health	4	5	12	0	2	4
Animal Health	5	13	8	3	6	5

n = number of articles within a given category (media type within era)

6.3.2.1 Water Pollution

Water pollution was the most covered type of environmental impact within the articles. Mainstream articles within the Harper era made a connection between impacts to bodies of water and waterways with impacts to the health of animal populations, which people depend upon for food. For example, an article mentions that “For more than five weeks on Lelu Island, there has

been a protest camp spearheaded by Donnie Wesley, a Gitwilgyoots tribal leader who objects to the proposed terminal site because it is next to Flora Bank, an ecologically sensitive area that nurtures juvenile salmon.” (Jang, 2015, Oct 2nd). In this article, the issue of constructing an oil terminal is presented as a potential risk to water and salmon populations. One cannot be impacted without the other also being affected. Other articles are less specific as to which animals could be impacted by oil, such as an article that simply raises the concerns of damage due to oil sands activity: “Indigenous and environmental groups foresee damage to the area’s water, land and animals.” (Wheeler, 2013, Dec 9th). In the Trudeau era, there is a slight shift in how this issue is explained. Here, water is discussed relating to human use, rather than as a habitat for animals. Regarding support for the DAPL protests, an article states: “From across Canada and the United States, aboriginal leaders rallied to the cause of the Sioux community, which argued the proposed pipeline would disrupt burial grounds and threaten the reservation’s water supply” (McCarthy, 2016, Sept 12th). Here and in other articles, water is portrayed as a vital necessity that protesters worry is at great risk. In an article about Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline, an article says, “Near Merritt in B.C.’s Central Interior, Chief Lee Spahan of the Coldwater Indian Band has said his community is concerned about the impact of the expanded pipeline on the aquifer the band relies on for drinking water and irrigation.” (Hunter et al., 2017, June 3rd). Like others, this article interprets concerns from individuals as grounded in water quality for human consumption. This type of link has the potential for being framed as an issue of human rights, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Independent news sources put a different spin on issues of water pollution. Like mainstream articles, independent news also mentions oil as potentially impactful to human and animal health, though independent articles seem to portray water pollution as more serious,

describing how oil spills could impact many Canadians: “Line 9 crosses dozens of major rivers draining into Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, including Beverly Swamp in the headwaters of Spencer Creek, Hamilton's largest watershed, putting the drinking water of millions of people at risk of an oil spill.” (Bonnar, 2013, June 26th). This article provided specificity as to which waterways could be impacted as well as how many people could suffer if a spill occurred. Other articles highlight the seriousness of oil pollution by referencing previous oil spills, such as the infamous Exxon Valdez Spill: “Even still, the Coastal First Nations were having none of it in late March 2010, when they declared, on the 21st anniversary of the Exxon Valdez disaster, that ‘oil tankers carrying crude oil from the Alberta Tar Sands will not be allowed to transit our lands and waters.’” (Dembicki, 2012, Jan 16th). Referencing previous oil disasters provided readers with context and proof of the potential risks of oil (discussed further later in this chapter). In the Trudeau era, coverage on water pollution by independent sources decreased. However, the content of coverage was similar, with articles stressing the potential risks of oil projects, referencing previous spills, and in one case, directly referencing access to water as an inherent human right: “Whether it's the continued lack of access to this basic human right, or the imminent threat of poisoned water sources due to ongoing settler-colonial projects, issues of contaminated water run deep for many First Nations in Canada” (Forcione, 2016, Nov 15th)

Indigenous articles, while similarly discussing water pollution as a rights issue, focused more on the protection of water rather than the pollution of water. This provides a more positive frame: how to protect water sources from potential risks, rather than waiting for pipelines to fail and pollute water. As an example, an article produced during the Harper era quotes Chief Marilyn Slett, a representative of the Heiltsuk First Nation who stated: “We are committed to

taking all lawful steps necessary to defend our lands and waters from tar sands oil. The Heiltsuk believe there are thousands of British Columbians and Canadians who feel the same way, and who stand with us” (*Alberta Native News*, 2015, Oct 2nd). Here, defending water is portrayed as a duty of all Canadians, Indigenous or non-Indigenous alike. Another article quotes Chief Fred Sam of Nak’azdli, who had the same argument regarding protest against Enbridge’s Northern Gateway: “Everyone’s opposition to Enbridge is a common ground that I think is helping First Nations and non-First Nations people forge new links with each other to protect the land, water and air that we all care about” (*Alberta Native News*, 2014, Dec 10th). Again, the focus here is on collaboration on water (land and air) protection between individuals in Canada. Unlike other news media, Indigenous articles consistently covered water pollution throughout the Harper and Trudeau eras. In the Trudeau era, there is a continued focus on water protection. In opposition to Energy East, an article states that “First Nations women from Nipissing First Nation and North Bay led an event to protect the water” (Smith, 2016, May 18th). Many examples like this emphasize protection rather than protest. This is especially the case regarding the DAPL protests, where individuals are described as “water protectors” not “protesters.” An article states that many decided “...to stand in solidarity with the Water Protectors who’ve been camping at Standing Rock since April” (Restoule, 2017, Jan 6th). The focus on water protection rather than activism is similar to Coburn and Atleo’s (2016) argument that Indigenous protest is not simply a social movement but is a form of continued resistance against colonialism. In this case, water protection is resistance against resource extraction and pollution of water, while also representing an expression of Indigenous nationalism.

6.3.2.2 *Land Pollution*

Coverage of land pollution as a protest issue was less common than water pollution in general. Most articles on land pollution include quotes from individuals who are concerned about it, with only a few examples of journalists directly discussing it themselves. During the Harper era, an article on potential expansions in the oil sands states that “Indigenous and environmental groups foresee damage to the area’s water, land and animals” (Wheeler, 2013, Dec 9th). This article suggests that activists expect that oil projects will result in future pollution. Other articles frame land pollution issues as future-oriented. For example, on the potential of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway to impact land, an article quoted Kaska Dena Chief Liard McMillan saying, “We’ve made the decision we are standing up to stop the destruction of [that land] because otherwise there will be nothing left for future generations” (Hume, 2012, Nov 27th). In the Trudeau era, coverage of land pollution by mainstream media was minimal. An article produced during this time focused on pipeline opponents regarding the impact of Keystone XL to land: “Opponents are expected to argue KXL would threaten prime farming and grazing lands, offer only a small number of mainly temporary jobs...” (Cattaneo, 2017, May 3rd). This quote posits that oil projects like Keystone XL are too risky, with the environmental costs outweighing the potential economic benefits. Like those within the Harper era, Trudeau era articles consider these issues through the opinions of others, rather than taking a direct stance on land pollution.

Compared to mainstream coverage, independent news discussed land pollution much more frequently. The focus of these articles is on the protection of land, rather than the destruction of it. In the Harper era, for example, an article on a protest against Northern Gateway stated: “At the Kitimat rally, local officials demonstrated a similar recognition of a shared responsibility to protect the land and water.” (McCreary, 2010, Sept 2nd). This excerpt is about

stopping pollution before it happens, rather than exploiting land and having to deal with the repercussions later. Furthermore, it frames land protection as an issue to all, not just those who would be directly impacted. Similarly, another article describes land protection as a conscious effort. The article discusses several Tar Sands Healing Walks that took place in Alberta to bring awareness to land and water that has been heavily polluted by oil sands activity. The author states: "...we remain largely oblivious to the way a lifestyle based on consumption and development threatens the land we want to protect" (Stewart, 2014, July 8th). The land is seen as a taken-for-granted resource, which is finite and vulnerable to human activity. In the Trudeau era, coverage decreased, though similar themes arose within articles. Land protection is not only used against oil projects; it is needed to fight against other energy projects. For example, an article covering the Muskrat Falls protests stated, "The victory is cautious -- and the land protectors remain suspicious of the provincial government's sincerity, but one of the smallest corners of the country stood up against colonialism -- and colonialism blinked." (Stewart, 2016, Dec 20th). This example suggests that land pollution is caused not only by an energy project but by colonial exploitation of land. Other articles discuss similar issues of colonialism. Land protection is expressed as an active assertion of Indigenous sovereignty in two different articles: "Sovereignty and the protection of water and land are inseparable" (Forclon, 2016, Nov 15th); and "...the core of sovereignty is acting in defence of our peoples, lands and cultures..." (Palmater, 2015, Nov 20th). Unlike mainstream coverage on land pollution, independent authors make clear statements in support of protest actions against oil projects.

As was the case with independent articles, Indigenous articles also highlight the importance of land protection from extractive projects by Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals alike. In the Harper eras, articles include inspirational quotes from notable actors of

influence. For example, an article includes a quote from Chief Fred Sam of Nak'azdli, which states: "Everyone's opposition to Enbridge is a common ground that I think is helping First Nations and non-First Nations people forge new links with each other to protect the land, water and air that we all care about" (*Alberta Native News*, 2014, Dec 10th). Land protection in this quote is viewed as a responsibility for all peoples in Canada, though land protection is often first pursued by Indigenous peoples. Yet, when damage has already occurred, the focus shifts from protection to restoration. An article discusses 'Toxic Tours,' an initiative started by Aamjiwnnaang women who give tours of areas made toxic from oil sands development in their community. This article states: "Vanessa plans to conduct a study in the future to investigate how toxic her community's land and water is and if there is anything that can be done about the contamination" (Garrick, 2015, Jan 7th). Since this article discusses already damaged lands, mitigation of pollution is emphasized. In the Trudeau era, Indigenous coverage of land pollution and protection decreased slightly, though meaningful discussion did occur. One article brought up the issue of government obligations to reconciliation and relationship restoration between Canada and Indigenous peoples as a reason for not pursuing environmentally harmful projects. It stated that "...Canada is supposed to be working with its First Nations people towards reconciliation, not destroying their lands and clean water supplies" (Restoule, Jan 6th, 2017). This article goes on to discuss how Trudeau campaigned on promises of reconciliation and creating a better future for Canada. Other articles are also concerned for the future, especially since land is a limited resource that will be required for survival in the future. An article cites the DAPL protests as an inspiration, creating a "...fundamental hope that our basic life sustaining elements: Water, air and land are protected for all our children now and into the future (*Anishinabek News*, 2016, Sept 8th). This article, and several others reference the DAPL protests as an important

event for would be land protectors in Canada, especially since the DAPL protests were temporarily successful in halting project construction.

6.3.2.3 Human Health

Human health was another topic of concern throughout the media sources, though coverage was more prevalent during the Harper era. Two of the mainstream articles that talked about health impacts from oil did so referencing Neil Young's "Honour the Treaties Tour", which brought awareness to such issues. Rather than interviewing an individual who was directly impacted by oil, media articles instead talked to an outsider. However, articles that covered Young's opinion said that "...he warned of the health effects on First Nations peoples and described the area around Fort McMurray as a Hiroshima-like 'wasteland'" (Wheeler, 2014, Jan 12th). The other article that discusses Young's tour was written by the same author, and referred to this same issue, quoting him as saying "Fort McMurray is a wasteland. The Indians up there and the native peoples are dying" (Wheeler, 2013, Dec 9th). Other articles, which were not related to Neil Young, only mentioned health impacts offhand, with no specific examples provided. One article suggested that Indigenous peoples in Canada are wrongly portrayed as "...blockers of natural resource development," due to many issues such as "...allegations of health impacts in Alberta' oil sands..." (Bolin, 2014, June 13th). Health impacts are not elaborated on, with the article arguing that many people are for resource development. There were no references to health impacts and oil within mainstream articles during the Trudeau era.

Unlike mainstream coverage on health impacts of oil, independent news articles go into more depth providing specific examples of impacts (though coverage was nearly as minimal as mainstream coverage). Several articles provided attention to the issue of increased cancer rates

amongst Indigenous communities who live downriver from oil sands development. One discussed how representatives of the Dene First Nations, the Mikisew Cree First Nation, and the Lubicon Cree First Nation gathered in Ottawa to oppose the oil sands, as they were deeply concerned about the impacts of the oil sands to the health of communities nearby development (Vigliotti, 2011, Sept 27th). Another article titled “Alberta’s Oil Legacy: Bad Air and Rare Cancers,” described how oil activity uses “Sickening carcinogens...” that cause high rates of “...blood cancer and leukemia...” (Nikiforuk, 2013, Oct 24th). Another article discussed how tailing ponds were making communities difficult to live in, causing members of the Lubicon Cree First nation to leave “...their homes due to illness and poisoned livestock” (Stewart, 2014, July 8th). These references to human health are much more specific, providing cause and effect, rather than broadly discussing possible health effects. In the Trudeau era, coverage on human health impacts was only evident within two articles; each of which discussed issues of access to healthy drinking water for many Indigenous communities throughout Canada. One article discussed how many communities must boil water in order to consume it, a problem that the author links to “...poisoned water sources due to ongoing settler-colonial projects” (Forcione, 2016, Nov 15th). The other article produced during this era expresses concern for the potential of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric dam project to “...risk methylmercury exposure to local communities” in Labrador (Stewart, 2016, Dec 20th). While both issues are clearly quite serious, there is quite a difference in the frequency of expressed health concerns between the Harper and Trudeau eras.

Lastly, Indigenous news provided the most coverage on health impacts, decreasing from the Harper to the Trudeau era. They also made references to specific health problems, connecting them to resource projects. In the Harper era, an article referenced studies that suggest that people

who live in Aamjwnaang First Nation have high rates of asthma, as well as difficulties in conceiving male babies due to the influence of petrol-processing plants near their community (Garrick, 2015, Jan 7th). Several also discuss increased cancer rates, one specifically mentioning individuals becoming sick or dying within Fort Chipewyan (Beljaars, 2011, Oct 7th), and another that states oil development projects “...have life-and-death consequences, resulting in an epidemic of rare cancers and community water supplies that are unsafe to drink” for those who live near development areas (Stewart, 2013, Nov 21st). Health impacts are said to stem from both long-term development, as well as episodic events such as oil spills. Health impacts are also said to be proof of human and Indigenous rights violations by the government and by the oil industry. In the Trudeau era, two articles by the same author referenced “...neurological illness and birth defects in families near fracking zones” (Graf, 2016, August 11th), and another discussed the same issue of birth-ratios in Aamjiwnaang First Nation, which was mentioned during the Harper era (Graf, 2015, Dec 23rd). Besides these specific references to health tangible health impacts, others were broader during this time period. However, all articles that cited health impacts did so to argue that the oil development is dangerous, especially to the health of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

6.3.2.4 Animal Health

In contrast to coverage on the human health impacts of oil, coverage on animal health as a protest issue was much more common. Often these impacts are related to oil spills, which damage ecosystems and animal habitats, as well as human harvesting of these animals for food or economic gain. So, while these impacts are directed towards animals, they can also negatively impact humans.

Mainstream media paid the least attention to animal health issues, with coverage dropping from the Harper to Trudeau era. During the Harper era, articles never directly mentioned harm to animals from oil projects but did so indirectly by describing concern from individuals. The majority of the articles discussed potential harm, with only one article covering documented animal harm. For example, on Shell's Jackpine mine, an article states that "Indigenous and environmental groups foresee damage to the area's water, land and animals." (Wheeler, 2013, Dec 9th). In another article, the author states that citizens of the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation fear the consequences of an oil terminal on Lelu Island, due to the location being "...an ecologically sensitive area that nurtures juvenile salmon" (Jang, 2015, Oct 2nd). The one article to cite previously occurred damage to animals did so in relation to the Exxon Valdez disaster, in which an activist referenced "...the deaths of 2,800 sea otters, 900 eagles, and 250,000 sea birds..." as a reason that Canada should ban future oil Tanker activity (Dhillon and Hume, 2014, June 19th). In the Trudeau era, all mentions of animal health impacts are hypothetical, with an article stating, "Protests, legal challenges over aboriginal rights and the fate of an endangered population of killer whales are among the hurdles facing Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline project" (Hume and Bula, 2016, Dec 1st). Another article states that an opponent of Energy east worried about the "... impact a spill would have on the environment and how that would affect hunting and fishing grounds" (Bickis, 2016, August 8th). The majority of references to animal health in both eras were to do with animals that inhabit aquatic environments, which would be vulnerable to potential oil spills.

Independent media discussed animal health the most, with coverage dropping from the Harper to Trudeau era. In contrast to the mainstream articles, many articles discussed animal harm that has already occurred. On the long-term impacts of the oil sands in Fort McMurray, an

article states that “In particular lake and river pollution is increasing; fish deformities are rising; mercury levels are increasing in birds; arsenic levels are increasing in groundwater; and the caribou population is nearing extinction” (Nikiforuk, 2013, Oct 24th). Another article also discusses oil sands impacts, including a quote from Greenpeace and Cree activist Melina Laboucan-Massimo, who said that oil sands tailing ponds “...consumed a whole stretch of our traditional territory, where my family once hunted, once trapped, once picked berries...” (Vigliotti, 2011, Sept 27th). The focus of this quote is how oil sands activity changed habitats, so they were no longer accessible nor had animals that previously inhabited them. This example and others within independent articles show increased attention to how animal harm also impacts people who depend upon them. This is also evident in the Trudeau era, with an article describing how the Pacific Northwest LNG, if approved, would “... inevitably wipe out critical salmon habitat and destroy the foundation for thousands of years of Indigenous heritage and culture...” (Behrens, 2016, Nov 23rd). Salmon are portrayed as particularly vulnerable to habitat change, as three articles during the Trudeau era cited the Pacific Northwest LNG as putting salmon habitats at risk.

Indigenous articles referenced animal health less than independent news, though more than mainstream news. Like both other media types, coverage dropped during the Trudeau era. Within these articles, there is a sense that animal health is inherently connected to other indicators of environmental well-being, including the aforementioned health of air, water, land, and humans. For example, an article on the Save the Fraser Declaration quotes notable supporters, such as Margaret Atwood, who stated, “Water is our lifeblood. Disrespect for our rivers and lakes and oceans, and all the life they support, will ultimately be fatal to us” (*Alberta Native News*, 2014, Dec 10th). Disrespect to water and animal life, in this case, is the construction

of Enbridge's Northern Gateway project. Respect would mean protecting all forms of nature, which our society ultimately relies on. This portrayal of nature as connected is evident in several other articles, including one that quotes Coast Salish Elder Amy George who states: "Our fish are disappearing, our water is degrading, our lands are filling up with toxins and poisons and if we fail to act it will soon be too late, not just for us, but for all Canadians" (Copley, 2014, Sept 22nd). Just as declining animal health is portrayed as a sign of nature degradation in general, it is also seen as detrimental to *all* humans, not just Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, these articles suggest that human exploitation is to blame for declining nature: "We Humans have no right to dictate to the natural world, Mother Earth, rivers, animals, fish life, winged ones, vegetation or people" (Beaton, 2012, June 7th). Though coverage declined during the Trudeau era, articles still stayed focused on how impacted animals would effectively impact other forms of life, such as humans. Specifically, there were examples of how animal life is vital to many Indigenous peoples, and the decline in animal species would result in further declines in the ability of people to practice Indigenous cultures and to live. One article broadly stated that "...the ongoing climate emergency is now threatening many of the plants and animals that lie at the heart of Indigenous cultures" (Turtle Island News, 2016, Sept 22nd). Others were more specific, stating how exploration for oil could potentially harm Inuit individuals living in Clyde River, Nunavut: "The community says the NEB also violated its Crown duty by not properly consulting with the Inuit before approving seismic oil testing in waters from where the Inuit hunt and fish for food. They fear that seismic testing could be harmful to marine mammals" (*Anishinabek News*, 2016, Nov 30th). Not only is exploration feared due to risks of seismic testing, but exploration is also the first step to extraction, which could have even more harmful impacts to animals and people.

6.4 Indigenous Sovereignty, Land, and Resources

Since all pipelines cross traditional Indigenous land, land is a central theme regarding colonial rule and Indigenous sovereignty. The importance of these issues is evident in literature on resource management. For example, Rossiter and Wood (2016) consider how Indigenous sovereignty and rights over land are central to debates on Enbridge's Northern Gateway project. These authors suggest that the federal and B.C governments have silenced Indigenous concerns regarding modern colonial resource and land theft, despite the fact that much of the lands in B.C have not been relinquished through treaties and remain unceded (Rossiter and Wood, 2016). Regardless of the potential benefits and environmental risks of these projects, all oil extraction and transportation of oil takes place on Indigenous lands in Canada, making Indigenous sovereignty a vital discussion point that cannot be obscured. This section focuses on how Indigenous sovereignty over land and resources are represented across different news sources.

Table 6.4: Coverage of Indigenous Sovereignty, Land, and Resources

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Indigenous Land and Sovereignty	6	11	14	9	9	8
Resource Theft	0	4	5	0	1	3

n= number of articles within a given category (media type within era)

Mainstream news workers seem to understand oil as problematic to Indigenous peoples due to pipelines crossing and industry taking place on Indigenous land. If these projects are respectfully negotiated, include input or control from relevant communities, are able to navigate environmental risks, projects may be seen as less problematic. One article provides an overview

of a government proposal to the Gitxsan First Nation in B.C, in which “...the government offers the Gitxsan about \$12-million, plus a signing bonus of over \$2-million, if it will allow two pipelines to cross territorial lands” (Hume, 2014, July 21st). However, the author mentions communication difficulties between the government and the Gitxsan First Nation and says that the Gitxsan “‘evicted’ logging, mining and sports fishing from Gitxsan territory to demand a bigger share of resource activities” (Hume, 2014, July 21st). This article describes the Gitxsan in relation to their control over their land, and their ability to negotiate with the government from a position of power. However, other articles frame such situations as disruptive to the Canadian economy. An article from 2011 discusses how many BC First Nations groups united to refuse oil sands activity and transportation in Indigenous lands and BC’s coast. This article includes quotes from Stephen Harper, and other government officials, which suggest that new pipelines in these areas could significantly boost the economy and provide jobs (Ljunggren and Jones, 2011, Dec 2nd). It also says that the whole process could “...drag on for years” and that “even if Enbridge gets approved, native groups are likely to appeal the case through Canada’s sluggish court system” (Ljunggren and Jones, 2011, Dec 2nd). Thus, Indigenous sovereignty over land is almost portrayed as an annoyance, which halts economic progress. In the Trudeau era, discussions of Indigenous sovereignty over land seems to be quite respectful. An article says that in Canada, “First Nations are asserting the right to approve or reject pipeline projects that traverse their traditional territory and demanding to be treated as full partners by industry sponsors and governments” (McCarthy, 2016, Sept 12th). This article clearly says that First Nations have a “right” to question and halt projects on their lands, especially when they are not adequately included as decisionmakers and benefiter of such projects. Several other articles also mention the UNDRIP, consent and consultation regarding Indigenous land and resource development.

There seems to be a notable shift during this time within mainstream media, where rights have become a central theme concerning Indigenous sovereignty and land.

Independent news articles also understand issues of oil development in relation to Indigenous land. Articles often make more concrete statements of political leanings on these issues. An article discusses Gitxsan opposition to the development of the Pacific Northwest LNG terminal on their land in B.C, though the author of this article says that “we stand with First Nations and non-First Nation communities across the province that are opposed to the LNG development” (Patterson, 2014, Dec 9th). The author clearly supports the rights of Gitxsan First Nations to reject such projects that take place on their lands. Another article specifically highlights the Canadian government's exploitation of Indigenous lands as representative of continued colonialism, stating that: “Canada must abandon out-dated, discriminatory approaches from the colonial era, especially in relation to Indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources” (*The Tyee*, 2013, Jan 4th). This article and others make the link between respecting human rights, Indigenous rights and treaty rights, with resource development. Interestingly, these connections are made during the Harper era, where mainstream media only started making them during the Trudeau era. Independently produced articles in the Trudeau era continue to frame land issues regarding rights. An article says that regarding oil projects “sovereignty must always come first” and that “as the landowners, these are our decisions to make. In our territory, it is the province and industry who must ask us for permission, not the other way around” (Palmater, 2015, Nov 20th). This quote makes it clear that Indigenous groups’ control over land must be respected. The author also says that Indigenous groups who are outsiders from specific lands cannot be consulted to make decisions over this land. One group cannot make decisions for another. Another article continues with discussions on sovereignty over land, regarding solidarity

events in Canada in support of the DAPL protests: “The message to honor the treaties was strong Saturday afternoon -- all peoples in Canada have treaty obligations that include respect for Indigenous self-governance and sovereignty over land” (Forcione, 2016, Nov 15th).

Indigenous news articles discussed land and sovereignty the most overall, with a decline in coverage during the Trudeau era. In the Harper era, an author describes land as central to colonial oppression: “The dispossession of Indigenous peoples from our homelands is the root cause of every problem we face whether it is missing or murdered Indigenous women, fracking, pipelines, deforestation, mining, environmental contamination or social issues as a result of imposed poverty” (Simpson, 2013, Nov 4th). Understanding these problems, the author argues, requires us to learn about why land is so important, and to properly respect Indigenous meaning, history, and usage of the land. Other references to land and sovereignty also discuss the need for respect, especially regarding communication on potential extractive projects that take place on land. An article on Enbridge protests in Saskatchewan states: “The protest on Sunday, Sept. 28th, was staged over the building of oil and gas pipelines on what the chiefs of Treaty Four First Nations consider their traditional land. The protesters say they haven’t been consulted and are demanding a share of the revenues” (Dolha, 2008, Oct 18th). As suggested in the previous chapter, consultation and consent are portrayed as key components for ethical extraction, as seeking these components is a clear demonstration of respecting Indigenous sovereignty over land. During the Trudeau era, debates about consultation and consent regarding sovereignty and land continue. An article quotes Grand Chief Serge Simon of the Kenesatake’s Mohawk Council, who says that just because consultation occurs, does not mean a project will be approved: “The crown has to understand that sometimes the answer might be, ‘no.’ It’s our land. We have every right to say yes or no if a project is going to go through. Until we see a process like that, I think

we'll remain at a stalemate" (Rowe, 2016, Sept 8th). This highlights the need for fully acknowledging Indigenous sovereignty over land, not just simply consulting groups out of respect, with the intent of pursuing projects regardless of a group's answer.

6.5 Rights Frames

All of the above protest grievances can be framed in some way regarding rights. Scholars sometimes refer to rights issues as a "master frame," which can be used as a basis for activism on a variety of social problems (Valocchi, 1996; Benford and Snow, 2000; Taylor, 2000). As Taylor (2000) suggests, master frames help activists to orient their movement efforts around a central grievance. These frames can help movement actors both pinpoint the root of a given issue, as well as place blame on relevant governments and institutions (Snow and Benford, 1992, p. 138). As many social movement researchers have discovered, positioning movement grievances around rights issues can be very effective in achieving goals (Valocchi, 1996; Clément, 2008; Thomas-Muller, 2014). Clément's (2008) book *Canada's Rights Revolution*, overviews how rights became a popular and useful frame for social movement actors to use in communicating grievances and achieving social change. They explain that activists use rights to leverage the public and the state: "...activists seek to protect individuals against state abuse of human rights or to mobilize the state to protect human rights...Individuals and groups can make rights-claims and such claims have powerful moral force, but they are not rights until recognized as such by the state" (p.10). So, rights not only provide movements with an ethical grounding for social change, they also have legal implications once acknowledged by governments.

Many argue that Indigenous rights can provide a viable legal instrument for those opposing environmentally risky projects (Klein, 2014; Thomas-Muller, 2014). While many in

Canada may be morally opposed to Canada's continued investment into the Alberta oil sands, for example, they may not have possessed a strong legal argument for their opposition. However, Indigenous rights and treaty rights can be a powerful justification for stopping these projects, as pipelines often need to cross Indigenous lands, waters, and communities. As Thomas-Muller (2014) suggests, "...Native American and First Nations peoples have an important tool. We are the keystones in a hemispheric social movement strategy that could end the era of Big Oil and eventually usher in another paradigm from this current destructive age of free-market economics." (p. 243). When news articles include coverage on these rights, they can draw upon these them to explain why people oppose pipeline projects, use them to describe government wrongdoings, or occasionally, as barriers to economic development in Canada.

Two types of rights emerged during the coding process: human rights, and Indigenous and treaty rights. Indigenous and treaty rights are similar, however, Indigenous rights refer broadly to the inherent right of Indigenous peoples, while treaty rights are directly related to signed treaties (which is not applicable to all groups). They are being discussed at the same time because media sources often used them interchangeably. However, some articles would reference specific treaties and treaty areas, which are relevant to specific peoples. For both types of rights, most coverage occurred during the Harper era (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Coverage of Rights

	Harper			Trudeau		
	Mainstream (n=30)	Independent (n=30)	Indigenous (n=30)	Mainstream (n=24)	Independent (n=24)	Indigenous (n=24)
Human Rights	0	3	6	0	6	1
Indigenous and Treaty Rights	12	16	17	10	17	14

n = number of articles within a given category (media type within era)

6.5.1 Human Rights

General human rights appeared far less than Indigenous and treaty rights, with most uses of human rights frames occurring primarily within the Harper era. Human rights discussions did not appear at all within mainstream media. Independent news articles used human rights framing most commonly. During the Harper era, all independent articles that covered human rights issues did so relating to Idle No More as well as broad government bills. One cited Idle No More opposition to Bill C-45 as increasing “...awareness about the break down in democracy in general and human and Aboriginal rights specifically” (Palmater, 2015, Feb 12th). Another article provided support to Chief Theresa Spence’s famous hunger strike and Idle No More as again highlighting human rights concerns regarding Bill C-45 (*The Tyee*, 2013, Jan 4th). Lastly, a third article instead claimed that Bill C-51 could compromise human rights if the bill is used unjustly to spy on and harm activists (McLaren, 2015, May 20th). All three of these articles show concern for the potential for the government to exploit policy to either disregard environmental protection when extracting resources (Bill C-45), or to limit dissent by activists (Bill C-51). In the Trudeau era, human rights concerns remained focused on unjust government policy. During this period, criticism of the government’s inability to fully enact the UNDRIP and obtain consent for energy projects is mentioned. Links are also made between access to water and human rights in Canada,

regarding possible oil spills into water supplies of Indigenous communities across the country⁶. So, while water pollution is seen as an important issue for activists, this issue is leveraged through the use of rights frames.

Within Indigenous articles, we see accusations of human rights violations by the government and by oil companies. Human rights are perceived as a social responsibility for the government to protect. For example, an article suggests that “Canada needs a moratorium to stop all oil pipelines because Native rights are being violated, and all people’s rights are being violated! Human rights are being violated by oil companies!” (Beaton, 2012, June 7th). The article continues by pleading with the government to consider how oil impacts Indigenous peoples, stating that “We as Indigenous people have proved that family values, community values, and our nation’s values are tied with the protection of Mother Earth and our way of life with all life forms” (Beaton, 2012, June 7th). For others, human rights are instead portrayed as a legal obligation. If one perceives human rights violations, they may suggest the need for legal action and accountability relating to the violations. Specifically, rights are described regarding the constitution, and as a legal option that could be utilized in court.

6.5.2 Indigenous Rights and Treaty Rights

Mainstream news included references to Indigenous treaty rights in several articles, with coverage dropping slightly during the Trudeau era. In the Harper era, most mentions of Indigenous and treaty rights are found within quotations from movement actors, with very few references to specific treaties. Articles usually discuss rights as a key component of pipeline

⁶ Lam et al. (2017) highlight the fact that many Indigenous communities throughout Canada are under boil water advisories and that news coverage on Indigenous water security has been minimal despite the seriousness of these problems.

negotiation. An article includes a quote from President Peter Lantin of the Haida Nation regarding the construction of Enbridge's Northern Gateway: "'For us it's a rights and title discussion,' he said. 'It's not necessarily about a pipeline'" (Dhillon and Hume, 2014, June 19th). The article then goes on to discuss how several groups have united in a legal battle against Enbridge, using Indigenous rights and sovereignty over land as a reason to reject pipeline construction. Another article explains a similar situation, in which Chief Boucher of Fort McKay First Nation argues that the government has overlooked Indigenous rights and full involvement regarding oil sands operations in the area: "The federal government has failed to acknowledge their rights over resources, and also their right to have a say over how development is carried out, he said" (Cattaneo, 2013, March 23rd). In the Trudeau era, Indigenous rights are directly discussed by authors, rather than through interview quotes. An article states that "Protests, legal challenges over aboriginal rights and the fate of an endangered population of killer whales are among the hurdles facing Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline project" (Hume and Bula, 2016, Dec 1st). Here, Indigenous rights are discussed as one of many serious barriers to pipeline approval. In another article, an author sees victories at the DAPL protests as having the potential to strengthen claims of Indigenous rights and control over pipeline projects within Canada and the US: "The widely watched protest and the victory – even if it is temporary – will fuel the determination of aboriginal leaders to defend their rights, whether in the courts or in direct action." (McCarthy, 2016, Sept 12th). Indigenous rights are clearly understood as having political and legal power, with many listing them as having true influence over the Canadian pipeline process: "Because there are few treaties settled in British Columbia, Indigenous rights are a large part of the 19 court challenges the project [Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline] faces in federal and provincial courts" (Hunter, Cryderman and McCarthy, 2017 June 3rd).

Independent attention to Indigenous and Treaty rights remained high within both eras, increasing slightly during the Trudeau era. Here we see more concrete statements from authors about the importance of respecting Indigenous and treaty rights. There is also some discussion of what it means to honour treaty obligations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada: “First Nations fought alongside Canadians in many wars to protect these lands. We lived up to our treaty obligations to protect you and be your allies. Now it's time for Canadians to stand up and restore this treaty and allied relationship - and protect our collective rights” (Palmater, 2015, Feb 12th). Another article also highlights the importance of treaties in Canada: “Full honour and implementation of Indigenous peoples' Treaties are crucial to the evolution of Canada and the principle of federalism. Cooperative and harmonious relations cannot be achieved by devaluing Treaties or by unilateral government actions” (*The Tyee*, 2013, Jan 4th). This clear focus on treaties is also accompanied by the acknowledgement of how rights can provide legal power, referencing the success of B.C First Nations to challenge pipeline projects: “First Nations have not only won their court battles and established their rights, but gained the respect and support of much of the general public.” (Mair, 2014, Nov 10th). In the Trudeau era, Indigenous rights are used in political arguments against pipeline projects, such as one article that describes Trudeau’s approval of Trans Mountain and Line 3 as contradictory to campaign promises: “What follows is a breakdown of some of the other stunning reversals made by Trudeau and the Liberals in recent months, with a specific focus on commitments made to climate change, environment and Indigenous rights” (Wilt, 2017, Dec 14th). Another article makes a similar argument, specifically referencing promises by Trudeau to respect Indigenous rights: “For a prime minister who vowed to make both Indigenous rights and the environment a priority, Trans Mountain was a symbol used by some to argue Trudeau was pursuing the same

policies as the Conservatives” (Munson, 2017, Jan 2nd). So, while Indigenous and treaty rights are used in legal conversations, they also carry weight politically.

Indigenous articles describe Indigenous and treaty rights most within the Harper era, dropping slightly during the Trudeau era. Protecting rights is sometimes used as a justification for protest events. In one case, an article discusses a legal battle between CN Rail and protesters who were intending to hold a water ceremony on rail tracks to oppose the transportation of oil sands products by rail due to the proximity of these rails to lakes and rivers:

Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy is calling on CN Rail to immediately drop injunction laid against Judy DaSilva, a Grassy Narrows First Nation member and a Michael Sattler Peace Prize recipient, and members of the Grassy Narrows Women’s Drum Group for exercising their inherent and Treaty rights (*Anishinabek News*, 2015, April 16th).

The article then goes on to explain that these rails cross Indigenous lands in many places, where Grassy Narrows First Nation can practice cultural ceremonies as outlined in area treaties. Rights relating to legal power are common throughout these articles, as such with an article on legal challenges to Northern Gateway: “Five west coast First Nations – the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xai’xais, Gitxaala, Nadleh Whut’en and Nak’azdli – are launching a legal challenge because they believe that the Northern Gateway project will negatively impact their lands, water, people and their constitutionally-protected rights” (Reynolds, 2014, Dec 23rd). Rights-based arguments for opposition continue into the Trudeau era. Like the articles from independent news, Indigenous articles explained criticism that pipeline opponents felt towards Trudeau’s pipeline approvals: “They called on the general public to stand with them to ensure the rights of Indigenous peoples are upheld and protected and tar sands expansion does not continue” (*Alberta*

Native News, 2017, Jan 11th). On the same issue, a journalist asks, “What about the treaties? It seems the government often forgets that we are all treaty people in this country” (Restoule, 2017, Jan 6th). Independent news and Indigenous news sources seem to be closely aligned regarding the importance of treaties and respective Indigenous rights in Canada, though all media types see rights as incredibly powerful legally and politically.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the environmental issues of concern for Indigenous-led pipeline protest, as covered by news sources during the Harper and Trudeau eras. Coverage on climate change increased during the Trudeau era, while attention to disaster events such as oil spills was most prevalent during the Harper era. This could simply reflect the fact that more high-profile spills (like Deepwater Horizon) happened during the Harper era. The Harper era focus on oil spills makes sense in relation to Callison’s (2014) work, which describes how more obvious examples of environmental harm are easier to understand and communicate by news media. However, changes in the Trudeau era could suggest that news media has become more interested in connecting long-term problems like climate change to pipeline projects. At the same time, other problems have fallen off the radar of the news.

In another study, Stoddart et al. (2016) calculated the news share of climate change coverage in mainstream news between 1997-2010, finding a peak between 2007 and 2008. My study differs by looking at environmental issues as related to pipeline activism. However, it suggests future work should compare the findings from Stoddart et al. (2016) to later years. This would further clarify news attention to climate change during the latter half of the Harper years as well as the Trudeau era.

Mainstream news coverage on specific environmental impacts was minimal in general. Indigenous and independent news paid clear attention to issues of water and land pollution over others, such as human and animal health. Additionally, environmental protection was emphasized more than environmental pollution, providing hope for those for want to take direct action rather than allowing pollution to occur. As Awâsis (2014) suggests, promoting environmental protection as a form of resistance can help encourage settlers to honour obligations to treaties and pursue decolonization of Indigenous lands.

Rights served as a central frame for environmental issues. Indigenous and treaty rights were relevant to environmentalism across all news types over time. This confirms previous studies, which found rights as a key frame in news coverage on Indigenous activism hold true in contemporary contexts (Baylor, 1996). Furthermore, it supports the literature that describes how rights are used as a tool and argument to mitigate environmental problems (Thomas-Muller, 2014; Klein, 2015). The inherent rights of Indigenous peoples protect their respective sovereignties over land and resources, while halting extractive projects from outside parties. In conclusion, even though news articles often create a divide between Indigenous and environmental activism, attention to Indigenous rights regarding oil extraction shows that news sources acknowledge the interconnectedness between Indigenous and environmental issues.

Chapter 7 : Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Throughout this thesis, I have considered how Canadian news media portray Indigenous environmental activism. I wanted to explore whether and how news coverage of these individuals changed over time and across two federal government regimes. Furthermore, I wanted to discover whether there were differences in the attention paid to issues, portrayals of individuals, organizations, and events by Indigenous, independent, and mainstream news sources. My analysis reveals several insights relating to media reporting on Indigenous rights, critical events, and government receptiveness to Indigenous environmentalism. It also shows how news sources intentionally or unintentionally generalize the actions and issues of concern to Indigenous environmentalists as representing the concerns of all Indigenous peoples rather than specific groups.

In this conclusion, I revisit the research questions that guided this thesis. In this section, I summarize and interpret several key findings from this project and discuss the contributions of these findings in relation to previous literature and theory. I then consider some key issues, which were absent from news coverage, and return to some of the methodological limitations of this study. Lastly, I identify some potential avenues and advice for future research projects and discuss how I pursued this project with anti-colonial theory and reconciliation in mind.

7.2 Revisiting the Research Questions

Three research questions guided this project. These questions are as follows:

RQ1: Does news media coverage homogenize environmental activism by Indigenous peoples as simply “Indigenous protest”? If so, how do generalizations of issues and peoples occur across different types of news media?

RQ2: How does news framing of Indigenous environmental activism differ across political regimes (Harper era vs. Trudeau era) and how do critical events influence coverage over time?

RQ3: What are the differences between mainstream, independent, and Indigenous news framing of Indigenous environmental protest? What environmental issues do these news sources deem relevant to pipeline activism?

These questions were crucial in the thematic coding and structuring of each analysis chapter.

RQ1 was tackled primarily in chapter 4, where I considered how individuals, organizations and industry actors were categorized and presented by news media. Chapter 5 was especially guided by RQ2 and looked at how coverage changed between two governmental periods in Canada and how news sources reacted to critical events for Indigenous environmental pipeline protest. RQ3 was important throughout this entire project. In each analysis chapter, I made comparisons between news content from Indigenous, independent, and mainstream sources. In chapter 6, I considered the types of environmental problems discussed when covering Indigenous-led pipeline activism.

7.2.1 RQ1: The homogenization of protest by Indigenous peoples

RQ1 asked if environmental activism by Indigenous individuals was presented as “Indigenous protest” or “environmental protest”. Before I began working on this question, I had noticed that relevant social movement research often focused on “Indigenous protest” (Baylor, 1996; Ramos, 2006, 2008; Wilkes et al. 2010, Corrigan-Brown and Wilkes, 2012) or

“environmental protest” (Corrigall-Brown and Ho, 2015; Corrigall-Brown, 2016; Stoddart et al. 2016). If both types of activism were discussed, the acknowledgement of this research divide was either not addressed or mentioned briefly (Alcantara, 2010; Clark, 2014; Haluza-DeLay and Carter, 2014). I bridged this research gap by specifically focusing on Indigenous-led pipeline activism, looking at how news content described individuals who were involved.

My findings did suggest that Indigenous people involved in protest are usually labelled as being “Indigenous” over their potential “environmental” ideologies or protest actions. This was evident in news frames, which created divisions between activists who were “Indigenous,” “allies,” or “environmentalists” distinct from, though in “solidarity” with Indigenous activists (see table 4.2). The homogenization of Indigenous peoples who engage in collective action and the variety of movement distinctions ascribed to settler protesters reveals more widespread issues of othering and the marking of non-dominant categories, as described in Frankenberg’s (1996) work. Frankenberg (1996) describes how individual identity is formed through the acknowledgement or marking of specific social categories. They suggest that whiteness often goes “unmarked” while non-white individuals (or those in marked categories of other attributes) are directly identified as being different (Frankenberg, 1996). In the case of Indigenous-led environmentalism, we can consider how news sources mark Indigenous individuals as being “Indigenous activists” while settler and non-Indigenous allies are unmarked in this way. This marking can obscure the great diversity amongst Indigenous cultures throughout the country.

On the use of generalizing terms, I tracked how “blanket terms” and “specific group” names were used in news articles. I found that mainstream and independent news relied most on “blanket terms,” especially during the Harper era (see table 4.1). Interestingly, independent

sources made clear changes in how often they used “blanket terms” in the Trudeau era, moving closer to the practices of Indigenous produced news. Indigenous news provided clear context in protest stories and avoided labelling individuals as simply “Indigenous” by acknowledging their specific group names. Independent news made steps towards contextual depth during the Trudeau era.

The above findings are important academic contributions. First, previous researchers such as Wilkes et al. (2010) and Clark (2014) did not make comparisons between three news types. Wilkes et al. (2010) focused only on mainstream news framing (the *Globe and Mail* and the *Vancouver Sun*) and did not qualitatively consider news depictions of protesters. Clark (2014), on the other hand, compared mainstream to Indigenous news, and did pay attention to how news sources suggest stereotypes or provided accurate context. My study adds independent news into the mix, showing how progressive independent news articles tend to fall between mainstream and Indigenous news, though closer to Indigenous news during the Trudeau era.

Furthermore, this study is novel for bridging the research divide between “Indigenous” and “environmental” movements. I was aware that these movements were commonly written about separately by academics, though I did not know if different forms of news did the same. What this study cannot do is describe the relationships between Indigenous and environmental movements, nor explain if the members of these movements perceive a clear separation between them. Future research could attempt to answer this question.

7.2.2 RQ2: Political receptiveness, critical events, and changes in news framing

Alcantara (2010) looked at political opportunity relating to Indigenous environmentalism, though they labelled protests as “Indigenous contentious collective action” and did not consider

the role of critical events. My study provides a unique focus, bridging political opportunity, critical events, and framing analysis, while considering Indigenous environmental activism.

There were several notable differences in news coverage between the Harper and Trudeau political eras. For example, a few news themes decreased over time, such as references to perceived “government failure” and the use of “blanket terms” by news sources. News mentions of “halting extraction” and “Idle No More” also decreased over time. While political opportunity is hard to pinpoint, it does appear that the Harper era was associated more with causing environmental concerns amongst activists. Corrigan-Brown and Ho’s (2015) study on environmental protest tactics during different governmental regimes showed that social movement organizations had to adjust their tactics during the Harper era, as the Harper government was not receptive to research on environmental problems. Furthermore, Saramo (2016) described the Harper government as avoiding environmental and Indigenous issues in general. My findings cannot speak to movement tactics, though they do suggest the Harper government was less receptive to the concerns of Indigenous groups and environmentalists in comparison to Trudeau. However, news coverage produced during both eras included criticism of the Canadian government for not taking enough action on environmentalism, by supporting bills that were too encompassing and that pose risks to the environment and the right to protest, or by approving pipelines that work towards sustaining Canada’s reliance on fossil fuels. In sum, neither era was perfectly associated with protest receptiveness or presented clear political opportunities for movement action.

Specific events in both eras were associated with inspiring activists to take action. Most convincingly, the UNDRIP emerged in the Trudeau era as a critical event, which caused changes

in the language used in reports, as well as in discussions around the need for governments to properly consult specific Indigenous groups, compensate them, and obtain free and informed consent before pursuing extractive projects. Yet other events, such as Bills C-38 and C-45 in the Harper era, were presented as causing widespread concern regarding environmental protection and Indigenous sovereignty over land and resources. It seems that these Harper era bills were depicted as increasing protest by angering concerned activists, while the increased attention to the UNDRIP in the Trudeau era strengthened protest arguments against pipeline projects. These findings contribute to current understandings of critical events for Indigenous environmental activism, unlike previous scholarship that primarily focused on older events (Ramos, 2006; Wilkes et al., 2010). Furthermore, it builds on Staggenborg's (1993) formulation of critical event theory, by focusing on the different stages of an event that media can represent (figure 5.1). In the case of Bills C-38 and C-45, news coverage primarily presented *movement response* to the bills, while coverage on the UNDRIP presented *potential social change indicators* that resulted from the event.

7.2.3 RQ3: Mainstream, independent, and Indigenous news framing, and portrayals of environmental concerns

Work addressing RQ3 can be seen in the whole of the thesis. Each issue was considered as they were presented by Indigenous, independent, and mainstream news. Unlike Clark (2014) who compared mainstream to Indigenous news, my study added independent news as a third type of source.

An example of the key differences between these news types can be seen with regard to coverage of positive and negative perceptions of activists. Mainstream news focused more on

violence and anger than the other forms of news. This finding was in line with the work of Baylor (1996) and Wilkes et al. (2010), which suggests dramatic and violent protest is more likely to be covered in comparison to peaceful protest. However, my study contributes to this scholarship by showing how independent and Indigenous news coverage compares to mainstream news coverage. Violent protests were not covered in independent and Indigenous sources, while anger was discussed minimally. This could mean that instances of violent protest were ignored by these news sources, or perhaps that mainstream sources paid closer attention when violence did occur.

On the perceived seriousness of environmental problems, there were clear differences across news types. For example, findings showed how Indigenous news articles devoted much more attention to the long-term impacts of oil spills than the other news types, especially during the Harper era. Furthermore, Indigenous news articles were much more concerned about how oil could pollute water systems, ultimately harming humans who rely on the natural environment. Concern over the impacts of land pollution was considerable in both Indigenous and independent news articles, while mainstream news only covered these issues minimally. These findings show how different types of media produce unique bodies of knowledge on environmental problems.

All three news types demonstrated the power of an “Indigenous rights” frame to halt pipeline projects, though mainstream news paid slightly less attention to rights issues than Indigenous and independent news, which covered these issues equally. Much like how Klein (2015) and Thomas-Muller (2014) emphasise that environmental activism benefits from Indigenous and treaty rights over land and resources, news media, too, recognise the potential

these rights have to halt oil extraction. This finding reaffirms that these rights are viewed as powerful for pipeline debates within academic and news spheres.

7.3 Absences in News Coverage

Throughout this analysis, I noticed a few absences in news coverage. First, I expected to see much more attention paid to Idle No More in mainstream media, especially during the Harper era. This is perplexing, as Idle No More was a high-profile movement spanning years. However, this absence is likely the result of the way I collected the articles, i.e. by searching key terms such as “pipeline,” “protest,” “Indigenous,” and “Aboriginal” (see chapter 3). While pipeline protest was certainly relevant for the Idle No More movement, this movement encompassed a plethora of issues relating to Indigenous resurgence, political and social participation, and the acknowledgement of continuing issues that stem from colonialism (Palmer, 2015; Coates, 2015). Perhaps expanding search terms would have yielded more articles that focused on Idle No More.

Another key absence was news attention to the TRC and MMIWG. Regarding the TRC, it was surprising that references to the commission were quite brief and were not linked to other grievances. Academics see the TRC as an important event and point out that media has been slow to acknowledge it. For example, James (2017) studied mainstream media coverage on reconciliation specifically. He asked whether or not mainstream media focused on the idea of reconciliation prior to the formalization of the TRC. While not using the specific term, James (2017) is essentially looking to see if the TRC was a critical event responsible for changes in media coverage on reconciliation. His study supported this idea, as media discussions of reconciliation increased after important events such as Harper’s residential school apology, and

the release of the TRC. However, within my sample, coverage on the TRC was minimal. There was only one article that really teased out the potential impacts of the TRC on Canadian society. This article appeared in a mainstream media source during the Trudeau era and described in detail the TRC's calls to action, while at the same time referring to similar events in Canadian history such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Macdonald, 2015, Dec 19th). MMIWG appeared in only a handful of articles, either in the context of Harper's failure to take the issue seriously, or Trudeau's initiation of a public inquiry. Though Trudeau was commended for taking action, an article suggested that the inquiry was a "...direct result of work by women who are at once the most marginalized in Canada and the most fearless and relentless" (Stewart, 2016, Dec 20th). So, while Trudeau was presented as more willing to consider this issue, the article suggested that no action would have been taken without the work of activists. Again, both of these absences could be related to my sampling strategies that may have excluded TRC and MMIWG focused articles, as they represent a broader range of issues. Furthermore, journalists and activists may simply not make explicit connections between these issues.

7.4 Drawbacks and Avenues for Future Research

There are several limitations to this study. A few of these drawbacks are methodological. For example, one potential problem is the fact that both independent news sources (*Rabble* and *The Tyee*) both produce content that is quite liberal. However, I justified this choice due to the absence of independent Canadian sources that self identified as "conservative", and the widespread reach of both *the Tyee* and *Rabble*. Another drawback is the fact that this study compares the Harper era to the Trudeau era, even though the Trudeau era is still ongoing (most recent article in sample is from November 20th, 2017). Several potential events for Indigenous pipeline protest have occurred outside this study's date-range. For example, there has been much

talk about the Liberal government's decision to purchase Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion to safeguard the project completion (Harris, 2018, May 29th). Furthermore, activists from many provinces have recently supported pipeline opponents by holding additional protest events (Oliver, 2018, May 27th). Returning to this project once the Trudeau era ends could present findings that did not emerge at the point the data was collected.

There are also limitations relating to my chosen sources of data. As this study used content analysis on print news sources, I was unable to gain insight from individuals who were actually involved in protest. Thus, this study is only able to understand what the news portrayed as important issues. These may differ from activists' views. Other scholars have described social movement media studies as being "text-centred" as opposed to "activist-centred" (Stoddart et al., 2015). If I were to combine my previous work with activist-centred methods, such as interviewing movement actors, I could discover a more thorough picture of what activists are concerned about, how they view the Canadian government (as receptive to grievances or not), and how they assess the impact of news coverage on protest. Furthermore, I could learn about the critical events movement actors believe were vital to movement success. However, I should note that some of the authors from independent and Indigenous news sources may actually identify as activists, which could explain why these sources were generally more supportive of Indigenous environmental activism.

7.5 Conclusion

This thesis sought to address the absence of scholarly work relating to media framing of Indigenous-led environmental activism. At the beginning of this project, I acknowledged my position as a settler-researcher, actively trying to improve my understandings of the inequalities

associated with colonialism and to work towards recognize my own privilege as a settler (Regan, 2010). While the TRC makes no formal calls to actions for settler-scholars, I felt it necessary to keep the TRC in mind while pursuing this project (TRC, 2015). I pledged to create research that can be used by Indigenous peoples, rather than creating research that simply uses Indigenous peoples. There are several actions I took to stay true to this pledge. I did my best to avoid damage-based framing in my writing and analysis by providing context to issues (Tuck, 2009). During the coding process of this project, I was diligent in not obscuring the names of groups, organizations, and issues relevant to reconciliation in Canada. I wanted to expose how news sources used generalizations or used Indigenous actors as a “selling point” for their stories. I chose to include news mentions of issues that appeared unrelated to environmentalism. For example, I discussed news mentions of the TRC, Residential Schools, and MMIWG, and argued these topics were discussed as representations of contemporary colonialism (much like references to environmental degradation are). I also cited Indigenous scholars and theorists throughout this project to challenge my own settler biases. My intention was to try as much as possible to work from a place of truth, by acknowledging my identity and biases as a researcher.

This project has shown how generalizations of peoples and issues can occur within news media, and how news practices have changed over time. A main takeaway, which would be useful for both news workers and academics, would be to take care when covering protest situations and to make best efforts to provide context: why people are upset, who these people are, and so forth. Thoughtful understandings of protest issues require talking to people who are directly involved, rather than simply consulting outsiders or those who are in positions of power (Brady and Kelly, 2017).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Article Archive References

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