CONFLICT AND SOLIDARITY

BETWEEN

ANTI-COLONIAL ENVIRONMENTALISM, INDIGENEOUS ANTI-PIPELINE RESISTANCE AND LABOUR

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Dissertation Abstract

Climate change has reached crisis mode, and confronting it requires confronting corporations, economic planning, policies that exacerbate this process, and social relations that enable such policies and economic paths. This dissertation shows how settler colonialism in Canada revolves today around extractivism. This fact makes the struggle for land critical and highlights how Canadian nationalism is an obstacle to Indigenous solidarity and environmentalism. In 2020, the Shut Down Canada movement that started from Wet'suwet'en territories against building the CGL pipeline on their land, which was a scale-up from the Idle No More movement, underscored the importance of the Land Back movement for environmental justice. Its tactic of shutting down critical infrastructures was the largest scale in Canada's recent history of Indigenous resistance at the time. The well-documented militarized attacks on Wet'suwet'en unceded territories creates a dilemma that should concern every activist. At the same time, the impressive organizing efforts that started from Unist'ot'en as a space of resistance provide lessons for every movement. The case of the CGL pipeline and Wet'suwet'en resistance puts us at the conjuncture of three movements: the issue of solidarity between labour, anti-capitalist Environmentalists and the Indigenous movement.

In this dissertation, I strategically explore possibilities for building strong Indigenous-environmentalist-labour solidarity. Through extensive policy analysis of the critical infrastructure risk management approach and media analysis of the CIRG task force, I explore a hidden link between the security arm of one of the largest global investment corporations, KKR, RCMP, and TC Energy executives. The government's risk management approach has enabled such a link, which facilitates and encourages conversations between the involved actors. The

state's claim to the so-called public/Canadian interest in pipelines is of utmost importance to this dissertation. The concept of Canadian interest works as a settler colonial and national ideology of governing; historically and presently, the concept creates an umbrella that includes the Canadian working class as it excludes Indigenous communities, along with the processes of reproducing nature and non-capitalist forms of economy that many radical environmentalists try to create through commons. A lack of land-based analysis of the situation of working-class people in Canadian labour has turned the labour movement into a more economistic version of trade unionism, one that does not actively oppose Canadian nationalism.

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Table of Contents

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT II

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS IV

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES IX

LIST OF ACRONYMS X

CHAPTER ONE: 1

INTRODUCTION 1

THE BIRTH OF A RESISTANCE SPACE: THE UNIST'OT'EN CAMP 1
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL NOTES 6
PRAXIS AND GROUNDED NORMATIVITY: ON PARTICIPANT ACTIVIST POSITIONING 10
PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF THE CAMP 16
MY POSITIONALITY 23
DISSERTATION CHAPTERS 30

CHAPTER TWO 32

SETTLER COLONIALISM, NATIONALISM AND EXTRACTIVISM IN CANADA: THE CASE OF CGL PIPELINE 32

INTRODUCTION 32
SETTLER COLONIALISM, CAPITALISM AND EXTRACTIVISM IN CANADA 34
SETTLER COLONIALISM'S CIRCLE OF FRAUD 35
CAPITALISM AND EXTRACTIVISM 39
SETTLER-COLONIAL EXTRACTIVISM AND ITS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE 43
CANADIAN NATIONALISM AND INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY 46
NATIONAL/PUBLIC INTEREST, COMMON GOOD AND FOSSIL FUELS 51
INJUNCTIONS, SECURITY SUBSIDIES AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF RESISTANCE 57
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CGL PIPELINE AND THE FALSE PROMISES OF CANADIAN INTEREST 65
EMITTERS OF THE CGL PIPELINE 66
ENABLERS OF THE CGL PIPELINE 69
LEGITIMATORS OF THE CGL PIPELINE 72
SUBSIDIES FOR THE CGL PIPELINE 73
CONCLUSION 76

CHAPTER THREE: 78

SOCIAL MOVEMENT SOLIDARITY WITH WET'SUWET'EN: THE SHUT DOWN CANADA MOVEMENT 78

INTRODUCTION 78
THE BROADER CONTEXT OF #SHUTDOWNCANADA 80
SHUT DOWN CANADA! 88
MULTI-DIMENSIONAL RESISTANCE 93
MAINSTREAM MEDIA AS APOLOGISTS OF STATE VIOLENCE 96
DIRECT ACTION 100
UNIST'OT'EN AFTER THE RAIDS 105
CONCLUSION 106

CHAPTER FOUR: 108

ANTICAPITALIST AND ANTICOLONIAL SOLIDARITY OR BARBARISM 108

INTRODUCTION 108
ALIENATION, THE BASES OF EXPLOITATION, CREATES CRISIS 111
DECOLONIZING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE 119
ALIENATED LABOUR AND FOSSIL FUEL EXTRACTIVISM 123
CONCLUSION 131

CONCLUSION 133

DISCUSSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS 134
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE TRAJECTORIES 138
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS 140

BIBLIOGRAPHY 141

List of Tables and Figures

List of Tables

Table 1: Labour productivity and related measures by business sector industry and by non-commercial activity consistent with the industry accounts.....125
Table 2: Employment by industry.....126

List of Figures

Figure 1: Images of the Go Train blockage in Toronto in February 25, 2020.....102
Figure 2: A map of direct actions organized in support of Wet'suwet'en resistance to the CGL pipeline and as part of the Shut Down Canada movement.....104

List of Acronyms

AHRA	All-Hazards Risk Assessment
AIMCo	Alberta Investment Management Corporation
APTN	Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
BC	British Columbia
BMO	Bank of Montreal
CAD	Canadian Dollar
CAPP	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
CER	Canada energy Regulator
CGL	Coastal GasLink
CHRR	Committee of Human Rights Reporters
CIBC	Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
C-IRG	Community-Industry Response Group
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway
CRCC	Civilian Review and Complaints Commission
CRU	Critical Response Unit
EAO	Environmental Assessment Office
EDC	Export Development Canada
EJ	Environmental Justice
ERT	Emergency Response Team
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIC	Gas Industrial Complex
IBAs	Impact Benefit Agreements
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITAC	Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre
ITK	Indigenous Technical Knowledge
KKR	Kohlberg Kravis Roberts
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
LNG	Liquidified Natural Gas
MFP	Multifactor Productivity
MMIW	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NPS	National Pension Service
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PIC	Prison Industrial Complex
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SOAS	School of African and Oriental Studies
TC	Trans Canada
TD	Toronto-Dominion Bank
TNC	Transnational Company
UNDRIP	United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter One:

Introduction

> In every social space, there is a normalised and experiential as well as ideological knowledge about whose labour counts the least. The actual realisation process of capital cannot be outside a given social and cultural form or mode. There is no capital that is a universal abstraction. Capital is always a practice, a determinate set of social relations – and a cultural one at that. Thus, 'race,' gender, and patriarchy are inseparable from class, as any social organisation rests on intersubjective relations of bodies and minds marked with socially constructed difference on the terrain of private property and capital.
>
> –Himani Bannerji, *The Ideological Condition*

The Birth of a Resistance Space: The Unist'ot'en Camp

Over a decade ago, major pipeline companies, including Trans-Canada, Enbridge and Pacific Trails proposed the construction of several pipelines through Wet'suwet'en territories in what is called British Columbia, Canada. The Wet'suwet'en unceded territories are comprised of 22,000 square-kilometres of land located in the northern interior section of so-called British Columbia, approximately a 16-hour drive north of Vancouver.[1] Wet'suwet'en means people of the Wa Dzun Kwuh River. The Wet'suwet'en nation consists of five clans of Gil_seyhu (Big Frog), Laksilyu (Small Frog), Gildumden (Wolf/Bear), Laksamshu (Fireweed) and Tsayu

[1] In 1997, the Dinï zé and Tsakë ze' (Hereditary Chiefs) of Wet'suwet'en people proved in Canada's top court that had never given up ownership to 22,000 km2 of land (Yintah The Film, n.d.).

(Beaver Clan), and thirteen houses; Unist'ot'en is affiliated with the Dark House.[2] The community surrounds and is crossed by Wa Dzun Kwuh (Bulkley River), Wedzin Kwa (Morice River), Fraser River, the Burns lakes and other smaller bodies of water. The proposed pipelines that cross through the unceded territories of Wet'suwet'en include the Pacific Trails, proposed in 2008, the Enbridge's Northern Gateway, proposed in 2010, ("Enbridge Northern Gateway," n.d.) and notably one that is, at the time of writing, the center of a dispute, the TC Energy's Coastal Gaslink (CGL) pipeline, proposed in 2012.

Mainly proposed by multinational companies, such as TC Energy, Enbridge and Chevron, these pipelines cross the culturally significant Wedzin Kwa River that has been the source of life for Wet'suwet'ens and other living beings such as animals, fish and plants. The Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs proposed the alternative McDonnell Lake route to protect their water sources, but the industry rejected it based on the claim that the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) approved the current path ("Coastal GasLink FAQs," n.d.). In a letter to CBC dated August 21, 2014, TC Energy claimed that the costs of the alternative route were prohibitive; it would add 89 kilometres to the pipeline and one more year to the project's timeline in order to consult the additional four First Nations along the route. The alternative route would also increase the project's liability given that it was closer to the urban areas of Smithers, Houston, Terrace and Kitimat. The additional length would also increase the environmental impact of the project. In contrast, the Office of Wet'suwet'en reasoned that the alternative route crossed already very disturbed areas, would have less impact on their territory, and it is further from the Skeena headwaters that is a salmon spawning area (Kurjata, 2020, February 16).

[2] For the governance system and full names of the houses see the governance structure of Wet'suwet'ens here. https://unistoten.camp/about/governance-structure/

In 2009, with the support of her community, Freda Huson, then Unist'ot'en hereditary spokesperson, started the Unist'ot'en camp to stop these pipeline companies trespass their territory ("Unist'ot'en Camp Timeline," n.d.). Huson is a member of the Dark House under Wet'suwet'en nation and received the title of Chief Howilhkat in 2019. According to the Unist'ot'en camp's website, Unist'ot'ens are the people of the headwaters and part of the Gil_seyhu (Big Frog) clan, C'ihlts'ehkhyu, and affiliated with the Dark House. The Unist'ot'en group erected a checkpoint, a pit house and a cabin along the pathway of the proposed pipelines. Later, they started building a healing lodge and more cabins. The camp, now called Unist'ot'en village, is located at the 66km point of the Morice River Forest Service Road (also known as Huckleberry Mine Road), on the shores of the Wedzin Kwah River, and the mouth of the Gosnell Creek. The closest town to the village is Huston, BC.[3]

The Unist'ot'en camp/village is a decolonial exercise in Indigenous self-determination, a space where those who seek healing can reconnect to traditional self-sufficient culture, knowledge and way of life. Huson's idea of healing and decolonization encourages community members who have been pushed into reserves or urban areas to reoccupy unceded territories and practice Indigenous ways of life. In an interview in 2015, she explained the Wet'suwet'en traditional way of life in more detail:

> Our people have always used all our territories according to the seasons. For our salmon, we went back to the home community where we grew up to do our fishing. Certain areas are more plentiful with moose, so we usually ran our hunting camps in one of our other territories. And this area that we're protecting from the pipelines is one of the best for

[3] For Unist'ot'en Camp Location, see https://unistoten.camp/about/location/

trapping. Each of our territories had a specific purpose, and we still practice that today. (Khalfan, 2015).

Previous assaults on the territory by resource extraction companies had already affected the Wet'suwet'en people, destroying the habitat of the community's staple foods, such as salmon and caribou (Khalfan, 2015). While the territory is relatively intact, the impacts of settler colonialism on the community have resulted in disconnection from the land**,** an aspect of the broader struggles faced by many Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island against the violence of cultural genocide, residential schools, the Indian Act and the ongoing missing and murdered Indigenous women. The camp thus takes on a significant role beyond simply stopping the construction of several pipelines; the camp is central to the processes of healing and resistance.

The Unist'ot'en village has become a bittersweet spot for many Indigenous land defenders and environmental activists. In the memories of land defenders and allies, Unist'ot'en camp/village's ongoing and relatively short history of is often split as follows: the period before the violent RCMP raids and the time since those raids. By raids I am referring to the three highly militarized and extremely violent attacks by the RCMP tactical units on Wet'suwet'en territories to clear the resistance camps and construct the CGL pipeline. Between 2019 to 2021, RCMP performed three raids on the Wet'suwet'en territories, on the Gidumt'en checkpoint on January 7, 2019; on the Unist'ot'en camp on February 10, 2020 (the last day of a five-day raid that dismantled checkpoints and barriers to Unist'ot'en camp)**;** and (c) on the Coyote camp in December 2021.

The documentary *Yinta* (2024) courageously, caringly and vividly depicts this decolonial resurgence and the decade-long clash between Wet'suwet'en land defenders and Canadian security forces seeking to seize Wet'suwet'en land at gunpoint in the interest of multinational

companies. This documentary shows how the Unist'ot'en camp/village is an important space in and for Wet'suwet'en people's struggles against oil and natural gas pipelines and for self-determination. The camp is an important struggle against extractivism and its complex organizations of support, including national and global classes of fossil fuel moguls. In a span of a decade, the camp has turned into a village, a resistance ground for many Indigenous land defenders and non-Indigenous allies who come from many different identities and worldviews, including environmentalists, religious groups, socialists, anarchists, punks, queers and academics.

Why does the Canadian government spend millions of dollars on its security apparatus (RCMP) in the region? Why is Unist'ot'en camp important for anti-capitalists? What do a small Indigenous community's struggles for self-determination and sovereignty over land, water and their ways of life have to do with the lives of precarious or non-precarious workers in urban areas who are trying to improve their working and living conditions? Why do Indigenous communities' sovereignty over their territories matter to environmentalists?

In this dissertation, I delve into these questions in order to strategically explore possibilities for building strong Indigenous-environmentalist-labor solidarity. To do so, I will focus on the solidarity actions with the Wet'suwet'en people against the imposition of the Coastal Gaslink pipeline by TC Energy (formerly known as Trans Canada) between 2019 and 2021. There is a lot to learn from Unist'ot'en village and Wet'suwet'en resistance for decolonial anti-capitalist environmental and labour movements. That a relatively small Indigenous nation in northern BC could build a large solidarity movement across Canada and beyond is impressive. Not only Wet'suwet'ens have resisted a massive fossil fuel infrastructure of a state-sponsored,

private corporation, they have insisted on alternative, social, cultural, economic relations and ways of being than those imposed by capitalism.

In the following pages of this introductory chapter (Chapter One), I first discuss my methodological approach, followed by my personal account of living and working at the camp. I then address an important piece of any decolonial writing that is examining my positionality as a participant-activist researcher. I finish by giving a summary of next chapters.

Theoretical and Methodological Notes

This dissertation is not just an academic exercise but a sincere attempt to make sense of years of organizing. It serves as a channel to systematize my thoughts that are deeply rooted in both action and theory. I am not a detached observer but an active participant in both Wet'suwet'en solidarity actions and labour organizing. I write from the perspective of an activist researcher, a long-standing method in social sciences that has become increasingly important in the study and integration of the politics of everyday mobilization. My subject position is one of an active supporter of the Wet'suwet'en struggles against the CGL pipeline. Through a participatory action research methodology and a decolonial approach, I center indigenous struggles and those questions that are important to anti-capitalist, anti-colonial activists to build solidarity.

I have been active in resistance movements for almost twenty years, starting with the feminist and student movements in Iran, and later in Canada as a prison-abolitionist human rights reporter and more recently as a union organizer and environmental justice and Indigenous solidarity activist. In Canada, I felt a huge gap between the labour and environmental movements, as if the people involved in them were from different universes. There is so much

conflict among different fractions of each movement, exacerbated by the degrading of Canada's labour movement as the result of decades of neoliberal policies and cuts to public spending. I often ask myself: what is it about the processes of socializing, identities and consciousness that makes moving between different organizing spaces alienating for many activists?

I use theories of grounded normativity developed by Glen Coulthard (2014) and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017), the philosophy of praxis by Antonio Gramsci (1971) and Karl Marx (1994) and the development of social consciousness in opposition to ideology from the feminist, anti-racist Marxist perspective to link Wet'suwet'en struggle to the labour movement and the radical environmental movement. The themes of extractivism, praxis, grounded normativity, social reproduction, common sense, nationalism, sovereignty, self-determination and critical infrastructure are important for understanding the complexities of these resistance movements in the context of the CGL pipeline. I show how settler colonialism in Canada revolves today around extractivism. This fact makes the struggle for the land critical and therefore highlights how Canadian nationalism is an obstacle to Indigenous solidarity and environmentalism. My analysis will show that an anti-capitalist alliance of Indigenous, environmental and labor movements is necessary.

My methodology is grounded in historical materialism that centers race, gender and class analysis as deeply related social relations of power, rather than separate categories. As Himani Bannerji (2020, p.7) puts it, we cannot analyze race as merely cultural, gender as social and class as an economic issue. Thinking through gender, race and class lenses also brings the notion of labour that must value the reproductive and subsistence work, including the cultural work of preserving traditional knowledge that is essential in non-capitalist economies and mixed economies that are present, not just in the global south but here in Canada, especially in northern

communities. These knowledges and practices are also essential for responsible harvesting methodologies, including energy harvesting that cares for the environment and nature and does not disturb its reproduction cycle (Awasis, 2021, pp. 14–16). Similar to household work, these non-capitalist forms of work have been devalued and further criminalized throughout the history of settler colonial capitalism in Canada. To stop the transformation of knowledge essential for these forms of work and life to next generations, Indigenous communities suffered cultural genocide.

I look at specific aspects of the CGL pipeline and Wet'suwet'en resistance to show the continuity of the Canadian capitalist colonial system that also exploits workers. A lack of land-based analysis of the situation of working-class people in the Canadian labour movement has turned the labour movement into a more economistic version of trade unionism; one that does not actively oppose Canadian nationalism. The lack of what Gramsci calls organic intellectuals of the working class and the defeated labour movement resulting from decades of neoliberalization have opened space for nationalist neoliberal ideologies to fill the gap. Alan Sears (2014) explains how the anti-capitalist infrastructure of dissent that provides conditions of left organizing was destroyed by austerity and neoliberalism and contemplates on ways of creating new foundations for a new left. These nationalist neoliberal ideologies include a wide range from respectable liberal politics of "for the good of the nation" to brutally suppressing and funding militarized attacks on Indigenous sovereignty rights of Wet'suwet'en nations and onto the openly racist politics of the alt-right that manifested in the Freedom Convoy movement.

This dissertation fills a number of gaps in the fields of politics, political ecology and labour studies; this includes a lack of discussion of land in theories of labour and labour movement, inadequate discussion of labour in radical environmentalist movement and the

importance of centring radical decolonial approaches and solidarity with radical Indigenous resurgence movements. I write this dissertation as an activist researcher, paying special attention to what Glen Coulthard calls grounded normativity.

> Stated bluntly, the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around the question of land struggle not only for land in the material sense, but also deeply informed by what the land as system of reciprocal relations and obligations can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms [...]. I call this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice grounded normativity, by which I mean the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time. (Coulthard, 2014, p.13)

Grounded normativity is necessary to unlearn the common sense about land, resources and modes of production. As I explain later in this chapter**,** being on the land helped me to learn, understand and confront the depth of capitalist ideological common sense (Gramsci, 1971) that I did not know existed in me. It is a common sense in Canada that unceded Indigenous land is Canada. Such form of common sense contains the colonial racialized, patriarchal and class relations that normalize the role of consciousness in perpetuating Indigenous land as crown land or public land and Indigenous people as second-class citizens. This common sense is itself the product of the ongoing processes of primitive accumulation of Indigenous land through extractivism and backed by mainstream knowledge production on critical infrastructures such as pipelines. While the actual nationalist, patriarchal and racialized relations of subjugating

Indigenous communities to extractivist developments have been hidden from political economic critiques, they are not hidden to the communities who have been facing colonial violence in different forms of displacement, cultural genocide and criminalization of Indigenous economies, spiritualities, genders, languages and so on. This also can become visible to those who criticize the colonial capitalist mode of production and develop new consciousness based on praxis and grounded normativities.

Praxis and Grounded Normativity: **On Participant Activist Positioning**

As mentioned earlier, I use a form of participatory action research methodology that is in line with the scholar-activism perspective. Scholar-activists emphasize action in their research, prioritizing their contribution to struggling communities over producing reports for powerful entities like governments and corporations. Participatory action research (PAR) prioritizes the needs and wants of the community in conducting research. These two approaches together provide a responsible and accountable form of scholar activism. Scholar activism is broadly considered to be a perspective in which the scholar engages in social justice and politics in their research and teachings. Participatory action research is considered to be both a methodology and method.

> Participatory action research (PAR) is an approach to research that prioritizes the value of experiential knowledge for tackling problems caused by unequal and harmful social systems, and for envisioning and implementing alternatives. PAR involves the participation and leadership of those people experiencing issues, who take action to produce emancipatory social change, through conducting systematic research to generate new knowledge. (Cornish & Breton, 2023, p.34)

Here I explore the creation of the scholar activism approach from the rich history of anti-racist, feminist and Marxist praxis. As praxis, these long-standing approaches have sought to alter education systems and oppressive capitalist relations through socializing and historicizing the topics and processes of research. In these approaches, knowledge is formed collectively, drawing not only from the researcher's experiences but also from the involved movements and communities. They address socio-political and economic structures and collaborate with activists to instigate change, as opposed to the passive observer position or objective position. In the foreword to the edited book *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics and Methods of Activist Scholarship* (Hale & Calhoun 2008), Craig Calhoun maps the history of activist scholarship back to Marx, Machiavelli and Aristotle. In the contemporary period, he observes that activist scholarship is not widely accepted in academia and is treated as a surprising idea. For him, this lack of recognition may be attributed to three key problems:

> (1) modern science (and modern epistemology more generally) has developed an ideal of knowledge based on detached, objective observation; (2) the university has come to contain a much larger proportion of scholarship than in the past (though perhaps not as big a proportion as academics believe), and thus scholarship is more contained with "academic" agendas and career structures; and (3) activism is widely understood as directly expressive of individual interests, or emotions, or ethical commitments rather than of a broader, more reflective, and more intellectually informed perspective on social issues. (Hale, 2008, p. xii)

The traditional concept of a detached, objective researcher has been challenged by critical thinkers, particularly in political and social spheres where pure objectivity is unattainable. Remaining a passive observer often aligns with power structures, colonialism and liberal

capitalism. The issue of problematic objectivity has been articulated, over and over, by black feminists such as bell hooks, critical race theorists such as Stuart Hall and many other thinkers and writers in academia and by community members. The so-called objective research has usually resulted in the out-of-touch policies that governments implement in marginalized communities, which have been neither effective nor useful. Many of these policies were based on objective research or written and approved by those who neither have personal experience of the issue nor any connections to communities. As the result, PAR became a more acceptable research mode in the academia.

To restate**,** being objective means you carry the biased consciousness in favor of power. This is why it is important to delve into forms of consciousness. Different people, based on their class, gender, sexuality, race and many socio-political and economic situations develop different forms of consciousness regarding social hierarchies and subjugation to power. Some of these forms of subjugation have been talked about more, such as the construction of race and gender, the necessity of class struggle and the struggles of colonial subjects, dating back to Du Bios' (1903) concept of double consciousness. Du Bois argued racialized people see themselves in part from the gaze of the dominant world or the other. I choose not to enter the whole discussion around self-consciousness and false consciousness as I find the concepts of common sense and ideology better for explaining the socializing aspect of racialization, patriarchy and colonialism.

The concept of double consciousness has played a key role in developing revolutionary thought. Many scholars such as Frantz Fanon and James Baldwin built upon and developed Du Bois's concept to describe and analyze experiences of being Black in a White world and to understand the self from the subject position and through the gaze of others. The gaze of others stems from the hegemony of the dominant social groups, the systems of value that keep the

dominant social groups in power through wealth and access to means of production and land, as well as through culture that creates values of beauty, emotions and the power to choose what history is to be taught or not in schools. Selective culture and values and knowledge create common sense, which is an important part of capitalist ideology. The dominant ideology creates processes of subjugation in a way that makes them look natural. Decolonization is not a clear path of unlearning, rather, it is a process of unlearning and learning in which praxis and grounded normativity becomes key.

Many feminist scholars have emphasized the social construction of gender. From Simone De Beauvoir's famous line that "we are not born woman, we become woman" to the long history of Black and global south feminist thoughts that explain the different categories of women that are not separable from race, class, and many other forms of identities, which are also the products of society and the conditions in which we live. As Ruth Wilson Gilmore mentions:

> A more useful critique of identity complicates its subjective qualities (noting, for example, that class is also an identity rather than an ontology), shows how the complexity operates (as in Hall's [1980b] exquisite "Race is . . . the modality through which class is lived"), and reveals the contradictory ways in which identities fracture and reform in the crucibles of state and society, public and private, home and work, violence and consent (see, e.g., Alexander 1994; Omi and Winant 1986; Ransby 2006; Kelley 2002). In other words, if race is the modality through which class is lived, but not voluntarily, then the official codes, habits, and institutions, and the military, immigration officers, and other police who maintain order (sometimes through producing a mess to be endlessly fixed up), have a lot to do with the production and reproduction of ways of being in the world (Kim 1999; Brown 1994). (2008, p.39)

From this perspective, actively analyzing one's identity as a social construct creates social being in relation to all systems of privilege and oppression. Such consciousness confronts the manipulation of marginalized identities by the desirability of power. As a result, participant activist researchers can create valuable interventions in the process of knowledge production.

Critical Black feminist writers and scholars such as bell hooks and Angela Davis use their position within the community and academia to challenge the dominant system of knowledge production and education. hooks's (1994) "Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom" (1994) is especially poignant in pointing to the role of scholar activists in challenging the oppressive practices and contents of education. Angela Davis's praxis was a constant challenge to the educational system. Both hooks and Davis helped grow the theoretical perspectives of relations among race, gender and class and participated in creating the theoretical foundations to confront the mainstream knowledge production.

Problematizing objectivity is also the basis of other fields of studies. As a central theorist of cultural studies, Stuart Hall dismissed the idea of pure objectivity and highlights the significance of a researcher's positionality and subject position through "Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies" (Hall, 1996). The field of cultural studies emphasizes how the researcher brings an awareness concerning their power, biases, experiences and perspectives of their research and knowledge production. In political ecology, Ben Wisner (2015) in his article, entitled "Speaking Truth to Power: A Personal Account of Activist Political Ecology," advocates against separating political ecology from activism and taking for granted the hierarchy of power in research and work. He distinguishes between three forms of research that involve community. It is important to note that participant action research on its own can include different methods

and outcomes. Wisner (2015) puts it in three categories of first, “application” that uses “applied research” and is engaged with an official entity such as a government. Second, “advocacy” works with marginalized groups that does not challenge the dominant social political and economic relations. Third, “activism” that questions and challenges those power relations.

Despite the resistance from mainstream academics and academic structures, as the result of the persistence of many activist scholars, activist scholarship spans various disciplines, including curricula on solidarity economies and grassroots politics, among many others. In “We Make Our Own History,” Laurence Cox and Alf Gunvald Nilsen (2014) present a non-orthodox Marxist perspective, reclaiming activist knowledge and shaping it into a theory of organized human practice. They emphasize transforming experiences into active matters, pondering our responses to the events surrounding us. They emphasize on praxis as a drive for movement from below to transform society through challenging power structures.

In my methodology, Marx’s critique of political economy, alongside feminist and anti-racist praxis, comes together with grounded normativity as decolonial praxis. Praxis as a method and way of life has a long history in Marxist thought, and in other ontologies, such as Indigenous ecologies, political ecology and more. Himani Bannerji (2020, p. 10) emphasizes that Marx provided a critique of political economy in opposition to the orthodox Marxist readings that use economic reductionist theory as a form of political economy. The importance of this is to open the door for different forms of anti-capitalism as legitimate grounds to oppose capitalism, which opens Marxism for allyship with radical Indigenous resurgence. Therefore, the notion of grounded normativity and Indigenous self-determination as a form of anti-capitalism that centers land and not just labour becomes as important. Although I criticize Coulthard’s intersectional reading of marginalization, I find grounded normativity a valuable notion for decolonization and

activist scholarship. Praxis as a set of processes entails that theory and action are not separable, we study and analyze social structures while actively participating in actions to change them for the better, both as a method and a way of life. Praxis holds a substantial history in Marxist thought[4] and extends to various ontologies, including Indigenous ecologies and political ecology.

Despite attempts by universities to incorporate activist scholarship under guises like public sociology or participatory research, the evaluative systems still favor elite academic publishing and presentations. This often sidelines radical scholars in favor of more conservative, secure positions.

Personal Accounts of the Camp

The resilience and resistance of the Wet'suwet'ens did not start with the camp. Since the period when Indigenous communities were pushed onto reserves and into towns by settler colonial violence, language keepers and knowledge keepers have, despite criminalization, maintained a connection to the land, raising their children on their territories, and harvesting what they need for ceremonies. This history is documented in photos of generations of Wet'suwet'en on the Unist'ot'en camp website. The Unist'ot'en village was born out of this long history of resistance; the camp created a permanent space of resistance for many Indigenous peoples and allies to actively participate in decolonial processes and begin to undo the alienation of capitalism. The aim ultimately is to practice sovereignty over Indigenous lands by repopulating the territories outside of designated reserve lands and to practice self-determination

[4] Marx's writings in "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845) and *The German Ideology* (1846) specifically expand on the importance of theory and action to accompany each other. Some of the most famous Marx quotes such as thesis eleven on Feuerbach "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it," (1845) come from these texts in which Marx developed the notion of praxis.

with an emphasis on self-sufficiency. The camp is a collective experience in building community, in rebuilding one from the harms of colonial capitalism, based on self-determination and Wet'suwet'en cultural and spiritual ways of life, and their anti-capitalist environmentalism.

Being at the village comes with grounded normativity and making relationship with the river, the land and all human and non-human beings on the territories that are essential for unlearning the effects of settler colonial capitalism and seeking and relearning Wet'suwet'en cultures. This unlearning and relearning process has become an important part of the movement. Protecting the water and land that is essential to reviving Wet'suwet'en's culture, language and ways of life. This includes reproductive work and Indigenous economies; practices that are inseparable from Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination on unceded territories. Unist'ot'en's acts of everyday resistance are not reactionary but insist on Indigenous title and way of life that have existed, sustained, evolved over thousands of years.

I experienced life at the camp both before and after the raids. Before the raids, there was a Wet'suwet'en controlled checkpoint on the bridge over the Wedzin Kwah River. This was the point of entrance to Unist'ot'en territories. Nobody could pass the bridge without the hereditary chiefs' consent and permission. To attain that, one has to follow the protocol and answer questions put forward by the chiefs of the *Yintah* and the Dark House. "Yintah is a Wet'suwet'en expression meaning earth or land, but more specifically territory" (Wong, 2022, March 22). The protocol is based on the practice of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). Indigenous communities have developed the FPIC protocols based on their right to self-determination in order to pursue their cultural, economic, land and territorial rights.

My first trip to Unist'ot'en village was in spring 2018, during the longest strike in Canada's post-secondary sector at York University. At the time, the territories were fully under

the control of the Wet'suwet'en. A dear friend and I travelled to Vancouver and met with a young, Indigenous, queer person who also was travelling to Unist'ot'en. A volunteer truck driver from Vancouver gave us a ride to Wedzin Kwah River. During the long drive, he told me that he is a truck driver and a Marxist. He learned about Unist'ot'en resistance, was eager to help as a worker who drives these roads on a regular basis and decided to volunteer to drive up supporters to the camp. He dropped us by the bridge and we parted ways. I met Freda Huson in the middle of the bridge. She asked us the centuries old free**,** prior and informed consent protocol questions, including questions such as "where are you from?," "what skills do you bring?," and "have you worked for resource extraction companies?," among other questions.[5]

While we were at the Unist'ot'en camp, we helped paint the Healing Center. A few months later the Healing Centre was finished and started to accept Indigenous community members seeking support to help undo the damage of years of settler colonialism via traditional methods, medicines and teachings. In other words, the Center does the vital work of reconnecting people to their history, community, territory, and traditional practices. W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the most important Black scholars who dedicated his life to the emancipation of Black people in America, emphasized the importance of history in resistance. "To lose one's history," he wrote, "is to lose one's self-understanding and with it the roots for pride" (King JR, 2019). Those who faced dehumanization and devaluation of their lives know the value of pride in who you are, which has fuelled many anti-colonial struggles throughout history. It is through reconnecting Indigenous people to their history that the Center has become a vital space of decolonial, anti-capitalist practice.

[5] Preparing for your Visit: https://unistoten.camp/come-to-camp/preparing-for-your-visit/

It was nice when the territories were fully under control of the Wet'suwet'en. After a workday you could go for long peaceful hikes with other supporters, have some fiery conversations and contemplate what we support and try to preserve, which is not just the environment, but the possibility of imagining another form of life that is not organized around constant and unlimited accumulation. Listening and participating in a circle is an important part of learning about Wet'suwet'en values and the mode of life; one that can enable people, environment and non-human beings to live in balance and respect, with no activities that threaten the possibilities of reproduction of communities and nature.

These lessons are hard to learn; we have been conditioned that anything deviating from capitalist and individualistic, profit-driven motivations is not logical. For example, understanding how one can hunt in a respectful way when the animals also have the ability to consent or dissent. Oral stories are valuable sources of knowledge and ways to learn about Wet'suwet'en ethics. It takes time to internalize what it means that the bear, the moose, or the deer that we would eat at the camp had consented, and to learn about ways of consumption that would not only ensure the reproduction of us as people but also of animals, plants, land and water. From this perspective, the Unist'ot'en camp is a unique space of communal living and decolonial practices.

> Decolonization is the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation. (Waziyatawin, 2005, p.2)

Similar to other forms of praxis, life at the camp has its own challenges. Every year hundreds of people go to the camp. Indigenous peoples from different territories and settler

supporters with different backgrounds and nationalities, all attempt to act in unity to resist the destructive forces of capitalism and settler colonialism that threaten the environment while actively practicing Indigenous sovereignty. Sometimes conflicts and misconducts happen and based on the cases the camp would choose to enter a community accountability process or take away the consent for the person to be on the territories, which means they have to leave.

I went back to the Yintah after the raids in June 2023 to support the spring work camp at the Unist'ot'en village. A trusted ally of the camp gave a ride to me and two young queers from Vancouver. This time after Huston, on the forest road to the Unist'ot'en village, we had a shadow, a truck that followed us. We passed a few CGL workers' trucks and a permanent RCMP station on our way. At one point, a CGL security guard walked towards us to say something, but we did not stop to give them any sense of authority on the unceded territories. When we got to the camp, the gate was open and we directly drove in. Dr Karla Tait and Brenda Michell (Chief Geltiy) met us in front of the healing center and asked us the Unist'ot'en protocol questions as part of the free, prior and informed consent protocol. After answering them we were granted permission to stay.

We were warned of a young bear that had been visiting the village for the past few days. The people in the village had done everything they could to scare him off. We were told if the bear comes back they would have to shoot him. The next morning, I woke up to Taze, the black German Sheppard dog of the village, barking and the sound of a loud shotgun around 5am; I knew the bear must had come back. I tried to go back to sleep but it was already daylight outside and in an hour or two I began hearing the constant traffic of CGL workers and security passing by in their trucks and heavy machinery. My phone had no reception up there, so I had bought a

watch to track time; the sun sets only for two and half hours in June so it was almost always bright day light outside.

A day at the work camp involves a full day of work but with no hierarchy of productive versus reproductive activities. There is a list of things that should be done, some of which are time sensitive. Tasks would be assigned based on one's skills, abilities and desires. Our days started with a circle at 8:00 a.m. before breakfast with a round of introductions so supporters and Unist'ot'en would get to know each other. This was followed by a prayer, not to an Abrahamic god but to creation. Each day a different person led the prayer to allow everyone to express what they were grateful for and what they are trying to change in order to bring more balance to their lives, while offering a spirit plate to the river, earth, or air to honor the ancestors who had carried the fire of resistance and resilience before us. During the circle, we also discussed the tasks for the day and determined who is going to work on which of them. I met a diversity of the supporters who had come to the work camp from different places; they were a mixed group of people from different ages, genders, and backgrounds, all super nice, respectful and energetic.

During my stay we emptied and dismantled two woodsheds that were built in previous work camps over a decade ago. The only paid crew was a German one who came to Unist'ot'en three days in a row, driving from Smithers, to install solar panels to make the whole village energy self-sufficient. My climbing skills and the fact that I am comfortable working at heights became handy, as I was tasked to help the crew to finish the work faster. During those two weeks I also helped with cooking and cleaning, and later watched the skilled builders lay out the new buildings. Every morning I set a ritual for myself to go and fill up my water bottles directly from the Wedzin Kwa, sitting for few minutes by the strong current of the river that you can drink directly from. It is meditative in a strange way**;** the currents take your mind and throw you into a

thought or memory and it is as if you do not have control over that process. It is an experience that cannot be explained, maybe this is why it is sacred, maybe this is why Wet'suwet'ens insist that visitors go and take their water from the river instead of the kitchen, because of the relationship you build with the river. The direct relationship takes away the alienation from nature and all that sustains life, so when the time comes you will know it is worth fighting for! After lunch, a few of us would usually go to the river to dunk our bodies in its cold water. One cannot stay in the cold water for more than a minute or two, but it is very refreshing. After dinner, I would either take a shower at the bunkhouse, play cards with others, or go back to my tent to rest.

Unlike in 2018, we could not leave the camp for beautiful hikes without the expectation of getting stopped and harassed by industry security, workers, or the RCMP. Ironically, this shift on control over territories replicates before and after settler colonialism to some extent. From the moment you leave the camp, you are under the constant surveillance of the CGL security or the RCMP, with a drone high in the sky that is not visible unless it is during the short two-and-half-hour period of darkness at night. Surveillance is not the only issue; the CGL security contractors happily go out of their way to follow, film and harass Unist'ot'ens and their supporters. The bunkhouse was on the other side of the road and if they see you on the road, some industry workers push on the gas to make you run, a murderous joke perhaps that was not funny to any of us. That happened to me; others have had similar experiences. The motive might be an attempt to regain colonial capitalist domination in the face of resistance. The question that comes to one's mind is that if these people are workers why do they go out of their "right of way" to threaten or follow land defenders to harass them? Where is the radical identity of the worker in these people? The answer relies not just in Marx's formulation of alienation from labour but also in the

history of settler colonialism and nationalism that relied on settler violence against Indigenous peoples.

These experiences are important. There is a huge difference between reading and hearing about settler colonial violence and having to run away from a truck on the road when the driver is pushing on the gas to threaten you while you are walking peacefully with a shower towel on your shoulder. We were simply participating in sustainable harvesting with intention of self-sufficiency and thinking about alternative economies to capitalism through action. Speaking with many other people who participated in the camp demonstrates that these are collective experiences, each person has their own story of these events but with same essence.

My Positionality

At the Unist'ot'en camp and anti-pipeline solidarity direct actions, I often face the question of "why are you here?," followed by questions about growing up in Iran. One usually does not see an immigrant Iranian running around blockades**.** For friends, protestors and community members who ask me these questions, the real question is why the issue of Indigenous solidarity is important to an Iranian first-generation immigrant. I situate my position in two interrelated contexts: the history of my activism and the context of global extractivism and oil politics.

I am an Iranian immigrant, an exile. As the result of my writings, reports and activism in and on Iran, I cannot go back to my home country without facing persecution. I came to Toronto from Tehran in summer 2008. In Iran, I was part of the feminist movement and a member of the student committee of human rights reporters focusing on prisoners in Iran. Many of my friends ended up in prison for their activism against different forms of marginalization at the hands of

the religious dictatorship in the country. I was criminalized to the point that many of my friends were scared to have any form of communication with me for fear of being criminalized, given the government's heavy surveillance. Slowly, after arriving in Canada in 2008, most of my direct connections to my friends and remaining family in Iran were severed. I decided to look around and see how I could relate to the society I am living in, instead of turning the memories of my homeland to nostalgia and continuing to live in my past. I asked myself, where am I? How can I make sense of social relations here? To delve into how my feminist Marxist anti-colonial and anti-racist methodology was shaped, I need to delve into some details of my activism.

I have been active in resistance movements in Iran and Canada for almost two decades. Activism engages with politics from below and challenges the power structures and the hierarchy of social relations, roles and definitions. Activism has had a significant effect on my epistemology, how I think and the academic path I chose. Activism includes a nonlinear form of thought and action, which means the success or defeat of a specific campaign or movement should not be evaluated solely by its immediate outcome. Success is also about all the relationships that the movement made, all the small changes in different groups of people that it made that eventually cause a bigger change. In my early twenties, a wide range of writers and activists influenced my thoughts, from Gramsci to poets such as Lorca and Forough Farrokhzad to Iranian feminist activists and writers who became my comrades and good friends such as Parvin Ardalan.

Activism is about having principles and values that guide the change and spread among people in society who are suffering from oppression. Building up principles is important so that if a movement becomes a popular movement, it is less vulnerable to being coopted by another oppressive political organization. I will not go into too much detail about cooptation of popular

movements, as that topic warrants a dissertation of its own. From this vantage point, reducing a movement and activism to a particular moment, an end goal of success or defeat, is a form of de-historicization. I explain this process with respect to Wet'suwet'en history of resistance through Leanne Simpson's writing on non-linear processes and my involvement in Iran's feminist movement in this section.

My first activist experience was with the feminist and student movements in Iran. In 2005, I started organizing with the student movement. In 2006, I joined the One Million Signature Campaign, a feminist movement that was trying to change discriminatory laws against women through a bottom-up approach. The movement was street based in that it used mixed methods such as art, writing and workshops, alongside taking over public and private spaces to gather signatures in support of the changes. That experience taught me a lot about organizing. Our campaign grew over different regions of the country. It became one of the most successful organizing efforts since the period of political stagnation caused by the political arrests, executions and exiles of tens of thousands in the 1980s.[6] Waves of arrests of many feminists, including myself by state intelligence forces attempted to stop the successful rooting of the feminist movement.[7] Ironically, feminists facing arrest opened the world of prisoners and brought the interrelation between the subjugation of women and incarceration to the forefront of our thinking and actions.

The waves of activist arrests and constant pressure on social movements also pushed me to become a human rights reporter with a specific focus on prisoners. The Committee of Human

[6] Many analysts and people might have tried to reduce the campaign to a right-based liberal feminist movement, but this is not true. Because of its bottom-up approach, people who shaped the campaign would constantly go beyond the goals and create many radical processes that expanded to place-based empowerment initiatives of women, self-sufficiency and organizing against execution and prisons. Women led each campaign committee from different communities, many did not have prior experiences in organizing but found a space in campaign to come together with many other women facing similar issues.

[7] See, https://www.amnesty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Iran-Womens-Rights.pdf

Rights Reporters (CHRR) was established in March 2006 by a group of students who identified as women's rights activists, Marxists, Baha'is and student activists. I joined this group in 2007 as a women's rights and student activist to work on prisoners' rights.[8] As reporters, our constant work on the prison experience allowed us to see the prison's socio-political and economic patterns and its relationship with the macro-political policies of the country. We learned that the shift in formal policies, even economic developments, as well as the opening and closing times of schools and universities, have consequences in both political arrests and non-political arrests.[9] At first our work was focused on political prisoners, but soon it evolved to cover all prisoners. It did not take long for me and my friends' analysis of society and justice to deepen, and we became prison abolitionists. This might have been my first realization of class analysis: economic conditions are not separated from political and social conditions and systems of oppression.

I came to Canada with the idea that I would continue my studies, go back for visits every year, and eventually move back to Iran. Alas, the 2009 uprising had other plans for me. As human rights prison reporters, we found our role crucial in exposing the extreme violations of rights of those arrested during the uprising; our small CHRR group became a reliable source for

[8] The members of the group came from different marginalized social groups and working with different social movements. In CHRR, they came together to work on a broader category of human rights with a specific focus on prisoners' rights, including both political and regular prisoners. Focusing on the prison gave members access to the most unfortunate of each social group who represented the most outcast of the society, except for some well-known political prisoners whose background was not much of the outcast.

[9] For example, in the fall term, it was more possible that the attack would be on the student groups, while in the spring term, they would target more women's rights groups as going into the warm weather of summer, women start to put on less clothing, which means disobeying the Islamic dress code. The arrests of worker's rights activists and ethnic minority activists were more in relation to labour strikes or regional events, while the arrests of journalists were more in relation to the shifts in formal internal politics and the government's fundamentalist tendencies. The extremely violent arrests of the so-called "thugs and louts," a term that state media used for the detainees coming from very poor areas for committing petty crimes and who were paraded in highly violent public performances, were related to major shifts in macroeconomic plans such as cutting subsidies and austerity measures. These arrests usually culminated with the public execution of the prisoners within a time period of less than a month, which means that they had no legal court processes. This had the function of spreading fear in society to control the people, especially the poor and the working classes to whom these arrestees belonged.

many of the news from inside the prisons.[10] The government intelligence forces also realized the importance of our work and went after all members of our small, volunteer-based group. We were all criminalized with false accusations. At that moment, I knew that the consequences of my activism had become a defining part of my life. A central moment here was when the intelligence forces wanted us to stop publishing the news, but some of us decided to continue the work that was very vital for many prisoners.

The consequences of our activism in the feminist movement, student movement and as human rights reporters resulted in exile, imprisonment, despair of seeing your friends and comrades in horrible situations of solitary confinement, torture, forced-false confessions and sometimes death. I always think about those consequences when one challenges the power hierarchy of a dictatorship that has developed a cultish religious system of identities, laws and so-called ethics that are intertwined with economy and social status. The consequences are harsher, and such a system repeats brutality suppressing generations of activists and communities. In an oppressive dictatorial regime, it does not matter who you are or what you do; if you are not part of the inner circle of the elite, anyone may face an unjust situation. That was why the killing of Jina Amini, a 22-year-old woman from Kurdistan who had travelled to Tehran with her family, by so-called morality police sparked a feminist revolution in Iran in fall 2022.[11]

[10] Because of our previous years of reporting on prisons, we had links with some prisoners, and had gained the general public's trust. The families of the jailed would contact us, and we could safely publish about their loved ones' situation and demand their freedom or rights. Simply by publishing their names and their reports, in many cases, the pressure on them would become less; in many cases, publicity would create a small shield of safety from harsh tortures for them.

[11] On September 13, 2022, she got arrested by the infamous "morality police" for not having a proper mandatory Hijab. She was beaten and collapsed in jail, spent two days in a coma and died on September 16th. What is proper hijab is totally at the police's discretion, and each year, thousands of women in Iran are kidnapped on the streets by the morality police, humiliated and jailed and, in the case of Jina, beaten and killed. The next day, thousands gathered for Amini's funeral in the Kurdish city of Saqqez, her hometown. Her father said at her funeral: "Dearest Jina, you never die! Your name becomes a symbol!" That was the beginning of what we call the feminist revolution of "Woman, Life, Freedom" in Iran.

The take-away from this condensed short history is not to feel sad but to realize movements continue, even when the harshest defeats happen. Sometimes they continue openly on streets, sometimes they continue underground with coded art pieces and writings, and the continuity of it can cause a revolution. None of us thought that one day, millions of people in Iran would come to the streets under the banner of "women, life, freedom" to protest the violation of the rights of women, and that women would be at the forefront, burning the symbol of their oppression. I see that as success, even though there is a long, hard way ahead to shift the power relations of the society. We need to keep burning symbols of our oppression long enough so that it becomes a lifestyle. Activist scholarship, for me, is the continuation of this praxis in which one's scholarship cannot be separated from one's activism and life.

After the exile, I explored Canadian movements and became involved with socialist organizing and, more recently, labour organizing and the environmental movement. I became friends with an amazing group of anti-pipeline and environmental justice organizers, socialists and anarchists. I developed a deep understanding of the necessity for anti-colonial and anti-capitalist Indigenous solidarity activism on the ground while reading and discussing theoretical arguments with Marxists and socialist comrades in the New Socialist group. Here, I felt a huge gap between the labour and radical environmental movements as if the people involved in them are from different universes; there is so much conflict, not to mention that Canada's labour movement is very weak due to decades of attacks on workers' rights and unions.

Coming from one of the major oil countries and being deeply affected by the coups, sanctions and wars over oil, oil that feeds an authoritarian government, uneven development and disastrous management of resources, I have always been concerned with the political hypocrisy around oil and energy systems. Contemplating, becoming involved in movements, reading and

discussing matters with many amazing people throughout my life helped me to develop an anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian perspective that is also feminist and anti-racist. Based on my experience, building bottom-up movements is only possible through the process of empowering different communities to create their own anti-capitalist ways of life that are not alienated from their work and environment. Environmentally conscious workers' cooperatives that are inclusive and therefore conscious of settler colonialism, racism, sexism and homophobia are the strongest hope against the rise of fascist movements and state authoritarianism.

I felt that it was my responsibility to participate in the anti-pipeline and divestment movement from fossil fuels. Identities are not fixed; one can move between exiled immigrant to capitalist settler within a few years, and unfortunately, sometimes that is how many immigrants measure their success in Canadian society. I found a purpose and sense of connection to anti-capitalist environmental organizing that centered Indigenous solidarity and that the real anti-capitalist force is a decolonial one. I learned a lot from Indigenous communities, and I am grateful for my friendships with many of the land and water defenders. In Rising Tide Toronto, our work has been around mercury poisoning in Grassy Narrows, Aamjiwnaang First Nation pollution by more than seventy refineries, and the struggle to stop Line 9, and currently, we focus on solidarity actions with Wet'suwet'en.

The case of Unist'ot'en and Wet'suwet'en resistance to the pipeline goes beyond their territories; it is about how to make the future better. The environmental crisis has been going on for so long for all those animals and species that have gone extinct, and we call it "crisis" now because, as Stuart Hall explains crisis occurs when "the existing social formation can no longer be reproduced based on the pre-existing system of social relations" (Hall and Schwarz, 1988, p. 96). To be more specific, the crisis has hit the global north and affected even the middle-class

White families of the global north. Indeed, many feminist, anti-racist analysts observe that poor people, people of colour, queer and indigenous communities have faced ongoing crisis for much longer.

I use my experiences in all these movements accompanied by theory and critical analysis skills to explore a strategic analysis of the possibility of building indigenous-environmentalist-labor solidarity in this thesis.

Dissertation Chapters

In the following chapter, Chapter Two, I provide extensive empirical data on the CGL pipeline and its funders to criticize the political economy of the pipeline that can be used for a strategy of the movements from an activist-researcher perspective. The analysis of the pipeline economic complex in the context of extractivism provides a glimpse of a project that is deeply connected to global finance capital and state support and nationalist ideology to reach its aims. In other words, I bring the issue of the CGL pipeline from merely an economic issue and shows Wet'suwet'en resistance as a cultural issue within the mainstream economy in what Bannerji calls "the social," which includes both social relations and forms of consciousness beyond the economy. I highlight the parallels between the nationalism of the Canadian extractivist economy and the global finance capital that is behind the CGL pipeline. I explain that state nationalism comes with a complex apparatus of providing financial subsidies, claiming pipelines as critical infrastructure and using the lower court system to provide unlawful injunction. The history of Supreme Court rulings related to Indigenous titles is problematic as even when they recognize the existence of the title, the lengthy arguments of different judges tend to keep the definition of Indigenous title to cultural aspects while avoiding any discussion on the political right to

sovereignty over territories. Criticizing CGL's political economy and its ideological backbone of national interest concerning labour exploitation becomes key to building solidarity.

In Chapter Three, I delve into the significance of the Shut Down Canada movement, a pivotal period marked by diverse and extensive solidarity actions that brought the Canadian economy to a standstill, only to be interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This movement, a scale-up from the Idle No More movement, underscored the importance of the Land Back movement for environmental justice. Its tactic of shutting down critical structures was the largest scale in the recent history of Indigenous resistance in Canada. I conclude this chapter by emphasizing the inextricable link between environmental justice, labour rights, and economic justice, setting the stage for the next chapter.

In Chapter Four, I examine the theory of labour concerning land. To do so, I build on Marx's critique of the Theory of primitive accumulation accompanied by alienation not just from processes of so-called productive labour but also from environmental labour, subsistence, and reproductive labour. I draw on findings from each chapter to argue why supporting Wet'suwet'en's resistance for sovereignty over their land is critical to breaking the socioeconomic and cultural revelations of power in Canada that are essential for the national and global extractivist apparatus.

Chapter Two

Settler Colonialism, Nationalism and Extractivism in Canada: The Case of CGL Pipeline

> For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones.
>
> –Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*

Introduction

Many might think that the era of using colonial brute force has passed and we have entered the era of recognition, negotiation and reconciliation between the Canadian government and Indigenous communities. The 2019-2021 events on Wet'suwet'en territories, however, tell us a different story. The year 2020 began with incredible grassroots and community-based resistance to Canada's settler colonialism and extractivism. Through its highly militarized and violent attacks on Wet'suwet'en territories, the Canadian state aimed to open the path for the construction of CGL pipeline. The RCMP tactical forces' violent raids on Wet'suwet'en territories from 2019 to 2020 caused protests in different cities and towns across Canada and internationally. Widespread road, rail and port blockades across the country, in support of Wet'suwet'en and against colonial extractive violence, effectively disrupted the Canadian economy.

The Canadian state has spent millions of dollars on security and violent militarized attacks on unceded territories of Wet'suwet'en. To rationalize and justify the violent suppression of Wet'suwet'en sovereignty, the state has mobilized a nationalist ideology in name of "Canadian interest." As I discuss in this chapter, the only Canadian interest involved in the CGL

pipelines is that of the Canadian ruling class. I map out the global finance capital behind this project and show how it needs state support as the profits of the Canadian ruling class and global multinational corporations are not separable. More than 75% of the board members of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) are from foreign corporations or majority non-Canadian corporations (Laxer, 2022, para 6). I examine the political economy of the CGL pipeline in the context of the Canadian settler colonial history of extractivism.

I start by discussing the relations among settler colonialism, capitalism and extractivism in Canada and the central role that land plays in these relations. This makes the struggle for the land critical for Indigenous communities. I then analyze how the framing of fossil fuels as national/public interest has justified the Canadian state's attack on Wet'suwet'en sovereignty. Representing pipelines as critical infrastructure has made an extractive private-public alliance against Wet'suwet'en justifiable; one that has mobilized "national interest" to rationalize the settler-colonial conflict on unceded territories. Finally, I look at the political economy of the CGL pipeline, including funders, subsidies for extractivist settler colonialism and security subsidies, showing the complex system of funds devoted to expanding the Canadian and corporate share of energy assets.

One of my aims in this chapter is to fill the gap of systematic knowledge on CGL's economic and political apparatus and provide evidence that we need direct action and a big alliance of Indigenous, environmental, labour movements and general communities to push back on the extractivism of government and international/multinational corporations.[12] The decolonial relationship to the land, as explained in terms of grounded normativity, creates a theoretical and

[12] I will develop a perspective on movement strategies and theories in the next two chapters.

practical way to confront the colonial capitalist notion of nationalism, in which patriotism equates with the history of patriarchy and White supremacy. This chapter also provides context for the next chapter, in which I discuss the Shut Down Canada movement and its tactic of blocking critical infrastructure instead of seeking further recognition from the state.

Settler Colonialism, Capitalism and Extractivism in Canada

I build upon the expanded definition of settler colonialism that Indigenous and Marxist scholars have developed. I emphasize land and its relationship to the complex social, economic and political relations of settler colonialism in Canada that are central to the dispossession and oppression of Indigenous communities, and the social relations of oppression based on race, class, and gender together. This socioeconomic and political explanation of settler colonialism provides a theoretical argument for Chapter Four on the necessity of labour solidarity with Indigenous and environmental organizing. I mobilize the works of Indigenous scholars such as Glen Coulthard (2014), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017), Winona Laduke (2020) and Lee Maracle (2022). From Marxist theory, I use mostly Marx's critique of the theory of primitive accumulation. Critically, Marx considered primitive accumulation to apply primarily to the prehistory of capitalism. Other theorists, such as Michael Perelman (2000), David Harvey (2017) and Judith Whitehead (2010), have argued that primitive accumulation is a necessary part of the ongoing processes of capitalist expansion. Perelman (2000) explains the ongoing process of primitive accumulation through the social division of labour at both the local and global levels. Harvey (2017) calls it accumulation by dispossession. Whitehead (2010) argues that displacement destroys social and kinship relationships, traditional knowledge, and alternative forms of relating to land. She argues that displacement is a form of primitive accumulation. I

develop this discussion more in Chapter Four to expand on solidarity grounds between Indigenous resistance, the working class and labour movements. In this section, I limit my discussion to the relationship of workers to settler colonialism and the nationalist ideology of the state.

Settler Colonialism's Circle of Fraud

It is impossible to separate settler colonialism across what today we call Canada from the doctrine of discovery intertwined with the capitalist cultivation of land and the creation of a specific hierarchy. The doctrine of discovery was used to facilitate the land grab of native lands by White Christians (Tomchuk, 2022). Settler colonialism in Canada is based on the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous people from the land (Coulthard, 2014, p. 7) and on establishing a Christian, hetero-normative, White society that is constantly trying to expand its sovereignty over the land. This system simultaneously creates a market-based society that reproduces sets of specific gendered and racialized social and cultural practices that privilege the capitalist mode of production, and center market and profit over other ontologies, productive reproductive practices, social relations and cultures. While cultivation of the land established a capitalist mode of production, the doctrine of discovery provided an ideology of race and racism that facilitated state and settler violence against Indigenous communities.

For the settler colonial project, cultivating the land has been the legal argument behind the colonization and removal of the Indigenous communities who have lived on the land (Coulthard, 2014, p. 6). Cultivation goes hand in hand with the enclosure of the land and turning it into the private property of the settlers. The framing of specific capitalist ways of using the land as the only legitimate ways necessitates the dismissal and erasure of the Indigenous ways of

life that use the territories for subsistence. This is while Indigenous harvesting methods developed sophisticated ways of harvesting that would leave the territories looking untouched to the outsiders; human harvesting methods would not endanger other beings' ability to reproduce (Carter, 2006). The capitalist mode of production that claims to be superior to other forms of production/reproduction is based on the unlimited extraction of resources and unlimited production for profit and private property that leaves devastating effects on the land. Glen Coulthard (2014) defines settler colonialism as a system of

> [p]olicies, techniques and ideologies explicitly oriented around the genocidal exclusion/assimilation double [...] In the Canadian context, colonial domination continues to be structurally committed to maintaining through force, fraud, and more recently, so-called "negotiations" ongoing state access to the land and resources that contradictorily provide the material and spiritual sustenance of Indigenous societies on the one hand, and the foundation of colonial state-formation, settlement, and capitalist development on the other. (2014, pp.6–7)

Coulthard's definition of Canadian settler colonialism includes two aspects of capitalist economic expansion: one is through violent forces that are a continuation of genocidal practices, and the other is through recognition processes that are fraud. Recognition processes are implemented by government officials who enforce state interpretation of Indigenous title and self-determination on communities in a form that excludes substantive sovereignty.

I look at this circle of force, fraud, and negotiations by bringing the examples related to the CGL pipeline on the Wet'suwet'en territories. This circle of fraud includes the processes of leasing mining practices, determining pipelines as critical infrastructure and for "Canadian interest," providing vague and problematic requirements for the duty to consult, auditing

limitations, defining Indigenous title in a way that excludes sovereignty, risk management, injunctions, and criminalizing land defenders. The goal is to shape Indigenous economies as subsections of capitalist economy and criminalize self-sufficient forms of Indigenous economy. Shiri Pasternak (2020) calls Canadian settler colonialism "assimilation/partition-segregation" and delves into the dual tendencies of Canadian settler colonialism that excludes and criminalizes Indigenous economies, while establishing practices of negotiation such as impact benefit agreements (IBAs) to secure White capital.

IBAs and the duty to consult practices are examples of what Coulthard calls fraud to advance settler colonialism. The function of IBAs is to facilitate the extractivist activities of the companies and pipelines while following a business model with communities in opposition to the Indigenous rights approach. The government has set a general requirement to consult the communities affected by mining or pipelines in their territories. An example of IBAs in the CGL case includes agreements made with band council chiefs (Simmons, 2022). In 2018, British Columbia approved the project after TC Energy received environmental assessment permits and the consent of 20 First Nation band councils through impact benefit agreements and presented it as an Indigenous consultation requirement. At the time, mainstream media repeatedly emphasized that the company got the consent of the Indigenous communities along the pipeline. This process, however, was fraud. Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs rejected the project and insisted that unceded land is their responsibility and band councils' responsibility is just over the reserves. As such, the IBAs are invalid.

According to lawyer Kate Gunn and Indigenous law scholar and lawyer Bruce McIvor, "[t]he Chief and Council system exists under the *Indian Act,* a piece of federal legislation. It was introduced by the federal government in the 19th century as part of Canada's attempts to

systematically oppress and displace Indigenous law and governance" (2020, para. 6). The traditional governance of hereditary chiefs has the right to Indigenous title. The 1982 Constitution Act protects this right and their ancestral land. In the CGL's assessment, such right is perceived as a risk (Lukacs & Pasternak, 2020). To mitigate this risk, CGL has tried to define and limit Aboriginal Title in the IBA signed by band councils, even though this is not legal (Pasternak, 2020b). The Yellowhead Institute's (2019) red paper report underlines the vagueness and problematic nature of the duty to consult, elaborating on what was "ignored, coerced, negotiated or enforced" (p. 9). Anna Zalik (2011) argues that the duty to consult creates specific tendencies that result in the criminalization of Indigenous leaders who oppose the extractive projects. We can see a similar pattern is repeated in the CGL pipeline case.

Instead of the duty to consult and IBAs, Indigenous communities insist on Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocols. Indigenous communities have developed FPIC protocols based on their right to self-determination and to pursue their cultural, economic and legal rights to their land and territories. This consent process should be free, without coercion or manipulation. Consent is given prior to the authorization of projects, and all information about the project has been provided concerning the right of the community to reject or take the consent away later. The right to FPIC is also enshrined in the UN's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), (United Nations, 2008). These protocols may differ from community to community. Unist'ot'en has its own FPIC protocols that have been in place for centuries; the protocols change based on the necessities of the time.

> The Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocol used by the Unist'ot'en is a request of permission to enter the lands of the traditional chiefs and matriarchs. Visitors are asked to identify themselves and their relationship to the hosts, as our ancestors did. Like a border

crossing, the protocol questions make Unist'ot'en land a safe place. FPIC ensures peace and security on the territory.

In ancient times and even today in canoe journeys, and community resistance building gatherings, there exist Protocols where visiting peoples have shown who they are in relation to asking permission to enter the Traditional Lands from the Traditional Chiefs and Matriarchs of the hosting lands. This is a living breathing assertion of the Traditional Laws of the Wet'suwet'en, which have been asserted via protocols like this on the lands for thousands of years and renewed by today's sovereigntists. (Unist'ot'en Camp, n.d.)

So far, I have explained settler colonialism's advance via the dispossession of Indigenous communities across three fronts**:** first through the cultivation of the land, second through the doctrine of discovery to create a White hetero-Christian society, and third, through fraud that includes vague policies and laws that open up the door for different readings and interpretations. Before moving to extractivism, which will build upon these aspects of settler colonialism, it is important to expand on the capitalist aspect of settler colonialism, which is oppression. Oppression and its economic aspect (exploitation) become key to linking settler colonialism to the broader issues of the working class. In their reconciliation manifesto, Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson (2017, p. 72) argue that Canadian settler colonialism has three pillars: dispossession, dependency and oppression. The dispossession of Indigenous communities is necessary for ongoing capitalist colonial state claims of sovereignty, which feed into an oppressive global extractivist economy that also feeds on the exploitation of workers.

Capitalism and Extractivism

Marx provides an ecological criticism of capital as a form of systemic crisis in which a capitalist economy implies ownership and uses its resources to its limits. We call this crisis an ecological crisis that is primarily pushed by the fossil fuels economy and extractivism. This ecological crisis is destroying conditions necessary for the reproduction of life. In the realms of fossil fuels economy and extractivism, nature is seen as a resource, land is a form of commodity in needs of being conquered, privatized and cultivated. Marx criticizes capitalism's system that builds on alienation; capitaliasm alienates humans from nature by making that relationship merely economical and for exchange value (Foster, 1997, p. 280). This alienation and commodification of life is at the heart of extractivism.

> 'Extractive' here refers to the over-exploitation of nature (including both human labour and non-human resources) to such an extent that it undermines its conditions of existence over time, in the manner of O'Connor's (1988) 'second contradiction of capitalism.' Such over-exploitation has prompted ecological crises due to the separation of human resource use from the basis of production, or what has been termed the metabolic rift (Marx 1993; Foster 1999; Burkett 1999) Scholars have highlighted that this dynamic extends beyond urban–rural divisions to include spatially distant colonial resource frontiers such as sugar plantations and silver mining in the Americas. (Killoran-McKibbin & Zalik, p. 538)

Settler colonialism and extractivism are intertwined in Canada's staple economy, as well as the mining, oil and gas industries. According to Macarena Gómez-Barris:

> Extractive capitalism is known in the Américas, indicates an economic system that engages in thefts, borrowings, and forced removals, violently reorganizing social life as well as the land by thieving resources from Indigenous and Afro-descendent territories. (2017, p. xvii)

Extractivism explains the matrix of settler colonialism, unlimited exploitation of the environment and extraction for profit of nature, people and land that led to the climate crisis caused by capitalism. Extraction under neoliberalism does not include just the raw materials; it also includes humans and other beings. Extractivism, in opposition to Indigenous harvesting methods, has had devastating effects on animals, plants and non-human beings (Awasis, 2021).

Latin American and Indigenous scholars take the concept of extractivism beyond profit-making processes. There are many similarities between North American extraction and neoliberal extractivism in some parts of the global south. In Latin America, as in Canada, primitive accumulation of land and resources through mining and industrial farming could happen only by destroying the traditional ways of life that connect people, communities, and tribes to the land. According to John Smith (2016, p. 108): "The accelerated spread of capitalist social relations among Southern nations during the neoliberal era has been far more effective in dissolving traditional economies and ties to the land than in absorbing into wage labour those destitute by this process." This is why struggles for the land has become central to many movements, such as the Zapatistas, in which Indigenous and peasant communities maintained some control over the land (Muñoz Ramírez et al., 2008).

Extractivism has become a popular term that points to capitalist and colonial processes of extraction of minerals and the forms of resistance it creates. According to Thea Riofrancos (2020), the concept of extractivism in Latin America was developed by intellectuals, environmental and Indigenous activists to indicate

> the intensive and extensive exploitation of natural resources; little or no industrialization; export as the principal destination; exploitation that impedes natural renovation […] the

> economic form of the 'enclave' (Chavez, 2013). It is a syndrome comprising the various pathological effects of political and economic dependency on resource extraction. (Para. 5)

She maps out how the concept went far beyond and became an important academic concept and took on different forms such as neoliberal extractivism, progressive extractivism, urban extractivism, data extractivism, financial extractivism and green or aeolian extractivism. Riofrancos (2020) argues that in this broad scholarship, extractivism becomes a "descriptive or analytical term to refer to extractive activities, the policies and ideologies that promote them, their socio-environmental effects, and the forms of resistance that they provoke" (Para. 3). Extractivism includes communities that are affected through the environmental destruction of their territories, which in turn, causes forced migration and separation from traditional knowledge and culture, especially for future generations.

Extractivism is at the forefront of Canada's settler colonialism, racial capitalism and environmental racism. In the Canadian context, the oil and gas extractivist companies reported total assets of C$489,800 billion in 2022, in which mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction contributed C$111,997 billion to Canada's GDP alongside the energy sector. According to Statistics Canada (2023, September 27), the energy sector is the largest export sector in Canada, contributing billions of dollars to GDP and playing a significant role in Canada's 9th most robust economy globally. "An economic plan built on extraction requires physical infrastructure. This is the context for the expansion of oil pipelines, rail, and road infrastructure" (LaDuke & Cowen, 2020, p. 250). The infrastructure of this sector is the center of the dispute in Wet'suwet'en territories; this is the infrastructure of advancing settler colonialism on unceded territories. As I explain later, these infrastructure projects are essential to turn large oil and gas reserves into assets. Whether these assets will end in profit or not because of the enormous cost of

transportation and mode of extraction such as fracking, they provide political power. In the following section, I specifically look at the critical infrastructure of extractivism as a form of ongoing settler colonial project against Indigenous sovereignty.

Settler-Colonial Extractivism and Its Critical Infrastructure

Canadian colonial capitalism, including extractivism and its infrastructure, such as railroads and pipelines, have created ongoing processes of separation of Indigenous communities from culture, spiritual practices and subsistence that are connected to land-based practices (Laduke & Cowen, 2020). Unceded territories, however, represent a contested space for settler colonialism. The Canadian state needs to establish its right to sovereignty over unceded territories in order to turn those territories into a space for so-called productive economic activity. In most of the northern territories, capitalist economic activities are exclusive to the extractivist economy and its infrastructures. Meanwhile, Wet'suwet'en nation, similar to many other Indigenous communities, participate in mix economies. Coulthard (2014) explains that sovereignty for Indigenous peoples is not just in the material sense but it is also a system of reciprocal relations and obligations. For Wet'suwet'en, the Indigenous traditional view of territories is not based on ownership but on sovereignty; this understanding of sovereignty is central to Indigenous anti-capitalism.

These different understandings of sovereignty create ongoing battles of jurisdictions that cannot win recognition in the colonial court system, as (Coulthard (2014), Simpson (2017) and Maracle (2022) explain; the politics of recognition do not work. One reason is the different readings and definitions of sovereignty. In Canada, a significant aspect of extractivism is inherently colonial and capitalist as the rights to minerals in Canada are mainly for the Crown,

which includes federal and provincial governments. These governments lease mining rights to the private sector (Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, n.d.). Interestingly, CP Rail (CPR)**,** one of Canada's first colonial infrastructures, is an exception. CPR signed huge land contracts with the Canadian government before the Crown signed treaties with many First Nations in the 1880s. This gave extraordinary advantages to CPR, including rights to minerals and coal, exemption from taxes and more. The construction of CPR enabled the ethnic cleansing of a vast territory from Regina to the Alberta border. James Daschuk (2013) has documented how Canadian officials denied food as part of this ethnic cleansing practices.

> Land was cleared to make way for the railroad but the railroad also enabled mass slaughter. It was in the wake of this genocidal violence that land speculators, 'colonization companies,' and the Canadian Pacific Railway's (CPR) own internal Department of Colonization transformed the plains into real estate profits. (LaDuke & Cowen, 2020, p. 248)

The CP land grabs were so profitable and excessive that with the money they gained, "CPR created Canadian Pacific Oil and Gas in 1958 and in 1971 merged with Del Rio and became Pan Canadian Oil and Gas. In 2002, it was merged with Alberta Oil and Gas and become Encana" (Cuthand, 2021, para.12). The case of CPR brings together the issues of private corporations, critical infrastructure, land grabs, colonialism, and extractivism. A legacy that continues with pipelines in contemporary times.

The right to minerals can affect both private property and the sovereignty of the nations. In the settler colonial context, as Leanne Simpson underlines in an interview with Naomi Klein (2013), "[e]xtraction and assimilation go together,"

> [t]he act of extraction removes all of the relationships that give meaning to whatever is being extracted. Extracting is taking. Actually, extracting is stealing, it is taking without consent,

> without thought, care or even knowledge of the impacts that extraction has on the other living things in that environment. That's always been a part of colonialism and conquest. Colonialism has always extracted the Indigenous extraction of Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous women, and Indigenous peoples. (Klein, 2013)

The ongoing primitive accumulation of land and extraction of resources could happen not just through coercion but also through histories of cultural genocide that separate communities from traditional survival and subsistence knowledge. Gomez-Barris (2017) explains how an extractive economy creates gender and racial exclusions through a dramatic divide between nature and culture. According to Simpson (2017), the erasure of Indigenous identity leads to access to land and resources. "It means resurgence must be concerned with the reattachment of our minds, bodies and spirits to the network of relationships and ethical practices that generates grounded normativity" (p. 44). Simpson builds on grounded normativity concepts and explains queer normativity as a continuation of gender-diverse traditions but in a fluid and evolving manner. As dispossession is intertwined with the erasure of identity, especially Indigenous women and 2sprits, Simpson explains that the women and two spirits are political bodies and political orders central to resistance. The Unist'ot'en camp came into existence in this context, to reoccupy and confront the legacy of colonial extractive violence that goes back to 1952 in the region. This includes hydroelectric projects, mining, logging, agriculture and grazing leases that involved either land grabbing by settlers or different forms of resource extraction by government or companies that got the mining or logging leases from the government (Khalfan, 2015, August 23). From my experiences at the Unist'ot'en camp and environmentalist blockades, many queer people shape this specific form of resistance and are present in numbers.

Another aspect of extractivist capitalism is the strong tie between international corporations and the political elite, namely, that the profit and power of one are not separate from the other. Extractivism, as Gomez-Barris argues

> functions within what Anibal Quijano first coined as the colonial matrix of power, where corporate entities and states are indistinguishable in their economic interests and activities; states act on behalf of corporations, and corporate entities hire security forces to control and suppress anti-extractivist organizing. (Gomez-Barris, 2017, p. 44)

In the following sections, I explain the multitude of dimensions of this matrix, from legal grounds, policies and nationalism of the state to the political economy of the CGL pipeline.

Canadian Nationalism and Indigenous Sovereignty

> If the problem is colonial law, the political solution is Original Indigenous Law. Otherwise, although the operation will be successful, the patient will die. Nationhood is the only cure for the disease of colonialism that I am aware of. Any band-aid applied to this disease will result in the greater death – the death of the hopes of Self-Determination. In our Original nation-states, Indigenous Peoples, particularly women, had place, power and privilege. Today, Indigenous Peoples have a colonized place lacking in power and full of under-privilege. (Lee Maracle, 2022, p. 11)

The question of jurisdiction over unceded territories has been a long-standing dispute between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government. Wet'suwet'en is unceded territory; unceded territory refers to territories where Indigenous communities have not signed a treaty with the Canadian government. In the case of Wet'suwet'en, this means the 22,000 square kilometres of territories are under the jurisdiction of the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs of five

clans namely, Gilseyhu (Big Frog Clan), Laksilyu (Small Frog Clan), Tsayu (Beaver Clan), Laksamshu (Fireweed and Owl Clan) and Gitdumden (Wolf and Bear Clan) (Office of the Wet'suwet'en, n.d.). As Glen Coulthard (2014) has assessed, the new forms of the dispossession of Indigenous people come with settler colonial capitalist economic expansion, a continuation of settler colonial structure that uses violence, jurisdiction and law to dispossess Indigenous communities from their territories (p. 125).

The 1997 Delgamuukw–Gisdaywav Supreme Court case had important results for the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en nations, including the recognition of hereditary chiefs' governance. Most court cases are about what Indigenous title means, especially whether it constitutes sovereignty, as previous definitions and what is acceptable are vague in Canadian settler colonial history of courts and laws (Supreme Court of Canada, 1997). The hereditary chiefs' history, duties, and laws are clear on this matter; hereditary chiefs insist that they are the guardians of the Wet'suwet'en land and their duty is to preserve sovereignty over the territory to protect their land, plants, animals and communities. Many of the hereditary responsibilities and laws have been passed through oral history, which put specific importance on the function of the feast hall as a space to make communal decisions. The Supreme Court decision of 1997 recognized the importance of oral history and criticized the trial judge for mishandling the oral history records (Supreme Court of Canada, 1997). Val Napoleon (2005) states that trial judge C. J. McEachern did not accept *adaawk* oral histories as standard Western court evidence. Napoleon (2005) also rejects the possibility of the colonial court's correct conception of *adaawk* and Indigenous title. "The Western legal process nonetheless filtered and altered the *adaawk*, thereby creating a distorted legal truth about oral histories that now pervades the aboriginal rights discourse" (p.125).

The conflict continued since no treaty was signed between Wet'suwet'ens and the Crown. John Borrows (2017) challenges the approach of the colonial court to the Indigenous Title. He argues that the court confuses history with law by bringing all aspects of the argument over title to the history of colonial contact or British sovereignty to determine Indigenous Title (p. 69). The legal interpretation of Indigenous Title remains complicated; the vagueness and complexity have provided an opportunity for the state and corporations to bend the legal definition to their benefit. The 2004 Haida nation decision established that "where Indigenous land claims remain unresolved, the settler state has a duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous interests (Lambrecht, 2013)" (MaCreary, 2022, p. 243). Amidst this legal vagueness, the Canadian government has taken for granted its authority over resources on unceded territories. This authority is not based on treaties and agreements but is exercised *de facto*, it bases itself on the force of colonization in the past 150 years. In 2004, in the case of unceded lands in BC,

> the Supreme Court of Canada referred to the historical and current situation as British Columbia's *de facto* control of Indigenous lands and resources. In other words, the Supreme Court recognized that the province's authority to issue permits for Indigenous lands, including the type of permits issued for the Coastal GasLink pipeline, is not based on established legal authority. It is based on the fact that the province has proceeded, for over 150 years, to make unilateral decisions about Indigenous lands.
>
> The fact that the province has acted since the 1860s as though it has full authority to decide how Indigenous peoples' lands are used does not make doing so legal or just. (Gunn & McIvor, 2020, Feb 13, para. 26-28)

The Crown has the right to minerals and their extraction. This means federal and provincial governments can lease these rights to different corporations. Each province has its regulations, including specific clauses on reserve land, but they are more or less similar regarding First Nations. In BC, those laws go back to the Gold Rush era, which allowed corporations to claim minerals even on Indigenous territories. This right is in direct conflict and inconsistent with Indigenous Title, similar to the Crown's right over critical infrastructure, including its promotion of the national interest (Simmons, 2022). Legally, the Crown cannot justify its jurisdiction based on established laws. The only ways through which the Crown can act on these unceded territories is, thus, through brute force and making corporations sign vague "benefit agreements" with Indigenous communities to get their consent (Mills & McCreary, 2021, p. 141). Corporations usually take the utmost advantage of the double structures of Indigenous governance, embodied in the double authority of band councils and the hereditary chiefs. The CGL pipeline, for example, stepped over the authority of hereditary chiefs and only signed agreements with elected band councils, whose authority is rooted in the colonial history of the Indian Act and limited to reserves.

The hereditary chiefs used indigenous laws to evict CGL and its workers from their territories in 2020. The eviction notice has been given to CGL numerous times since. In their January 4, 2020 statement, Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs submitted an eviction letter to CGL in Smither, BC that is worth quoting in length.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Smithers, BC

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs representing all five clans of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have issued an eviction notice to the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline company. The eviction

of CGL is effective immediately, and applies to “Camp 9A” on Dark House territory, as well as the neighbouring Gidimt’en, Tsayu, and Laksamshu clan territories. Hereditary chiefs have gathered on Gidimt’en and Gilseyhu territories to monitor the eviction.

Coastal Gaslink has violated the Wet’suwet’en law of trespass and has bulldozed through our territories, destroyed our archaeological sites and occupied our land with industrial man-camps. Private security firms and RCMP have continually interfered with the constitutionally protected rights of Wet’suwet’en people to access our lands for hunting, trapping, and ceremonies.

Canada’s courts have acknowledged in Delgamuukw–Gisdaywa v. The Queen, that the Wet’suwet’en people, represented by our hereditary chiefs, have never ceded nor surrendered Title to the 22,000 km of Wet’suwet’en territory. The granting of the interlocutory injunction by BC’s Supreme Court has proven to us that Canadian courts will ignore their rulings and deny our jurisdiction when convenient, and will not protect our territories or our rights as Indigenous peoples.

Anuc ‘nu’at’en (Wet’suwet’en law) is not a “belief” or a “point of view.” It is a way of sustainably managing our territories and relations with one another and the world around us, and it has worked for millennia to keep our territories intact. Our law is central to our identity. The ongoing criminalization of our laws by Canada’s courts and industrial police is an attempt at genocide, an attempt to extinguish Wet’suwet’en identity itself.

We reaffirm that Anuc ‘nu’at’en remains the highest law on Wet’suwet’en land and must be respected. We have always held the responsibility and authority to protect our unceded territories. Protection of our Yintah (traditional territories) is at the heart of Anuc ‘nu’at’en, and we will practice our laws for the future generations.

> The Wet'suwet'en have always controlled access to our territories. At Unist'ot'en Village, a Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocol has been practiced over the past ten years whenever someone outside of Dark House membership requests access to the territory. Dark House has not been able to implement this protocol since the enforcement of the interim injunction in January 2019. This protocol aligns Wet'suwet'en law with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which guarantees Indigenous peoples the right to obtain free, prior, and informed consent for development on our territories.
>
> We expect Coastal GasLink to peacefully comply with our eviction notice, and ask that British Columbia uphold its commitment to implement UNDRIP and instruct RCMP to respect our rights and refrain from interference in Wet'suwet'en law. (Unist'ot'en Camp, n.d.)

On May 14, 2020, hereditary chiefs signed a memorandum of understanding that recognizes their authority over the Wet'suwet'en territories and outlines a process for negotiating shared jurisdiction. "The agreement affirms the provincial and Canadian governments' recognition that Wet'suwet'en traditional authorities hold territorial rights and title 'under their system of governance'" (McCreary & Turner, 2021, March 2, Para.3). This recognition, however, did not stop the RCMP from launching more violent attacks on land defenders. Public interest as an ideological tool and injunctions as a legal tool have been used to justify these attacks to further the settler colonialism project on unceded territories of Wet'suwet'en. As I explain below, Canadian nationalism is an obstacle to indigenous solidarity and environmentalism**,** while providing false promises for labour and the economy.

National/Public Interest, Common Good and Fossil Fuels

The vague notion of national/public interest sits at the heart of the Canadian government's policies around critical infrastructure and extracting resources from the land. The Canadian state has used common good or public good to justify energy projects on Indigenous land across Canada, while using national interest for international affairs. Both concepts provoke similar nationalist signifiers to minimize public resistance to projects that are harmful to the environment and, therefore, to the public. The political economy of oil and gas energy projects is tied to the ideology of nationalism, even when the main stakeholders are international corporations. Extractivism is deeply ingrained in Canadian nationalism and identity; after all, the colonization of Canada started in the hope of riches from extracting natural resources, from fur to lumber and minerals, and now fracked gas and tar sands oil.

Mainstream media and government use resources and power to shape the public/national interest ideology, but in whose interest? There is a long history behind the systemic exclusionary aspects of the liberal concepts of "public" and "national." Historically, the working class, poor, women, LGTBQ, and racialized groups were excluded from the liberal definition of the public. When selected equity-seeking groups were included, they were used against each other in the hierarchy of power in the social system to maintain the system that empowers the elite; Himani Bannerji calls it colour hierarchy (Bannerji, 2000, p. 29) accompanied by patriarchy. The ideological emphasis on national interest has provided a nationalist common sense on two fronts, for the ongoing primitive accumulation through the extraction of Indigenous land and resources, and, for justifying the unjust violation of the sovereignty of the Wet'suwet'en traditional governance. As we will see later, national interest was enforced at gunpoint in the Wet'suwet'en, where the Crown had no legal jurisdiction over the unceded lands. If national interest has come in handy for the Canadian state to exploit unceded Indigenous land, the concept, framed as

public interest, has become synonymous with the interest of big corporations, particularly when it comes to climate change.

There is a history of the Supreme Courts' engagements with the concept of public good concerning Indigenous rights and titles. From a legal perspective, the Supreme Court of Canada has had different and sometimes contradictory rulings in relation to the concept of public interest in different cases. There is no clear definition for public interest, except that it is tied to critical infrastructure and resources, especially whenever the projects face resistance from Indigenous communities, allies and environmentalists. Indigenous rights are not part of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Consequently, the concept of public interest has become a popular political discourse to undermine Indigenous rights as the government cannot use the Notwithstanding Clause or Section 1 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to infringe on Section 35 Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. Many Indigenous law and rights experts emphasize that what is of national/public interest is vague and up for debate (Gilchrist, 2018).

Three examples of Supreme Court judges with different views on the public interest and the right of the government to infringe on Indigenous rights include, first, the Sparrow case in which a group of Supreme Court judges did not recognize public interest as a sufficient ground to infringe on Indigenous Title. Second, Justice Lamer's ruling, in which he saw public interest, even in the economic sense, as a sufficient ground to infringe on Indigenous rights. Many legal scholars have criticized his decisions and arguments as political and not judicial, and he eventually had to resign from the Supreme Court (McNeil, 2003, p. 1). Third is Justice McLachlin's view that does not approve of public interest as grounds to infringe on Indigenous rights**;** she argues it can only happen through treaties (McNeil, 2003, p. 1). I will look at these

cases especially from a national interest perspective as they keep being used by the government whenever they want to launch violent militarized attacks on unceded territories.

The1990 Supreme Court Sparrow case was about an Indigenous man who challenged his arrest for fishing without a permit and won his case at the Supreme Court by arguing that Canadian fishing laws were not applicable to him because of his Indigenous rights to harvest. That court established what is now referred to as the Sparrow Test (Centre for Constitutional Studies, 2021). The court ruled that Indigenous rights are not absolute, an identifying condition under which the Crown can infringe on Indigenous rights. Nevertheless, the court does not recognize public interest as sufficient reason, even in site-specific situations that would pass the Sparrow Test. The concept is so vague that the Supreme Court has legally questioned its mobilization by the government**,** stating, "[w]e find the 'public interest' justification to be so vague as to provide no meaningful guidance and so broad as to be unworkable as a test for the justification of a limitation on constitutional rights" (Canadian Legal Information Institute, 1990). The fact that the Canadian court opens the door to dispute Indigenous Title and law is colonial.

National interest is also central to Canada's critical infrastructure risk management approach. In the case of Wet'suwet'en, the government and mainstream media used a combination of the ideological discourse of nationalism, policies around critical infrastructure and the notion of public or national interest to justify the infringement of Indigenous rights. John Borrows (1999) criticizes the term infringement, arguing that "[c]alling colonization 'infringement' is an understatement of immense proportions. […] the effect of the court's treatment of 'infringement' is to make Aboriginal land rights subject to the 'colonizer's' objectives" (p. 568). In 2018, APTN News obtained a document (dated April 1, 2015) that showed how the Canadian government perceived Wet'suwet'en as a threat to its security, and "in

particular the Unist'ot'en House of the Gilseyhu Clan, which the government regards as a risk to Canada's 'national interest' and one of its leaders an 'aboriginal extremist'" (Brake, 2018).

The Canadian government's approach to critical infrastructure is based on all-hazards risk management. According to Public Safety Canada (2022, January 6), an all-hazards risk assessment (AHRA) "will help identify, analyze, and prioritize the full range of potential non-malicious and malicious threats. The process takes into account vulnerabilities associated with specific threats, identifies potential consequences should a threat be realized, and considers means to mitigate the risks." A tier system prioritizes different sectors to manage assessed risks. For example, energy is tier 1, and the plan is for different sectors of government and municipalities to work together with the shareholders, that is, the industry. An important aspect of this management is information sharing (Public Safety Canada, 2022). In the case of pipelines, when risk is environmental, that risk has been kept hidden from the public, the cost of dealing with environmental risks has been put on the public. As Gilbert and Zalik (2019) observe,

> whether in the rail or pipeline sector, inspectors are frequently drawn directly from the railway and oil and gas industry, leading to a revolving door of staff between regulatory bodies and those conducting the activities they are meant to oversee. In his conclusion, Power (1997: 123) writes "[a]uditing threatens to become a cosmetic practice which hides real risk and replaces it with the financial risk faced by auditors themselves. (pp. 662–3)

In 2021, Public Safety Canada (2021) outlined its renewed national approach to critical infrastructure resilience in a report entitled *National Cross Sector Forum 2021-2023 Action Plan for Critical Infrastructure*. The report mentions climate change only when it might cause disruption to "transportation systems, telecommunications networks and just-in-time supply chain," (Public Safety Canada, 2022, p.5). Rather than addressing the destruction of the

environment, the report is mainly concerned with the flow of capital and commodities to guarantee the smooth working of the capitalist system. Documents from the Harper government, obtained through Freedom of Information, insist on undermining Indigenous rights by pushing business-to-business models. They claim that the rights challenges might take years and even decades to settle in the court. Businesses need certainty and low risk, thus the goal is to get Indigenous partnership instead of taking a rights-based approach; unlocking resource development projects is in the national interest (Lukacs, 2015). Putting these approaches together means that opposing climate change or including its cost in the equation is not part of the nationalist ideology mobilized around public good or national interest.

The concept of national interest kept reoccurring in both Liberal and Conservative governments and have been used to undermine Indigenous rights. The Canadian government has mobilized the concept to force decisions to go ahead with a pipeline. Using settler colonial nationalist ideology for coercion is similar to foreign policy language when there is no law or jurisdiction to justify the actions. A clear example is Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline. As Hunsberger and Larsen (2021) have documented, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau used "national interest" to buy the Trans Mountain Pipeline and tweeted: "Access to world markets for Canadian resources is a core national interest. The Trans Mountain expansion will be built." In another tweet about the pipeline, Trudeau said: "Projects in the national interest get built for the benefit of all Canadians" (cited in Hunsberger & Larsen, 2021, p. 4). Canadian identity tied to extractivism produces the idea of national interest backed by a critical infrastructure risk management approach. An approach that leads to criminalization of environmentalists and Indigenous land defenders instead of tackling rout causes of climate change and colonialism. The combination of the ideological discourse of nationalism, policies around critical infrastructure

and notion of public or national interest were used to infringe Indigenous rights in Wet'suwet'en territories.

Injunctions, Security Subsidies and the Criminalization of Resistance

To represent extractivist projects of international corporations as national interest and to align the profits of the national political elite and those of the global neoliberal extractivist elite, the Canadian state uses two policies. The first policy is designating pipelines as national critical infrastructure; the second policy is using injunctions even if the Indigenous Title has a strong case to oppose it. These policies are then used to criminalize land defenders and activists who oppose these projects. Government and industry both know that these injunctions might lose their credibility. Indigenous court cases against the injunctions might take many years to settle. Injunctions are used to buy enough time to finish the projects.

The Canadian government and RCMP have no jurisdiction over unceded Wet'suwet'en land. As many legal scholars and hereditary chiefs have mentioned Wet'suwet'ens have never surrendered their jurisdiction over their territories to the Canadian government, their rights are recognized by UNDRIP and while Canada's legal system is common law they should align the Canadian law with International law (Grauer, 2019). Yet, on Dec 14, 2018, the Supreme Court of British Columbia issued an injunction to clear the path for the CGL pipeline (Coastal Gaslink Pipeline, 2018). On Jan 7, 2019, RCMP tactical unit Community Industry Response Group (C-IRG) attacked the Gidimt'en checkpoint, established on Wet'suwet'en land by a neighbouring nation of Unist'ot'en. The checkpoint had blocked the only road toward the Unist'ot'en Camp, Morice Forest service road. The RCMP wanted to clear the path for CGL workers to construct a "Man Camp" for housing the CGL employees in preparation for the pipeline construction. The

RCMP attack was brutal; police in full army gear attacked the Gidimt'en checkpoint, tearing apart wooden barricades and arresting 14 people, including one elder (Golkar, 2019). For days, the C-IRG officers did not even let media reporters go to the zone; the few journalists who were there were threatened with arrest or removed**,** thus contravening freedom of the press. The International Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, the Canadian Association of Journalists, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, and Amnesty International, all condemned these infringements of press freedom (McIntosh, E., 2020). The suppression of the news did not affect the movement, however.

In the aftermath of the 2019 RCMP raid, the resistance expanded; two more camps were established immediately on the road towards Unist'ot'en camp, including the reoccupation of the Gidimt'en cultural site on Feb 27, 2019 (Gidimt'en Checkpoint. n.d.). Simultaneously, many communities, activists and supporters organized solidarity actions in different places, including in Ontario. Theses solidarity actions targeted Canada's economic chokepoints such as railroads and ports. On December 31, 2019, BC Supreme Court granted CGL a permanent injunction on Wet'suwet'en's lands, preventing land defenders and their supporters from blocking Morice Forest Service Road (Amnesty International, 2023). Hereditary chiefs denounced the Supreme Court's decision, and community members delivered eviction notices to the CGL man camp site 9A. The result was that CGL workers and security staff left the territories. On January 8, 2020 a new camp was set up at 39 kilometres, five kilometres before the Gidimt'en checkpoint. RCMP also established an exclusion zone at 39 kilometres, and supporters set up another camp at 27 kilometres (Gidimt'en Checkpoint. n.d.). It is important to note that Unist'ot'en village is at 66 km.

The RCMP violently reacted to the spread of resistance; they started their multiday raids on February 6, first invading the 39 kilometres camp, on the 7th they raided the 44 kilometres camp, and also the 27 kilometres camp was surrounded (Gidimt'en Checkpoint. n.d.). On February 8, hereditary chiefs were denied access to their territories, multiple arrests happened, and on February 9, a large convoy of RCMP accompanied by industry workers went up towards the Unist'ot'en camp. On February 10, 2020, RCMP arrested seven land defenders during a ceremony for MMIW, including matriarchs Freda Huson, known as Chief Howihkat and director of the healing center, Brenda Michell (Chief Geltiy) and the clinical director of the healing center, Dr. Karla Tait. C-IRG had to cut through a board with the word Reconciliation written on it that was nailed to the middle of the gate to enter the Unist'ot'en territories. As hereditary chiefs said, **"**Reconciliation is dead. Around 80 individuals were arrested at Wet'suwet'en camps along the road and at solidarity actions taking place across the country" (Bracken, 2020, para.3).

As the resistance continued, so too did the police raids. On November 18, 2021, the RCMP launched a third militarized attack on Gidimt'en territory at 44 kilometres of the Morice Forest road to clear the Coyote camp (Gidimt'en Checkpoint, 2021) that was formed on September 25, 2021, at the drill site under Wedzin Kwa; the attack lasted two days. One of the arrestees was Chief Dsta'hyl, a Wing Chief of the Likhts'amisyu Clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, who upheld the Wet'suwet'en law of trespassing and evicted CGL subcontractors by dismantling their machinery through removing the batteries. He was arrested in October 2021 and convicted in court on February 20, 2024. "The BC Supreme Court has ruled that a traditional Wet'suwet'en trespass law cannot 'coexist' with the injunction order issued to Coastal GasLink in response to pipeline protests from the nation's hereditary leadership" (Hosgood, 2024). Four highly militarized attacks and constant RCMP presence demonstrate that settler colonialism is

not just about state sovereignty but also about the extractive projects of international corporations. The BC Human Rights Commission, the BC Civil Liberties Association and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, all condemned the ruling (McIntosh, 2020, para. 19). Despite these condemnations, court injunctions enabled the RCMP to criminalize land defenders on their territories, undermine Indigenous rights and titles, limit freedom of expression and censor media reports through arbitrary exclusion zones.

The COVID-19-pandemic lockdown and legitimate fear for public health and safety stopped activists and allies from taking more public actions. However, the resistance in *yintah* has continued while the RCMP and CGL security have moved on to constant surveillance and harassment tactics. The RCMP go to the camps and houses of land defenders and community members on the unceded territories any time of the day or night, sometimes blasting loud music and filming while falsely claiming it was Crown land (Brandi, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic became a curse for many but an opportunity for the CGL project. The government used the state of emergency to declare pipeline infrastructure construction as an essential service. "Moreover, the provincial government suspended making environmental governance reforms and limited public engagement around extractive development pathways. In effect, export infrastructure developments advanced uncontested" (McCreary & Turner, 2021, p. 239). Besides the preferable emergency policies prioritizing the construction of CGL and LNG Canada over the health of Indigenous communities, the government used millions of dollars of taxpayers' money for security. Many critics pointed at RCMP armed forces who were acting as security guards for the privately-owned pipelines. This argument was backed by evidence; access to data showed problematic communication between the CGL lawyer and the executive, giving the RCMP

directions on moving forward with the arrest and giving an interpretation of the injunction specifically about the arrests on the 2021 raid (Pasternak, 2024).

In 2017, Community Industry Response Group (C-IRG) was created as part of the RCMP tactical group in BC to specifically protect extractivist industries, such as the Trans Mountain pipeline against Indigenous resistance and environmentalists (Forester, 2023, para.1).[13] One reason for creating such a force was the Standing Rock resistance against the Dakota Access pipeline (Forester, 2023 August, para. 23–30). The C-IRG force soon expanded to support more extractive corporations at Fairy Creek and the CGL pipeline against Wet'suwet'en resistance and environmentalists. Their brutal tactics and violence against Indigenous communities and activists opposing extractivist corporations soon became the center of criticism. The public raised many concerns, especially that C-IRG officers usually operate without name tags and cover their faces (Hosgood, 2023, para.32). In *Behind the Thin Blue Line: Meet a Secretive Arm of the RCMP in B*C, journalist Brett Forester (2022) gives a detailed history of the C-IRG based on recording the violent arrests of activists in Fairy Creek**,** the detailed structure of command, the aims of the unit**,** and where its funding comes from. The research was based on over four thousand pages of Freedom of Information requests.

The C-IRG's command structure is not the central subject matter of this dissertation, but three points are important to mention. First, the task force is volunteer-based, which means officers from different units willingly join this task force and get paid overtime to take part in the suppression of Indigenous resistance to extractivism. It is also scalable, making it flexible for size and functionality changes. According to the RCMP website, they rebranded the unit as

[13] Another policing force screening the opposition to the pipeline is the Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET), as the CGL pipeline was designated a national critical infrastructure (Public Safety Canada, 2013).

Critical Response Unit CRU-BC on January 1, 2024 (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2024). Second, although C-IRG has been tailored for extractivist projects, the government fully covers the funding. “An APTN investigation into C-IRG found that industry is not required to pay for the unit’s services and that supplemental funding for policing operations are left to provincial and federal governments” (Fallet Hosgood, 2023, para. 24). Third, the C-IRG is involved in strategizing how to suppress the movement; for instance, it expected an injunction against Indigenous blockades, allowing criminalization of land defenders and environmentalists. APTN, Abolish-CIRG, and *Dogwood* articles, statements, and investigative journalism cited throughout this section about C-IRG reveal concerning points. The first concern arises from excessive surveillance and spying on many people in forms that do not conform to threat policies and violate the right to freedom of expression and privacy. Second, C-IRG communicates, strategizes and shares information with private security firms, pipeline security, and corporations. Third, these forces use violent tactics and disregard laws, clearly engaging in police misconduct.

James Attfield, the first highest rank commander (gold), decided that C-IRG shares intelligence with the industry when necessary and communicates directly with them. After Attfield retired, John Brewer became gold commander. “Brewer is a nearly 30-year veteran involved in domestic and international policing operations, including in Afghanistan, according to court files. He’s a former RCMP Emergency Response Team (ERT) member, the force’s militarized SWAT units” (Forester, 2022, para. 49). Many documents show that the top commanders of private security firms of the CGL pipeline are mostly former army personnel who were stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq. This unit is not only about tactical training, it is also about being comfortable being violence—one of the main requirements of being part of C-IRG. In his interview, Brewer mentioned more than once that because of their tactics and use of force,

this task force is not for everybody in the RCMP. *Dogwood* investigations connected the violent attacks on Wet'suwet'en to former CIA director David Petraeus. Petraeus is "a Partner at KKR and Chairman of the KKR Global Institute, which he established in May 2013" (Petraeus, n.d.). Petraeus is also the architect and author of the *US Counterinsurgency Manual* that was used in Iraq and Afghanistan. KKR is one of the main shareholders of the CGL pipeline. Petraeus's speciality for KKR is to identify problems facing their investments, reduce their risk with "boots on the ground" and work with "national leaders." According to Kai Nagata, communication director of *Dogwood*:

> Environmental activists in the States, who have been tracking environmental and human rights violations there, did sound the alarm when KKR took over Coastal Gaslink, but that warning came during the 2020 raids and the 'Shut Down Canada' protest, then COVID hit, and people didn't have time to do the research to understand the implications of this company taking over security for CGL. (2023)

APTN uncovered a series of allegations against C-IRG, ranging from intimidation, torture, brutality and harassment to racism, theft, destruction of property and onto arbitrary detention, inhumanity, lying and deceit (Forester, 2022, para 3). By January 2023, the RCMP federal watchdog received around 500 formal complaints. While some of these have been proven in courts, the force still denies them. Hereditary Chief Na'Moks calls the 2021 raids and the constant surveillance of the *yintah*, "a form of war, physical and psychological" (Coles, 2023, para. 10). In January 2024, three land defenders, who were arrested during a 2021 raid on Wet'suwet'en, asked the court for a judicial stay of the proceeding, justified by the fact that their Charter rights were violated during their arrest and investigation processes. During their court hearing, a tape was submitted as evidence that showed officers were laughing at their brutal

arrests and at people with disabilities; they also disrespected women who honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, comparing them to monsters. The evidence was undeniable; C-IRG superintendent Jim Elliot, the silver commander and the second highest rank in C-IRG, affirmed the defence lawyer's query about whether arrestee's charter right was violated. "That is unacceptable and I'll offer my personal apologies," Elliott said during his testimony Wednesday. "That should never have happened" (cited in Follett Hosgood, 2024**,** para. 6). The Civilian Review and Complaints Commission (CRCC) is reviewing the allegations and C-IRG misconduct, although they have prolonged the release of documents and information, with no deadline.

Between January 2019 and March 2020, C-IRG costed the public more than C$13 million in federal and provincial governments payments, a security subsidy to police the CGL pipeline (Cox, 2021). Amanda Follet Hosgood, *The Tyee* journalist, obtained Freedom of Information on RCMP spending on Wet'suwet'en; between January 1, 2019, and March 31, 2021 (2021), RCMP spent C$19 million. Overall, the injunctions justified the C$50-million cost of C-IRG for the CGL pipeline, Trans Mountain pipeline, and Fairy Creek logging of the old growth, almost ten times more than what they first budgeted (Forester, 2023a). The Fifth Estate documentary *Who's Police?* investigates evidence of why many critics say C-IRG acts as "a de facto private security force for resource companies" (D'Souza, & Mathieu-Leger, 2023). Evidence obtained through Freedom of Information shows that company executives were directly in contact with the RCMP, pushing them to move and clear the blockades. Brewer claimed they were impartial, which contradicted his answer on whether it is justifiable to spend C$50 million against Indigenous resistance and environmentalists; he replied we are talking about billion-dollar projects that needed to go ahead. The fact that multinational corporations' projects have become major actor

of a pipeline that framed as national security and interest has created a form of Canadian nationalism and militarism around extractivism, especially fossil fuels.

The Political Economy of CGL Pipeline and the False Promises of Canadian Interest

In this section, I argue that the class benefits of Canadian political elites within the government are tied to Canadian corporations and international financial institutions, private equity firms, investment firms, multinational corporations (MNCs) and Transnational corporations (TNCs) revolving around extractivism. I provide a political economic analysis of the CGL pipeline to demonstrate how the rhetoric of Canadian national interest has been employed to mitigate public resistance in favour of fossil fuel companies and to lower their risk, ultimately undermining Indigenous sovereignty, a continuation of Canadian settler colonialism. The continuation of Canadian settler colonialism is tied to the international corporate financial system, which uses similar methods with different intensities of violence in extractive initiatives all around the world. The Canadian state and political elite mobilize the nationalist argument of Canadian interest to obtain the consent of the general civil society, including Canadian workers. Settler colonialism creates a narrative that divides the general working class and Indigenous peoples; it does so by developing a limited economic path, in which the violent infrastructure of extractivism appears as the only possibility for boosting jobs and the economy while exploiting labour and the environment.

There is a significant void in academic literature when it comes to the critique of the political economy of the CGL pipeline. I have primarily relied on media analysis methods, examining publicly available information from sources such as the CGL website, the World Bank database, the Private Equity Stakeholder Project and news research, as well as from activist

articles on various websites. This approach has allowed me to construct a comprehensive history of the CGL pipeline and its funders. For categorization, I have used the categories provided by the Corporate Mapping Project to classify the Canadian fossil fuel industry into emitters, enablers, and legitimators.

> Emitters are corporations based in Western Canada that are directly involved in extracting, processing and transporting oil, gas and coal.
>
> Enablers are organizations that enable fossil fuel production, such as banks and industry-friendly regulators.
>
> Legitimators are organizations that persuade the public or political elites that 'business as usual' must continue or that a timely shift away from dependence on fossil fuels is unfeasible or unnecessary. Legitimators include industry associations, think tanks, lobby groups, business councils and pro-oil advocacy groups. (Corporate Mapping Project, n.d.)

Emitters of the CGL Pipeline

The Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline was proposed in 2012 and commissioned to Trans Canada, which changed its brand to TC Energy in May 2019. TC Energy is an Alberta-based Canadian multinational corporation that builds and operates pipelines in Canada, the United States and Mexico. According to the CGL website, the CGL project is building a 670 kilometres pipeline, approximately 190 km of which will be in Wet'suwet'en territories, to carry natural gas from northeastern British Columbia to the LNG Canada export facility in Kitimat, BC. LNG Canada is supposed to liquefy the gas and send it to the global market, mainly to the Asian market, by 2025.

The joint venture responsible for assigning TC Energy to construct this pipeline is LNG Canada, composed of various international corporations led by Shell plc, through its affiliate Shell Canada Energy (40%), Petronas's wholly-owned entity, North Montney LNG Limited Partnership (25%); PetroChina Company Limited, through its subsidiary PetroChina Canada Ltd. (15%); Mitsubishi Corporation's subsidiary, Diamond LNG Canada Partnership (15%); and Korea Gas Corporation's wholly-owned subsidiary, Kogas Canada LNG Ltd (5%). The operational entity for LNG Canada is LNG Canada Development Inc (LNG Canada, n.d.). These international corporations, primarily led by Shell, have pooled their resources to extract and produce liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Canada for export purposes. Key natural gas suppliers for LNG Canada include Shell Canada and Progress Energy Canada Ltd., a subsidiary of Petronas, along with other producers who supply natural gas through contractual agreements. These companies gain the right to engage in exploration, drilling and mineral resource extraction through lease acquisitions, along with securing regulatory approvals and environmental assessments, among other factors.

While specific details on the proportion of fracked gas within LNG Canada's gas supplies are not publicly disclosed, it is worth noting that a significant portion of the natural gas produced in northern BC is shale gas, extracted primarily through hydraulic fracturing (fracking), a method associated with significant environmental impacts. The CGL project connects northern BC's unconventional gas production in the Montney Formation (with an estimated 14,521 million barrels of natural gas) to LNG Canada export facility in Kitimat (Canada Energy Regulator, 2013), making it Canada's largest private sector investment (McCreary & Wouters, 2022, pp. 243). The LNG Canada export terminal alone is a C$17-billion investment, or "$40 billion when upstream assets and the associated Coastal GasLink pipeline are included" (Bennett, 2022,

para. 2). LNG Canada export terminal and the C$6.6-billion Coastal GasLink pipeline are the largest private sector investments in Canadian history.

Many oil and gas analysts question the profitability of the CGL project, in contrast to the assertions made by LNG Canada and the government. The reason why the companies behind LNG Canada would push for such a pricy project with an unsure future is deeply related to contradictions within financial capitalism that lead to destructive monopoly capital. Controlling more assets comes with more power and, therefore, is profitable in ways that are not directly related to the price of that specific commodity. According to Clark Williams-Derry, an energy finance analyst, many of these companies stay competent in the global market by either replacing the reserves that they are extracting from or buying more reserves and then turning those reserves into assets even if they are significantly less profitable than similar projects.

> The whole purpose of LNG Canada was to monetize the reserves that these companies had on their books, but they couldn't get to market... It was an exercise in reserves engineering or financial engineering at their reserves […] The reserves were what gave the company long-term value, […] So you create the LNG Canada project to say, 'Okay, this is how we're going to get the stuff to market and monetize it, this is how we're going to turn it from something that it's in the ground to something that has extractable economic value and that we treat as a legitimate reserve (Simmons, 2022, para. 42–46).

These assets will then contribute to Canada's assets at the point of export, adding to Canada's GDP even though the sale's profit would go to international corporations.

Enablers of the CGL Pipeline

TC Energy faced many obstacles for the CGL pipeline project, including finding adequate financing. There are multiple reasons for the lack of funding, including Indigenous resistance to the pipeline throughout Wet'suwet'en territories. Wet'suwet'en resistance makes the project riskier not just because of the blockades and direct actions, but also because of the court's future decisions on Indigenous rights and titles that might affect the project. The general move towards divestment from fossil fuel and net zero, which means fewer customers and lower prices in the global market, is another reason for the lack of funding. According to Clark Williams-Derry, LNG plants and pipelines in BC are very expensive, which put them at a disadvantage with other producers. The pipeline's cost has been raised to 70% above the original proposed cost**,** due to rising construction costs and policy changes that has been brought about through First Nations' court challenges (Williams-Derry, 2023). Some of these obstacles were solved by selling major shares of the pipeline.

In December 2019, two major investment companies, AIMCo and KKR, infamous for taking on risky projects, acquired a 65% equity share of the CGL pipeline project using Alberta pension money and the South Korean pension pool; the deal was closed in May 2020. South Korea's state-run National Pension Service (NPS) is "the third-largest pension in the world with over US$600 billion in assets. It provides for more than half of South Korea's labour force, about 22 million people." (Yunker, 2020, para. 25). Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co, KKR is an American private equity firm and is one of the largest investment firms in the world. AIMCo is an Alberta government-owned investment management corporation that manages investments for pensions, endowments and government funds in Alberta, including RCMP pensions. Equity shares are a form of private investment in projects whose stocks are not publicly available;

therefore, they are riskier and less transparent than public firms. They can hide aspects of the project such as the actual environmental cost, the identity of insurers, the amount of subsidies and the benefits that they receive from the government; they can also falsify project's profitability while not being accountable to Indigenous rights and titles that their projects most often infringe on.

The support of the project by these two major investment firms signalled to banks that the project was worthy of investment. Twenty-seven Canadian and international banks funded the C$6.6 billion project. Below is the full list of banks backing Coastal GasLink, organized by country (Sulakshana, 2021):

- Australia: National Australia Bank
- Canada: ATB Financial, Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia, Canadian Western Bank, CIBC, Export Development Canada, National Bank of Canada, Royal Bank of Canada, TD
- China: Bank of China, China Construction Bank, ICBC
- Germany: KfW IPEX-Bank, Landesbank Baden-Württemberg
- Japan: Mizuho, MUFG, SMFG, Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank
- Singapore: United Overseas Bank
- South Korea: Kookmin Bank
- Spain: CaixaBank
- United States: Bank of America, Citi, JPMorgan Chase, Raymond James, Trust Securities (formerly SunTrust Robinson Humphrey)

Almost all major Canadian banks, including RBC, TD, BMO, CIBC, and National Bank of Canada, are among the 27 banks that fund the CGL project. Export Development Canada is

another funder of this project. “The Canadian subsidies have been routed through Export Development Canada (EDC), the federal Crown corporation that has taken the lead in dispensing corporate relief during the COVID-19 pandemic” (The Energy Mix, 2020, para. 2). Export Development Canada (EDC) is government-owned and one of the largest corporations in the world. It provides credit to Canadian companies to promote trade between Canada and other countries. In 2022 alone, EDC supported C$133.4 billion in exports; C$19 billion was in the oil and gas sector (Soubry & Cameron, 2024, Para. 10; EDC, 2022). Over the years, EDC has provided billions of dollars to the fossil fuel industry for projects in Canada and internationally, including millions in funding to TC Energy and Mexico’s Federal Electricity Commission. EDC is notoriously non-transparent and has been criticized for weak oversight and for failing to adequately hold accountable the companies it funds for abuses and contamination (Above Ground, 2019). The lack of transparency in reports makes it hard to determine how much each financial institution has invested in the CGL pipeline. There are estimates of overall investment in the sector with little transparency about what the money was used for. From 2016 to 2021, RBC invested over C$263 billion in fossil fuel projects. In 2022, it became the world’s largest funder of fossil fuels, supporting the oil and gas industry, including the CGL pipeline, up to $42 billion US (STAND earth, 2022). In 2022, TD Bank invested more than $29 billion in fossil fuel projects, while JP Morgan Chase Bank, formerly the largest investor in fossil fuels, became second after RBC with C$39.2 billion in investments (CBC, 2023).

The information about the enablers is incomplete without looking at TC Energy insurers. Yet, TC Energy filed a request with the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) to keep their insurers list private, which hides the group of enablers who have taken off the risk of the project (Canada Energy Regulator, 2021). The decision was based on the argument that the nature of the insurer

contract is financial. In 2021, TC Energy included the privacy of the names of the insurers in the contract. However, the decision was not based on TC Energy's other points. First, TC Energy faced the same challenges as the Trans Mountain pipeline because environmental activists targeted the insurer, and the pool of insurers became smaller. The price thus went higher than the market. Second, TC Energy claimed, publishing the names of insurers would create substantial safety concerns for them. Although the insurers' names are not disclosed to the public, Liberty Mutual, AEGIS, and Energy Insurance Mutual are major fossil fuel insurers ensuring TC Energy's other major pipelines (Sulakshana, 2021). Liberty Mutual, a Boston-based company, is one of the firms that provided insurance for building the CGL pipeline. Keeping the insurers secret, is another way to take away corporate accountability for climate change and colonialism.

On Oct 19, 2021, the Gidimt'en Checkpoint from the Wet'suwet'en members issued a letter to over 35 CGL investors and banks in Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States. The letter demands investors and banks cease and withdraw all support from Coastal GasLink and LNG Canada and highlights how financing the project violates Indigenous rights and breaks any investor commitments to racial justice, Reconciliation, and social responsibility.

Legitimators of the CGL Pipeline

Legitimators are the Canadian government, the C-IRG force, the mainstream media, and organizations that pretend to be grassroots but have deep-pocket relationships with the industry, such as Canada Action, which produces and reproduces nationalist rhetoric about Canadian oil as ethical.

Subsidies for the CGL Pipeline

As extractivism plays a central role within the Canadian economy, the Canadian government is the leading actor as an emitter, enabler and legitimator for different extractivist projects. At times, it is in the role of emitter for the cases in which they bought a pipeline, such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline (Canada Energy Regulator, 2023). In most cases, the government is an enabler and legitimator. An enabler's role stems from the billions of dollars in subsidies that the government provides to oil and gas companies from taxpayers' money. Different institutions use different definitions for subsidies and as the result the amount of money being reported by each sector can vary dramatically. These differences would affect future policies around the government's commitment to divesting from funding fossil fuel projects and cutting subsidies. According to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, tax subsidies for fossil fuels include,

> Tax expenditures (A type of tax measure, such as a preferential tax rate, exemption, deduction, deferral, or credit, with which the government aims to achieve public policy objectives through the tax system.), grants and contributions, government loans or loan guarantees at favourable rates, resources sold by the government at below-market rates, research and development funding, and government intervention in markets to lower prices. (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2019, emphasis in original)

All existing reports and research on subsidies and pipeline funding indicate that exact amounts of these subsidies are impossible to find as they do not make it to the budget that the governments announce. According to the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) report, the amount is at least $4.8 billion each year.

> Federal subsidies include research and development support programs and tax breaks like flow-through shares, which incentivize oil, gas, and mining exploration. Examples of provincial subsidies include crown royalty reductions in Alberta valued at an average of CAD 1.16 billion and deep drilling and infrastructure credits in British Columbia valued at CAD 350 million in 2019. (Corkal & Gass, 2020, para 4-5)

Some measures have been announced as part of COVID-19 support packages, for example, the federal government's unconditional transfer of C$320 million to Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil sector and Alberta's C$750 million from the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) fund for the oil and gas sector to reduce emissions.

Two international institutions, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Energy Agency, gave similar estimates; "At the Bank of Canada average exchange rate for 2019, the subsidy total in the OECD-IEA study equates to C$4.9 billion" (The Energy Mix, 2020, para. 3). In the same year, Canada was among the top 10 CO2 emissions-generating countries with 573 MtCO2 emissions, which amounts for 1.6% of global emissions (Fleming, 2019). Environmental Defence Canada gives a much higher estimate of subsidies. Every year, they publish a list of subsidies in the form of direct subsidies, tax breaks, government financial supports and funds that they could track (many of these subsidies are not transparent) including Export Development Canada's substantial support to fossil fuel companies. From 2019 to 2020, these amounts were between C$18 billion to C$20 billion each year (Environmental Defence, 2023).

EDC gives a narrower definition and claims loans, equity and insurance are not subsidies (Thurton, 2021). The World Trade Organization (WTO) defines subsidies as any financial contribution by a government or government agency that confers a benefit to the recipient,

including tax breaks and direct spending. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) gives a broader definition of subsidies that includes externalities and, therefore, a much higher amount of expenditure in subsidies. Their goal is to raise fossil fuel prices way higher than current prices to download the environmental and health costs of the fossil fuels onto costumers (IMF, n.d.). A significant issue arising from different definitions is that it creates enough muddy waters to eliminate transparency in data provided by government and corporations, accompanied by a lack of any functional principle to track these funds and where the money goes or how the corporations use it. Lack of transparency in data creates several problems. It creates severe barriers to accessing correct data on tax breaks and support these companies receive through government public funding. For example, federal tax breaks are not reported, direct investment data are not centralized, and this lack of transparency covers the hypocrisy of the government that, on the one hand, promises to reduce emissions and, on the other hand, uses the state of emergency for the pandemic to raise the amount of assistance that the oil and gas sector receives.

The following data gives a general view of the dollar number for the CGL pipeline. The *Globe and Mail* database included nearly 20,000 EDC and Canada account transactions between 2001 and 2020, reaching 1 billion for TC energy alone (McClearn, 2022). In a 2020 piece in *Toronto Star*, Balingall (2020) wrote that CGL was approved for up to a C$500 million loan from the federal government through EDC. I searched for this announcement on the Federal government and EDC websites, but nothing came up. The public does not know where their tax money is being spent and how much each corporation benefits from it. Also, many fossil fuel companies are active in the green energy sector, and their green subsidies have helped the fossil fuel industry to take on riskier projects in fossil fuels. The government does not keep corporations up to environmental standards for emissions and pollution. The special treatment

pipeline companies get from the government helps them operate smoothly compared to other sectors. This blurred economy does not provide the true cost of projects such as the CGL pipeline. State-financed security is the main element to lower project risk arising from opposition and assertions of territorial sovereignty by Indigenous communities. It is an essential form of subsidy that is not usually discussed as an oil and gas subsidy. Indeed, the government channels millions of dollars into policing Indigenous and environmental resistance and actively participates in the criminalization of land defenders.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I mainly focused on the economic and ideological relationship between the settler colonial state of Canada and Indigenous communities, with a focus on the CGL pipeline forcing its way through Wet'suwet'en unceded land. Centering extractivism in a colonial capitalist state has both economic and ideological aspects that create social relations to support destructive extractivism. The socializing political economy of oil and gas stands on the notion of nationalism that comes with sanctioned and unsanctioned violence of the state in the name of security, law and citizens/workers to uphold White hetero male dominance against the radical Indigenous resurgence movement and environmentalists.

Federal and provincial Canadian governments have yet to respect Indigenous titles generally, and particularly Wet'suwet'en's sovereignty over their territories. To cover up the illegality involved in exploiting Indigenous unceded territories, the Canadian state, with the help of mainstream media, has justified the need for pipelines in the name of national interest and job creation for Canadians. On the ground, organizing grassroots resistance to pipelines and in solidarity with hereditary chiefs have become the forefront of many Indigenous communities

and allies, including anti-colonial environmental activists. The state's claim to so-called Canadian interest in the case of pipelines is of utmost importance for this dissertation. The concept of Canadian interest works as a settler colonial and national ideology of governing; historically and presently, the concept creates an umbrella that includes the Canadian working class as it excludes Indigenous communities, along with the processes of reproducing nature and non-capitalist forms of economy that many radical environmentalists try to create through commons.

Extractivism is a political and economic approach to the resources that can be extracted from the land and turned into profit. Ongoing processes of primitive accumulation of land continue through direct and hidden accumulation processes that systematically expand settler colonialism through sovereignty and critical infrastructure when they cannot privatize the land, undermining Indigenous Title and criminalizing land defenders through injunctions backed by nationalist ideology of Canadian interest. Such mobilization of Canadian identity around oil and gas deepens the gap between workers, land defenders and anti-capitalist environmentalists. Hidden accumulation processes also simultaneously devalue subsistence work and gendered and racialized bodies whose work is crucial for the reproduction of the environment in opposition to destructive capitalist extraction. In the next chapter, I look at the role of direct-action resistance as a necessary form for providing conditions for reproduction and subsistence not just for communities but also the environment.

Chapter Three:

Social Movement Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en: The Shut Down Canada Movement

> We are stewards of the land. We don't own … [it]; we're entrusted to care for it, so the land will take care of us. But if we destroy the land, we destroy ourselves.
>
> —Chief Howilhkat, Freda Huson

Introduction

Social movements are shaped by their aims, contexts, actions, social relations networks and histories, as well as by strategies and tactics, which are dynamic and changing over time. As a scholar-activist who has participated in different movements, I avoid analyzing movements solely through structural lenses, as even the most limited and precise campaigns go beyond their defined structures in action because our struggles are interconnected. In this chapter, I delve into the significance of the Shut Down Canada movement. The period from 2020 to 2022 was a dynamic time marked by diverse and extensive solidarity actions by different Indigenous peoples and allies supporting Wet'suwet'en's resistance against the CGL pipeline and for self-determination. I use a historical materialist approach to relations of race, class, and gender (Bannerji, 2020, pp. 5–22) to locate the Shut Down Canada movement in its historical and socio-political contexts through a decolonial lens of grounded normativity (Coulthard, 2014, p. 13). It is wrong and not acceptable to Indigenous communities to reduce such movements (including the Unist'ot'en camp) to environmental resistance. Indigenous peoples' reoccupation of land is a centuries-long resistance against settler colonialism, and this resistance overlaps with the battle against capitalist extractivism and shares a path with ecological justice struggles in the capitalist

settler colonial system. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) explains this point from the Anishinaabe perspective, which is helpful for understanding the decolonial dimension of Indigenous reoccupation of land and its complicated relation to the environmentalist perspective.

> "Capital" in our reality isn't capital. We have no such thing as capital. We have relatives. We have clans. We have treaty partners. We do not have resources or capital. Resources and capital, in fact, are fundamental mistakes within Nishnaabeg thought, as Glenna Beaucage points out, and ones that come with serious consequences—not in a colonial superstitious way but in the way we have already seen: the collapse of local ecosystems, the loss of prairies and wild rice, the loss of salmon, eels, caribou, the loss of our weather. (Simpson, 2017, p. 77)

These lines, accompanied by the Wet'suwet'en's reoccupation of their territories, provide a valuable lesson on a perspective of land and environment that is grounded in responsible relations to humans and nonhumans, water and land; a perspective that goes beyond ownership or our capitalist-colonial social relations and modes of production.

The Shut Down Canada movement was the result of decades of Indigenous organizing around self-determination and demanding the Canadian state to respect Indigenous sovereignty over Indigenous land. As Dr. Karla Tait emphasizes in her interview with Farnsworth, the Unist'ot'en camp and the resulting movement were the result of Freda Huson's sacrifices and resilience in returning to the land to stop the Enbridge pipeline. This return later resulted in building a vision of the reoccupation of their territories with the aim to "Heal the people, [and] heal the land" (Farnsworth, 2019, minutes 53–56). Reoccupation of Wet'suwet'en territories was a tireless attempt that generated massive support and built up an important movement for Indigenous peoples with a broader effect on the environment and non-Indigenous people. Active in this period also were environmental groups that focused on the critical issue of decolonial

politics in the environmental movement, and all those who understood that environmental justice is not separated from the struggle over land and non-capitalist forms of relationship to it. My goal is to show the complex path of decolonial praxis within the environmental movement. To show the sociopolitical and economic complexity of this trajectory, I use the term 'gas industrial complex' (GIC), which I explain in detail in this chapter. To provide empirical data on the events, I use mostly grassroots and ground media accounts of the events to provide a decolonial, Indigenous-led, movement-centred and anti-capitalist narrative. The decolonial approach stands in opposition to mainstream media's approach that strengthen settler colonial structures in a way that legitimizes the RCMP and police violence. While some scholars, such as Hume & Walby (2023), have extensively researched the mainstream coverage of the Shut Down Canada movement, this chapter fills in the gap in academic literature on the accounts of the events from a movement perspective.

The Broader Context of #ShutDownCanada

On January 4, 2020, hereditary chiefs evicted the CGL pipeline from Wet'suwet'en territories. Freda Huson (Chief Howilhkat) gave the official notice to a CGL man camp security; the notice read, "we hold a feast hall saying that we did not approve of this project" (Gidimt'en checkpoint, n.d.).[14] Soon after the eviction, trees fell, and multiple checkpoints, barricades and camps went up, starting from the 39km point of Morice Forest Road that marks the entrance to Cas Yikh Yintah to the 44km mark that is the Gidimt'en camp. This eviction led to a month-long

[14] In Chapter Two, I explained the importance of the feast halls in Wet'suwet'en traditional governance, where decisions are being made and are part of oral history. The link to the video of Freda's speech while giving the eviction notice to CGL https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnpztCgP_oU

blockage of Morice Forest Road to Unist'ot'en (Between Storms [zine], 2022). At the same time, the Unist'ot'en camp website published a callout for general public to support the camp by organizing actions everywhere.

> Unceded and sovereign Wet'suwet'en land is under attack. On December 31, 2019, BC Supreme Court Justice Marguerite Church granted an injunction against members of the Wet'suwet'en nation who have been stewarding and protecting our traditional territories from the destruction of multiple pipelines, including Coastal GasLink's (CGL) liquified natural gas (LNG) pipeline. Hereditary Chiefs of all five Wet'suwet'en clans have rejected Church's decision (Unist'ot'en camp, 2019), which criminalizes Anuk'nu'at'en (Wet'suwet'en law), and have issued and enforced an eviction of CGL's workers from the territory. (Unist'ot'en camp, 2020a)

The last CGL contractor was escorted out by Wet'suwet'en Chiefs on Saturday, January 4, 2020.

> We watched communities across Canada and worldwide rise up with us in January 2019 when the RCMP violently raided our territories and criminalized us for upholding our responsibilities towards our land. Our strength to act today comes from the knowledge that our allies across Canada and around the world will again rise up with us, as they did for Oka, Gustafsen Lake, and Elsipogtog, shutting down rail lines, ports, and industrial infrastructure and pressuring elected government officials to abide by UNDRIP. The state needs to stop violently supporting those members of the 1% who are stealing our resources and condemning our children to a world rendered uninhabitable by climate change.
>
> Light your sacred fires and come to our aid as the RCMP prepares again to enact colonial violence against Wet'suwet'en people.

> We ask that all actions taken in solidarity are conducted peacefully and according to the laws of the Indigenous nation(s) of that land. (Unist'ot'en Camp, 2020c)

This callout highlights fundamental interconnected oppressive systems that make the backbone of settler colonial violence against Indigenous peoples and are part of systemic causes of our current climate catastrophe. First, the callout points out that the decision of the settler colonial court not only criminalizes land defenders and environmentalists but also undermines Wet'suwet'en traditional law. Despite all the hype around reconciliation, the Canadian state used an injunction to extend its authority and sovereignty over unceded territories. The use of injunction has become a speedy pattern to implement many extractivist projects that face resistance and legal challenges based on Indigenous title and sovereignty. As I explained in Chapter Two, injunctions have become a staple ingredient of settler colonialism and what Coulthard (2014) calls structures of force and fraud (pp. 6–7). This is not a new development, however. The practice of closing land to non-capitalist utilization has had different names and titles throughout the history of capitalism in Europe, colonies and the Americas. From enclosures and erasure of common land to primitive accumulation (Marx, 1990, p. 873) and *terra nullius* (*Terra nullius*, n.d.), all were enforced through state or state-sanctioned violence to strip people from their common land and territories either to create waged labour or to steal land for extractivism. Critiques have called these practices privatization of land, accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2017), or different forms of colonialism and imperialism.

The environmental effects of the pipeline and fracked gas (see Hwang et al., 2023) are not hidden from most people, no matter how much liquified natural gas is branded as a clean Canadian "alternative" (LNG Canada, n.d.-b). Both have also negatively affected communities and nearby towns, while industry lies about job creation and economic benefits for local

communities (Caretta et al., 2024). The less studied environmental effects of compression sites are noise and vibration pollution and how they affect the animals in the area. The Environmental Impact Assessment of the CGL pipeline (2014) determined that it would eliminate approximately 30% of the habitats of two already endangered caribou species. Such results were not enough to stop the project, as the assessment also concluded that there is no feasible alternative path that would not cross their habitats.

> An estimated 129 out of 459 Hart Ranges caribou herds will be affected by the project, and 32% of their functional habitat will be disturbed. Telkwa caribou are highly endangered, with only about 20 animals remaining; the pipeline project will jeopardize almost half of it. Based on the 2014 federal recovery strategy, almost all of the habitat for both of these herds is considered critical habitat. The predicted cumulative impacts of this project on these caribou populations is so negative that federal management and conservation plans for recovering these populations may not be possible. (Shake up the Estab, 2020, February 11, para. 4)

The above quote summarizes the Coastal Gaslink project environmental assessment report (2014) on caribou in the wildlife section; the report includes other impacted animals, such as grizzlies and more (pp. 124–152). From the beginning of the project in 2019 up to 2020, CGL had over 50 instances of out-of-compliance with the conditions of its Environmental Assessment Certificate, which was extended without due process (Linnitt, 2020, February 20, para. 29). This is while sustainable development has been central to the Liberal Party's strategies and presented as a solution for combating climate change. The notion of sustainable development in Canadian policies such as the federal Sustainable Development Act (2008) is defined as a "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Adkin (2010, p. 3) argues that the notion of sustainable development has

become an effort to make environmental goals acceptable to businesses and big corporations and to set acceptable forms and limits of sustainability. Sustainable development as such works within the logic of capitalist extraction and economic growth. The above quote from the CGL environmental assessment report provides only a few examples of how this project dismisses both Wet'suwet'en traditional law and the importance of significantly limiting habitats of already endangered animals. Pipelines and extractivist infrastructure disturb and sometimes destroy sections of Indigenous traditional land use (Armstrong et al., 2023, p. 362).

The second point in the callout is that the Canadian state's support of the 1% enables them to steal resources and make the planet inhabitable for future generations. In Chapter Two, I showed how critical infrastructure in Canada is inseparable from the global fossil fuel industry, which, besides providing profit to elite international corporations, keeps polluting the planet and contributing to climate change that affects us all. Such alliance constantly provides corporate-based fake solutions to climate change that, time and time again, have been proven inadequate, if not harmful. For example, in our case, fracked shale gas is branded as a better environmental solution (Minkow, 2017, April 6). It took the changes to Canada's Competition Act, which now includes fines of up to $10million for corporations that fail to provide evidence for their environmental claims, such as net zero goals through untested technologies of carbon capture and storage, to stop corporations from such misleading messaging (Noakes, 2024). These types of false messaging have, to some extent, shaped public opinion. This is mainly because the public do not have access to the exclusive elite spaces in which decisions about investment in pipelines are made, from exploration and fracking gas stages to pipeline routes, LNG export facilities, LNG trade shipping routes, global markets, and onto the complex finance behind them.

In contrast to the exclusive elite decision-making spaces on pipelines, Shut Down Canada created a dynamic, democratic, radical, creative movement that opened up space for bottom-up politics to force the gas-industrial-complex elite not just to hear the voice of the mass public opposition but reveal the industry's false promises and push them away. WeSmellGas research and an activist group from the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) started using the term gas industrial complex (GIC) modelled after the prison industrial complex (PIC):

> The expression 'industrial complex' elucidates the multiple corporate and governmental interwoven interests and, necessarily, the economic, political, and ideologies on which the industry relies. Indeed, both the GIC and the PIC "simultaneously produce vast profits and social destruction." The historic institutional safeguarding of the energy sector as well as the mass proliferation of fossil gas infrastructure are not passive profit-seeking ventures with inadvertent harmful consequences. It must be stressed that the GIC is an analytical lens that connects energy companies' continued financial success to their reliance on racialized exploitation and environmental violence, where this violence is both the means and the end. In other words, fossil gas corporations' exponential profits originate directly from environmental degradation and racialized exploitation; the GIC cannot subsist without these practices. (Lindo, 2023, para. 3)

I found the GIC framework useful in analyzing the CGL pipeline industrial complex as a mega economic and political project with its significant track of environmental racism and violence against the Indigenous peoples who opposed the pipeline.

The third point in the callout emphasizes the RCMP violence as a continuation of settler colonial violence against Indigenous peoples. This provokes a few questions and thoughts about how to stop such violence that many believe has ended in the era of reconciliation, celebrations

of Indigenous cultures and other performative events. The criminalization of Indigenous peoples and their resistance is part of this ongoing settler colonial violence (see Chapter Two). The RCMP's ongoing violence against land defenders and settler colonial violence of critical infrastructure make them active participants in the Gas Industrial Complex; this project could not happen without perpetuating violence and racism.

While shedding light on various forms of systemic state oppression, the callout also emphasizes resistance. The callout came from Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs whose strong leadership has provided direction for the movement that centres on the laws of Indigenous communities in which protests were taking place. Hereditary chiefs' rejection of the court decision was about acting on their responsibilities and Indigenous laws, as well as giving Wet'suwet'en sovereignty over unceded land. This form of empowering leadership on the ground is one of the key aspects of Wet'suwet'en resistance and a key aspect of decolonial praxis. Giving control of the land back to Indigenous communities means practicing grounded normativity and participating in what Unist'ot'en calls true reconciliation. As Dr. Karla Tait (Farnsworth, 2019) explains in a podcast, true reconciliation is the opposite of the government's false promises of reconciliation and forms of anticapitalism and environmentalism that do not center decolonial processes as an essential part of their praxis:

> It has been amazing to see all of the folks that have come out to [Unist'ot'en camp] and that is one of the things that I find heartening about all of this; [that] is, we have seen a lot of true reconciliation in action, through individuals that have come and supported the camp, helped build it, funded it, have raised awareness about it. Truly respect and make space for our rights to use that land in ways that are going to be healing for us and regenerative and often making

personal sacrifices for that shared vision and right or to support our vision (Farnsworth, 2019, Minutes. 42–43).

The call for resistance went hand in hand with an emphasis on people's power and the importance of grassroots solidarity actions; that is, the power of bottom-up politics and praxis. For Indigenous land defenders the current Wet'suwet'en struggle is rooted in the historical context of resistance, from demonstrations and direct actions by allies who have risen before not just for Wet'suwet'en resistance but also for other Indigenous nations. For example, in the 1990 Oka uprising, the Kanesatake Mohawk community defended their burial site against golf course development (Meng, 2020). Another important resistance movement is the Gustafson Lake standoff between Sun dancers and RCMP in 1995, when the community's land was sold to a rancher without their consent (Shrubsole & Lackenbauer, 2014). Elsipogtog Mi'kmaq blockade in 2013 against fracking (Roache, 2014) are also mentioned. All these struggles concerned the land and faced similar violent responses from the governments of the time and RCMP. Andrew Crosby and Jeffery Monaghan (2018), in their book *Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State*, explore the history and tactics of policing Indigenous activism and resistance, particularly in public spaces, around critical infrastructure, and in opposition to extractivism.

Many other blockades and community resistance around the land and against pipelines and clearcutting old-growth woods have happened in the past few years, such as Standing Rock in 2016–17 (Whyte,2017), Fairy Creek in 2020-21 (Morphy, M. & Research for the Front Lines, 2024) and Trans Mountain pipeline expansion that started in 2012. In 2018, the Tiny House Warriors started a more long term systemic resistance against the latter (Hermes, 2021). Most of these attempts have been organized around the concept of "land back" (David Suzuki

Foundation, 2021, April 5), used in both its political and literal senses. Despite decades of resistance, little has changed in the government's response to the Indigenous communities, especially when it comes to extractivist corporations' activities on Indigenous land and contested areas. As recorded in all the above cases, resistance to colonial capitalist use of land has always faced RCMP violence. Through its reports, RCMP has attempted to control the narrative of confrontation by characterizing protesters, whether Indigenous warriors (Brake, 2018, December 3) or environmentalists (Leahy, 2013, February 13), as extremists to justify police violence. The Shut Down Canada movement has built on past experiences and scaled up solidarity, media connections, and public support to break the isolating narrative fomented by armed forces.

Shut Down Canada!

Many allies responded to the call for action. Multiple actions in support of Wet'suwet'en took place almost daily in different cities while the blockade on Morice Forest Road was going on. There were growing support and demonstrations; direct actions were getting bigger and bigger, even with very short notice. On February 6, 2020, the C-IRG, which is the RCMP's task force, started a five-day-long attack, arresting people and clearing checkpoints and camps on 39km and 44km points of the Forest Road, while clearing numerous barriers, trees and snowbanks on their way to Unist'ot'en camp. On February 10, 2020, the RCMP reached the Unist'ot'en camp. Given that the RCMP exclusion zone in the area did not allow journalists to be present and cover their actions, many people, including the Unist'ot'en camp supporters, followed the updates from the Unist'ot'en website and social media. Allies, supporters, journalists and environmentalists broke the media ban (to some extent) by amplifying the hour-by-hour updates on the Unist'ot'en camp website on social media. All Eyes on Unist'ot'en was

the hashtag to follow the events on the social media and also the header of the Unist'ot'en website's updating page (Unist'ot'en camp, February 10, 2020). Following the updates, participating in and organizing actions became full-time work for hundreds of people. The dialogue below happened at the time that the RCMP finally reached the bridge and right away showed the clash of sovereignty that I explained in Chapter Two.

> 8:40 am – RCMP on the megaphone at #Unistoten bridge: 'This is the RCMP. This airspace is now restricted. Do not operate any drones in this area. This restriction is approved by transport Canada.' Freda Huson: 'This is not Canada! You are invaders! LEAVE!' (Unist'ot'en camp, Feb 10, 2020)

The photos and videos of the raids came out on social media of Unist'ot'en Gidimt'en and grassroots groups and allies. In order to trespass into Unist'ot'en territories, RCMP forces had to cut through a board with the word "Reconciliation" written on it; the board was nailed to the entrance gate to the Unist'ot'en territories. Witnessing the invasion, hereditary chief Freda Huson declared, "Reconciliation is Dead." Subsequently, the Unist'ot'en camp website posted a statement entitled, "Reconciliation Is Dead. Revolution is Alive" (Unist'ot'en Camp, n.d.c.). The RCMP C-IRG tactical task force had to walk through lines of red dresses hanging all over the bridge, bunk house and camp; symbols that honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and remind the armed forces that they are complicit in such crimes. Freda, Chief Howilhkat shouted in their faces, "you are trespassing into Unist'ot'en territories; you are not welcome here," and continued drumming and singing prayers. Seven land defenders who were performing a ceremony for missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) were arrested, including

matriarchs Freda Huson, her sister Brenda Michell (Chief Geltiy) and Freda's niece Dr Karla Tait who is the clinical director of the healing center.[15] The Unist'ot'en website posted:

> They were arrested in the middle of a ceremony to honour the ancestors. Police tore down the red dresses that were hung to hold the spirits of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people. They extinguished our sacred fire.
>
> We have had enough. Enough dialogue, discussion, negotiation at the barrel of a gun. Canada comes to colonize. Reconciliation is dead.
>
> It is time to fight for our land, our lives, our children, our future.
>
> Revolution lives. […]
>
> We call for solidarity actions from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities who uphold Indigenous sovereignty and recognize the urgency of stopping resource extraction projects that threaten the lives of future generations. (Unist'ot'en camp website, Feb 2020)

The above mentioned lines were a call to Shut Down Canada from Unist'ot'en chiefs and Gidimt'en land defenders.

It was neither an accident nor mere strategy that Unist'ot'en matriarchs chose to conduct a ceremony for missing and murdered Indigenous women during the RCMP raid of the camp. Indigenous sovereignty and environmental justice are also gender issues. This arises from a history of colonialism and a patriarchal order that has devalued women and disrupted knowledge of land and culture being transferred to subsequent generations. The space of this dissertation does not allow me to go in depth into the gendered regimes that were enforced through the Indian Act agents, churches, residential schools and arbitrary laws (such as loss of status if an

[15] The video of the arrest is accessible through this link. https://unistoten.camp/reconciliationisdead/

Indigenous woman marries a non-native and more).[16] One of the worst human rights records of Canada is the ongoing issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women that is rooted in colonialism as a structure. The exemplify how atrocities of the past against women and two-spirit Indigenous peoples have created the path for current atrocities (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019, pp. 17–20). The Highway of Tears[17] (Sabo, 2016) goes right through Wet'suwet'en territories. To reach Unist'ot'en, I drove through a section of that highway from the city of Prince George to the town of Houston in BC. Despite the community's complaints and providing compiled evidence that oil and gas man camps worsen the violence against Indigenous women, the government failed to act and stop the CGL project (Linnitt,2020, February 20, para 3–5).

When on February 10, 2020, the RCMP C-IRG task force launched their militarized attack on Unist'ot'en territory, the camp had already put up many red dresses on their path. Dr. Karla Tait explains that by putting red dresses with initials of missing and murdered Indigenous women on them, they provided space for the spirits of these women to stand with them on the territories. Tait explains,

> We have a line of red dresses across the bridge because we think it's a very powerful statement and it's an invitation to the spirits of those women to come and stand and face the RCMP who are failing to seek justice on their behalf, who failed to protect their safety by being complicit in this epidemic that our communities are facing. (quoted in Linnitt, 2020, February 20, para 37)

[16] To read more on this topic look at Gehl, L. (2014), chapter two pp:39–66 The Indian Act, Sex Discrimination, and Citizenship. Also, look at Stote, K. (2015). Chapter two, Indian Policy and Aboriginal Women, pp28–45, and Simpson, L. B. (2017). Indigenous Queer Normativity. In *As We Have Always Done* (pp. 119–145). University of Minnesota Press.

[17] Highway of Tears is a 724km of Yellowhead Highway 16 in Northern BC, where many women have gone missing or found dead, most of them are part of the large crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

The C-IRG officers expressed shameful comments and showed no sensitivity to MMIW during the December 2021 raid of the Coyote camp, where Sleydo[18] also known as Molly Wickham, Wing Chief of Cas Yikh and other Indigenous women painted their faces specifically to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women (Nagata, 2024, January 18, para 14–20).

In contrast, the Unist'ot'en camp has been a safer ground for many women and queer visitors and allies, who have kept going back over the past decade. The fight against extractivist companies and the settler-colonial state for Indigenous sovereignty is a multidimension struggle that provides a resistance ground for many queer folks that do not feel included in many other movement spaces. Unist'ot'ens carefully laid out the violent social relations of colonial and capitalist extractivism on their land. They made sure the story of the events on the ground was documented and shown to the public. Their resistance was revealing of the interconnected and inseparable layers of oppression within colonial capitalism. Another strong scene that Unist'ot'ens created was when the C-IRG officers had no choice but to cut through the empty word "Reconciliation," written on a piece of wood nailed to the entrance gate to the Unist'ot'en territories, to implement their violent attack. All these events were depicted in the powerful documentaries, Invasion (Toledano et al., 2019) and Yintah released in 2024 (Michell et al., 2024).

The declaration that reconciliation is dead shed lights on a political context in which lobbying, negotiations and court paths to recognize Indigenous sovereignty have come to a dead end. A few of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report are about adopting the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous rights (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The UN declaration includes, very clearly, the principle of free,

[18] This video includes Sleydo's views on why Wet'suwet'en resistance is important to their way of life. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwh8LxfXZWE

prior and informed consent alongside respecting and abiding by Indigenous traditional laws (United Nations, 2008). The Canadian government has not implemented most of these recommendations, including FPIC. According to the CPT Turtle Island Solidarity Network report, by 2020, only ten out of 94 recommendations were implemented (Turtle Island Solidarity Network, 2021, July 18, para 3). In 2023, the Canadian government created a page that reports on their progress on the recommendation, which includes an adaptation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act as law, but they do not include free prior and informed consent protocol (Government of Canada, 2023, July 10).

Multi-Dimensional Resistance

Unlike other similar movements in the past, the RCMP's militarized attacks on the Wet'suwet'en territories did not bring an end to the resistance. Rather the attacks ignited a series of actions across Canada and beyond that involved Indigenous communities and allies in mass numbers. From railroad, port, and road blockades to occupation of politicians' offices and targeting of banks, land defenders, environmentalists, and allies staged multiple, daily and long-term direct actions in many places. This was the beginning of the Shut Down Canada movement. Shut Down Canada refers to a specific and relatively short period of Wet'suwet'en resistance in 2020- 2021, marked by a wide range of direct actions all over Canada and beyond. The movement also staged one of the most disruptive series of rail blockades in Canadian history at the time of its occurrence that effectively stopped cross Canada rail transportation (BBC, 2020,

paras 1-2).[19] The call for action anywhere and everywhere that ignited the movement was a shift from previous strategies of the Wet'suwet'en resistance, wherein legal battles had led to the historic Delgamuukw decision (Supreme Court of Canada, 1997) as discussed in Chapter Two, and also focusing more on territory scale of movement by establishing a permanent space of resistance and reviving a cultural and healing center that led to the Unist'ot'en camp/village. The camp successfully stopped many pipeline projects and created a strong network of supporters, allies and land defenders from different nations and Indigenous communities to settler allies. The camp also created a space for learning new skills, from organizing workshops to carpentry and sustainable and responsible forms of harvesting and gardening. While getting direction from hereditary chiefs, the camp was also able to establish an Indigenous narrative of the events. This constantly produced news, articles, music videos and short and long documentaries to tell the story of resisting extractivism and confronting mainstream media and official statements about the situation. These efforts reached many people over a decade since 2009.

Angered by the RCMP's violent attacks on Indigenous territories, many people participated in direct actions across the country that brought the Canadian economy to a standstill; this was a radical negation of business as usual that was only interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in late March 2020 and served as a scaled-up resistance from the Idle No More movement,[20] Shut Down Canada underscored the importance of a decolonial movement that demanded Indigenous sovereignty and Land Back as critical for environmental justice and anti-capitalism. Its tactic of shutting down critical infrastructures was the largest in scale in the

[19] The main difference between the Wet'suwet'en rail blockade and other Indigenous-led rail blockades is that it consisted of a series of blockades at multiple locations for varying durations. During the "Shut Down Canada" movement, the longest of these blockades was the Tyendinaga Mohawks blocking the rail for two weeks.
[20] Idle No More movement was a big Indigenous movement in Canada that started in November 2012 specifically to protest the Canadian government's dismantling of environmental protection laws. The movement expanded all over Canada. For more information, see: *The Winter We Danced* (Arbeiter Ring, 2014) https://idlenomore.ca/ and https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/idle-no-more

recent history of Indigenous resistance in Canada. Shut down Canada targeted economic chokepoints for transportation of goods and, to some extent, financial institutions responsible for funding and ensuring fossil fuels such as banks. Another movement in North America called #FloodTheSystem that was mostly around occupying and disturbing financial institutions (Rising Tide North America, 2016).

Shut Down Canada participants were Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The actions by non-Indigenous allies were mostly organized by radical environmentalist groups, but participants in direct actions and demonstrations were from different social identities and classes. Indigenous-led direct actions also included diverse groups of people involved in Land Back movements and different forms of Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence movements.
Shut Down Canada disrupted the nationalist narrative of the Canadian state that represents the extractive industry as good for Canadians and the international claim that gas replacing coal in Asian markets will slow the climate change. The movement put the spotlight on the violence of extractivism and its environmental racism; it forced politicians, pro-extractivist academics, think tanks, and journalists take off the mask of liberal reconciliation, and pushed the colonial court to openly declare that Indigenous traditional laws and Canadian laws cannot coexist (Follet-Hosgood, 2024, para. 7–8). At the same time, political scientists and economists from conservative think tanks such as Fraser Institute called for more police violence against protesters to uphold the rule of law and order of the capitalist world (Flanagan, 2020, para. 10–12). This brute violence, along with the environmental crisis, brought many people to major demonstrations across the country. The movement blocked strategic economic checkpoints and provided a complete picture of the effects of colonialism as a form of gender and racial violence that harms the environment and ecology of beings through an extractivist economy. During the

two years of multiple attacks on the Wet'suwet'en and solidarity actions between January 2019 and December 2021, police arrested approximately 150 land defenders and allies in the Wet'suwet'en struggle different direct actions (North Shore, 2021).

Mainstream Media as Apologists of State violence

> It is not just the ideas that require to be confronted but the social forces behind them and, more directly, the ideology these forces have generated and which has become of what Gramsci calls "common sense." (Gramsci, 1992, 321–322)

Framing what is possible in the human imagination as a solution to climate change is a significant ideological purveyor of extractivism. There is an extensive apparatus and force behind making extractivism common sense. In Chapter Two, I explained how the all-hazards risk management approach to critical infrastructure, including pipelines, does not indicate the impact of such projects and infrastructures on climate change. Here, I provide a media analysis of the government's response to climate change and how it creates a limited, inadequate picture and possible avenues to combat it. My goal is to show how mainstream media coverage has directly or indirectly shaped the public's common sense around protests by choosing what stories to tell and how to tell them. The result is that mainstream media coverage has always supported the bases of capitalist settler colonial state infrastructure.

Moving from a past era of soft climate change denial by Canadian governments to current false solutions, including carbon capture and vast greenwashing of so-called solutions to climate change, it became clear that there is no top-down solution to climate change. This section shows that the Gas Industrial Complex has a strong hold on the Canadian government's economic plans and environmental solutions. Keeping information about climate change secret, exposing the public to different forms of climate-change denial and advertising untested scientific solutions as

a path to combat climate change has created a form of alienation from participating in actions. Instead, the public's attention has been focused on liberal individualistic solutions that are limited to personal lifestyle choices such as becoming vegetarian, eating local, organic, humane-raised meat, or choosing fashion that includes shopping for second-hand clothing and specific brands. These individualistic actions, however, do not lead to the kind of mass organizing that is needed to tackle the root causes of the issue, namely capitalism and extractivism. Gramsci's (1971, pp. 323–343) critique of common sense is not limited to forms of unconscious belief or intuition per se, rather he pointed to how common sense would lead to a lack of collective action in the face of crisis caused (in our case, fossil fuels or police violence, for example). False or untested promises of solutions, such as carbon capture, create inaction among many people. The common explanation that LNG is good for the environment because it is replacing coal in Asian markets is a justification of continuing fossil fuel extraction instead of phasing it out altogether. The Canadian government has a long legacy of controlling the narrative around climate change. Such a legacy was not created overnight when Prime Minister Trudeau signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2016; since then Trudeau's liberal government started mobilizing around the concept of sustainable resource development to rebrand extractivism as pro-climate-change regulations (Bowles & Veltmeyer, H., 2022). In reality, however, sustainable resource development is, for the most part, about replacing one form of fossil fuel with another one, rather than divesting from fossil fuels, or adopting so-called transitional energy forms that require the ongoing extraction of critical minerals. This reality prompts the bottom-up approach of social movements that includes direct action, civil disobedience and enforcing Indigenous laws over colonial law as key revolutionary forces moving forward.

The Shut Down Canada movement achieved the largest number of actions in different geographical spaces in the country's recent history, showcasing a wide variety of direct actions involving numerous participants, cities, and towns, as well as multiple actions occurring daily. In a panic, the mainstream media and the government tried to scare the public in order to lower the support for the blockades, instead of stopping the CGL pipeline. The mainstream media helped the government in controlling the narrative around extractivism and climate change, particularly through scare tactics. The examples bellow show different cases of the media framing actions against the CGL pipeline and in support of Wet'suwet'en as harmful.

News articles claimed that rail blockades could cost Canada $3.1 billion, while banks estimated the cost as equivalent to 0.3 percent of the GDP. Then Transport Minister Marc Garneau explained that calculating the cost of blockades can take up to six months because they need to include the data of corporations that chose other routes than rail for the transportation of their goods after the blockades (Panetta, 2020, para 6–8).The government never publicized the actual economic effect of the blockades because the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the 2020 crash in oil prices, created a global economic crisis (Canada Energy Regulator, 2020). The pandemic and 2020 oil crash made it impossible to blame the blockades for the economic crisis that has been brewing for a long time. In mentioning these facts, I am not intending to undermine the effectiveness of blocking economic choke points, which is an effective strategy because it puts significant pressure on the circulation of capital and commodities. These facts point to the sneaky attempt of the ministers and banks to blame protesters for the chronic economic crisis going on not just within the Canadian economy but the whole world (Gelinas, 2023; Chen et al., 2018, October 3).

News media were quick to blame the CN Rail layoffs on the solidarity blockades (Davis, 2020, February 18), despite the fact that CN Rail had announced and started the layoffs months before in 2019, a process that was extended during the pandemic (Reynolds, 2020). This is another example of how news media have been facilitating the strengthening of settler colonial structures, relations and violent responses to the protests, which means avoiding the main issues at hand: Indigenous self-determination and divestment from fossil fuels. Other reports emphasized the blockades' effects on public health, arguing that they hurt grain movement (Herring, 2020, February 13) or availability of chloride for clean water (Global News, 2020). Many Indigenous reserves have been under water advisory notices for most of a calendar year, and yet such conditions have never hit the threshold of crisis for the government or the mainstream media. Meanwhile, the possibility of such an event for two months in settler majority cities was and is considered a health crisis. This double standard is more evidence of environmental racism. Instead of focusing on issue of fossil fuel expansion and climate change crisis, media coverage was used for providing a stage for what came to be CSIS's attempt to put terrorism charges on blockaders. However, those charges were dismissed by the Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC) report that shows the accusation will not stick based on the Canadian criminal code (Forester, 2022b. para 4).

Despite all these mainstream media efforts, Indigenous resistance and solidarity with it expanded. Unist'ot'ens, who have built a small but effective ground-up media network, turned the state narrative of demonizing the blockades as violent extremism into rightful resistance for self-determination and against extractivist corporations. The empowering reality of expanding direct actions, the multiplying expansion of the resistance to other geographies and the growing number of people who joined the actions, undermined the discursive power of state-sponsored

pictures of the events. The combination of the strong Indigenous resistance against the colonization of land and for sovereignty, the increased environmental consciousness about the harms of fossil fuels and the effects of climate change in our daily lives played significant roles in the mass mobilization in support of Wet'suwet'en. Environmentalist ally groups' years of organizing in solidarity with Indigenous resistance also helped mobilize urban populations to raise their voices and organize direct action alongside urban Indigenous activists, particularly in Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal and Vancouver. Road blockades, port blockades, and, most importantly, railroad blockades of CN trains that carry pipelines to the Wet'suwet'en territories popped up all over Canada (Between Storms [zine], 2022, pp 20–21). In Tyendinaga Mohawk territory, Mohawk warriors organized a two-week blockade on the CN eastbound railroad (Francis, 2022). Many other cities and communities also staged short-term rail blockades and burned the injunctions handed to them by the police in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en. Hashtags such as Shut Down Canada, Land Back, and Reconciliation is Dead became trends on social media.

Direct Action

In Canada, direct action has been used by different groups over the years, from anti-globalization movements to migrant rights groups, anti-war coalitions and in the last few years, radical environmentalists and Indigenous land and water defenders have increasingly used direct action as part of their movement tactics. I see direct action as a radical praxis. Through direct action, activists take over spaces such as critical infrastructures, financial institutions, offices of politicians and corporations' CEOs. Participants reclaim those spaces as collective grassroots political spaces and spaces to influence decision making processes that they otherwise have no

access to. The Gas Industrial Complex has created exclusive and elite networks of policy and decision making that ordinary people have no access to. Reclaiming these spaces can be transformative for participants and disruptive for power. At times, such acts of reclaiming can alter social order and make heard voices of communities who have been marginalized from elite spaces of power and decision. For Coulthard (2014) direct action is necessary for radical Indigenous resurgence due to three reasons:

> first, [such] practices are directly undertaken by the subjects of colonial oppression themselves and seek to produce an immediate power effect; second, they are undertaken in a way that indicates a loosening of internalized colonialism, which is itself a precondition for any meaningful change; and third, they are prefigurative in the sense that they build the skills and social relationships (including those with the land) that are required within and among Indigenous communities to construct alternatives to the colonial relationship in the long run. (p. 166)

As part of solidarity movement, I have been involved in many actions in Toronto alongside many amazing activists and people, however I do not explain those actions in detail for security reasons. In what follows, I will explain one specific rail blockade in Toronto that stood out for me from other blockades because of its empowering effect, which resulted from unexpected events that happened during the action. I am referring to the two-day rail blockade at 4100 Dundas Street West, behind Lambton Arena, in Toronto that took place on February 25–26, 2020 (Westoll, 2020, February 15).

Figure 1: Images of the Go Train blockage in Toronto in February 25, 2020.

Credit: Rising Tide Toronto

This blockade primarily targeted Go trains and was a bit far from downtown and usual protest spots in Toronto. The rail blockade took place at the height of the Shut Down Canada movement, starting around 4:00 pm on a weekday. Within a few hours, hundreds of people joined the action. The first reaction of the police and rail security respondents was an attempt to scare the crowd by saying the reaction would be harsh this time. The order to end blockades had already come from high up; in his interviews and press conferences, Prime Minister Trudeau had repeatedly said blockades must come down (Turnbull, 2020, February 21). Two hours into the blockade, police officers started to shape lines on the railroad and then walked in two rows towards the crowd occupying the railroad; hundreds of people were also standing outside of the railroad as support. The police advanced in groups of two and, in a series of performative actions, arrested protesters one by one. As police officers were arresting activists, a large group of people arrived at the scene and walked on the rail towards us from the Lambton Arena. This was a very empowering moment; the police, who were present in numbers, totally lost control of the situation and left the railroad. As the night unfolded, the crowd grew bigger and bigger. Later

the police brought a big truck with very bright lights pointing at the crowd on the rail. Random people were bringing pizza, food, hot drinks and water. As the first image in Figure 1 shows, Rising Tide Toronto's Facebook posted a photo of a bonfire on the railroad, accompanied by text that read:

> The fire of resistance has ignited. We are absolutely wowed by the fierceness and dedication to justice of everyone who came out today, everyone who is still holding down the rail blockade, and everyone doing important off-site work.[21]

That rail blockade lasted until the early morning hours of the following day, way longer than organizers thought it would.

From 2020 to 2022, actions were organized across Canada. The map in Figure 2 shows hundreds of these actions in 2021–22, which is not comprehensive. Any long-term activist knows the toll that direct action has on the organizers. The actions themselves are relatively smaller amount of the work. The rest is the behind-the-scenes labour of usually a smaller group of organized activists who work tirelessly to make sure the actions go smoothly, from scouting to security measures, numerous meetings and division of labour to make sure the actions are well announced, follow security protocols, and provide a safe environment with back-up support in case of arrests.

The large-scale direct actions throughout the period of the Shut Down Canada movement were sustained by a vision that the Unist'ot'en camp and the Gidimt'en camp have created permanent spaces of resistance and reclamation of Wet'suwet'en territories. The Unist'ot'en camp, which was expanded into Unist'ot'en village, built many relationships sustained by

[21] From Rising Tide Toronto's Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/RisingTideToronto/photos/pb.100064520898989.-2207520000/2719769358130993/?type=3

community members and Indigenous and non-Indigenous-ally visitors to the land. Those connections created and evolved people's consciousness on the interconnection of radical Indigenous sovereignty and the fight against extractivism and climate change.

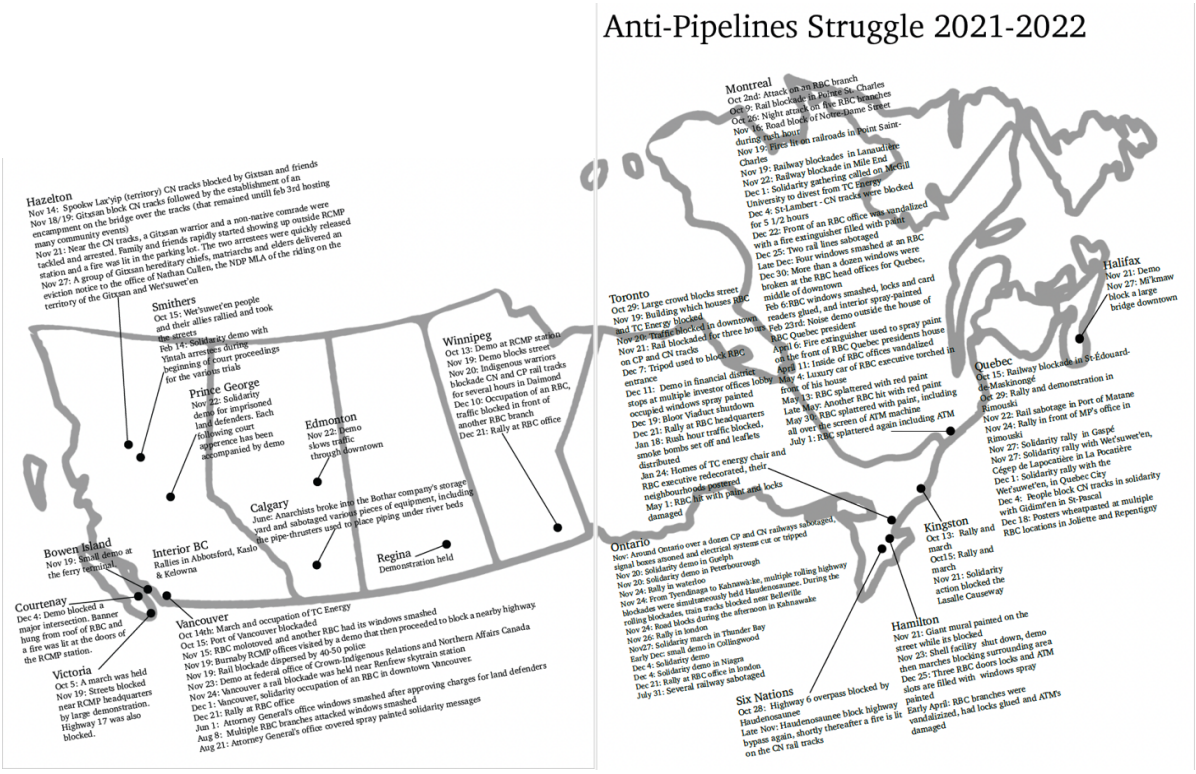

Figure 2: A map of direct actions organized in support of Wet'suwet'en resistance to the CGL pipeline and as part of the Shut Down Canada movement Source: Between Storms, 2022, pp. 20-21)

The map in Figure 2 shows many of the actions across Canada that happened in 2021–2022. The map does not show all the actions or hundreds of actions that occurred specifically in the winter of 2020; despite this, it provides a good visual of the scale of the movement.

Direct action is, as Steve D'Arcy (2013) calls it, a "disruption" (89) of the political system that reduces democracy to "a mere form consisting of political rituals that only serve to entrench the rule of capital and sprinkle holy water on existing social inequalities" (Bannerji,

2020, p. 6). Besides targeting economic chokepoints such as railroads, ports, and roads to disrupt the financial flow and breaking the alienation and harsh, violent reality of settler colonialism and climate change, these actions became spaces of practicing bottom-up democracy. As Coulthard mentions, these actions were also spaces in which many make new relationships, reclaim power, and ensure their voices are heard.

Unist'ot'en After the Raids

Unist'ot'en village was once a vision and an answer to the question that Unist'ot'ens discussed among themselves.

> What do we want this remaining less than 10% of our traditional territories being used for? The notion of healing center came up. That with the support that Freda garnered we can actually build the structures and the building that then support people to come back on the land and decolonize and revitalize culture and build up forms of resiliency to overcome the challenges that we see as the result of colonialism such as alcoholism and intergenerational trauma. (Farnsworth, 2019, January. 25, minutes 57–59)

After all these raids, Unist'ot'en's reoccupation of land still continues through persistence, mobilization and resilience against all odds (Heal the People, Heal the Land- Unist'ot'en Camp. [Zine], pp.21-22). They are walking Indigenous visitors who go there to seek help through their detoxicating journey while reconnecting them to the land and culture to keep them grounded in the journey of healing that is not separated from decolonization. What was once a vision is now a reality.

While doing the vital work of the healing center, they are also fighting against the RCMP, documenting the events and producing tons of literature, interviews, and documentary

movies such as *Yintah*, pursuing suing the RCMP in court for harassment and intimidation. Challenging CGL every step of the pipeline's construction, reporting leaks and spotlighting their constant failure to uphold their claim on environmental safety are all important aspects of resilience and the fight against settler colonialism and extractivism. The practice of berry picking and harvesting fish, moose, deer and bear and long hours of preparation and canning that provide food and sustainability for the healing center and Unist'ot'en camp is evidence that unlike all the odds, in the face of brute violence, constant harassment of state and industry, they do not back up. As Freda said, "This is not over" (Unist'ot'en Camp, 2019, January 10). Unist'ot'ens keep fighting and thinking about when this pipeline stops working and how to make the industry take it out of the land and clean the areas infected by their presence.

Important lessons for environmentalist, anarchist and socialist supporters are embedded in spoken words and writings of Indigenous writers and Wet'suwet'ens. The movement to reoccupy Wet'suwet'en and uphold traditional laws is not merely an environmental movement. It is Indigenous survival and reoccupation in the face of hundreds of years of colonial violence, racism and discrimination (Spice, 2019, para.23). The movement that centers community, respect for land, water and nonhuman beings and cultural practices that ensure reproduction of all the beings and sustain the land.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I delved into the significance of the Shut Down Canada movement. I explained the socio-political context of Shut Down Canada in three stages. The pre-raids context explains more than a decade of organizing and mobilizing that created a vast social network of Indigenous and environmentalist allies. I used the Gas Industrial Complex to specifically point at environmental racism and violence of settler colonialism, including gender-based violence, as an

inherent part of the international and state-supported network of power that makes GIC possible. During and after raids, Wet'suwet'en tapped into that broad network and asked for support, which created a pivotal period marked by diverse and extensive solidarity actions that brought the Canadian economy to a standstill. They specifically shed light on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and processes of reconciliation to send a strong political message that gendered-based violence is not separated from racism in industry and state. Finally, after the raid, I emphasize the Unist'ot'en's vision for the healing center and repopulating their land, which has decolonial lessons for environmentalists and anti-capitalist allies. I conclude this chapter by emphasizing the inextricable link between environmental justice, labour rights and economic justice, setting the stage for the next chapter.

Chapter Four:

Anticapitalist and Anticolonial Solidarity or Barbarism

> Those who are focusing on the authoritarian right and those who are fighting against democratic establishment (government) should easily recognize they are doing the same thing! why? Because the Democratic establishment which is an establishment to maintain a certain chunk of capitalism intact is going to constantly yield to the authoritarians in order to maintain the most important thing that they are the political wing of, and that is capitalism ... in the world today I'm not altogether sure there is hegemonic anything all there is, is domination! Descent from hegemony to domination means, one, everything is up for struggle, that's a good thing, but two, resolution tendencies is going to the direction, constantly of fascism.
>
> —Gilmore, *The Dig*, minutes 43–45

Introduction

I went back to Unist'ot'en camp in August 2024 to help with the daily tasks of the camp. The beautiful fireweed was in bloom and all around, and tasty huckleberries were in abundance. I have never seen either of those plants before and learned about some of the uses of them. At the time of writing, it has been months since TC Energy claimed the CGL project was done (Coastal Gaslink, 2023, November 28). However, there is still a lot of industry traffic on the Morice Forest road, and many workers are present on the land. Workers are there to build the second phase of the project, which includes six additional compressor stations. Two compressor stations are supposed to be built on Wet'suwet'en territories, one of them would be located where the

noise can transfer far through the valley (Stephenson, 2024, para 3). According to Wet'suwet'en law, compressor stations are illegal as the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs have not consented to the industry building them. Unist'ot'ens are worried that the constant noise and vibration of the compressor stations will have a substantial destructive effect on their territories and the wildlife, particularly on caribou due to the constant noise, vibration, and sensory pollution of the station.

TC Energy frames the pipeline as complete without its compressor stations. Now, signs all over the territories say No Caribou Hunting, explaining the Caribou repopulation project. The no hunting for repopulation of caribou is another false environmental solution because the Environmental Impact Assessment report has clearly mentioned that caribou are very sensitive to humans and human-made disturbances, in which pipeline and compressor stations will eliminate 30 percent of their habitats (Environmental Assessment Office, 2014, pp 127-129). The no hunting caribou signs are just a false performance of industry and government's so-called mitigation solutions. At the same time, they know caribou will not go there with this much traffic and noise. The real solution would have been respecting Wet'suwet'en traditional laws and recognize their jurisdiction over the remaining 10% of their traditional unceded territories.

Eliminating 30 percent of the habitat of an endangered species for one pipeline in one territory is a testimony to how fossil fuel infrastructures disregard life and consciously participate in an apocalyptic crisis of climate change. In this chapter, I return to address one of this thesis main research questions: considering the gap between the radical environmentalist, Indigenous and labour movements. The conflict over pipelines puts the conflict between these movements in its conjuncture. How do we create solidarity among these movements? I investigate why workers do not consider the destruction of caribou habitats relevant to their productive, reproductive and subsistence work conditions. I use Marx's theory of alienated

labour and critique of primitive accumulation to explain the human separation from nature and environment. I then demystify how the conditions that are being destructive to wildlife and Wet'suwet'en's traditional way of life are the same conditions and processes that create exploitative workspaces, drive up prices of food and shelter and perpetuate the privatization of public goods and services.

My argument is that an anti-capitalist alliance between Indigenous, environmental, and labour movements is possible by bringing land to the center of theorizing exploitation and oppression. In other words, in the struggle against the extractivist, settler-colonial, capitalist system, movements can build solidarity by undoing the bases of the capitalist system, which Marx (1990) explains in the critique of primitive accumulation as the processes of separation from means of production, means of subsistence and land.

I first explain that the accumulation of land as private property and resources is one of the three main pillars of creating a capitalist class system. Second, I focus on the processes of alienation from the land that includes (1) the separation of workers and communities from land that led to (2) alienation from land and nature, and resulted in (3) disrupting and, in most cases, forgetting land based subsistence practices of reproduction as (4) land and nature turned into commodities. Third, I discuss that the gap in the organic relationship of humans to nature that was created through processes of alienation was filled by nationalism to sustain a capitalist state structure instead of land and nature. Fourth, I argue that bringing land to the center of our movements is essential for a radical, anti-capitalist alliance of Indigenous, environmental and labour movements not just as a good strategy but as one of the main pillars of emancipation from the current oppressive structures and systems.

Alienation, the bases of exploitation, creates crisis

The alienation of workers and communities from nature is an ongoing process that occurs simultaneously with separation from the land. In a way, the practice of enclosing land to non-capitalist use has had different names and titles throughout the history of capitalism in Europe and the colonies, from enclosures and erasure of common land, to primitive accumulation (Marx, 1990, p.873) and Terra Nullius (Terra nullius, n.d.), each was enforced through state or state-sanctioned violence to strip people from common land and territories either to create waged labour, to landgrab, or for extractivism. Some critiques also called these practices the privatization of land, accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2017), or forms of colonialism and imperialism. In Chapter Two, I extensively explained settler colonialism and its relation to extractivism, specifically in Canada. Here, I want to connect it to the broader history of alienation from land that is intertwined with separation from the means of production and subsistence.

The exploitation of nature is inherent in capitalism. It is part of what Marx called the processes of primitive accumulation in which constant commodification of land and resources is the main driver and foundation of the system. From an economic perspective, as well as political and civic rights perspectives, private property became the center of society's organization. In the first stages of capitalism, only White male citizens with considerable property had the right to vote, which became the foundation of liberal democratic rights (Zinn, 1980; Mills, 1997). Western political thought excluded women, children, people of colour and most working class men in Britain who did not have the vote until after 1867 from participating in democracy while building the foundation of the so-called New World. Such history is enmeshed with the supremacy of White, wealthy males, and contains a violent history of slavery, genocidal

colonialism and domination over and exploitation of women, children and poor people. Only through race, gender, class and decolonial lenses of such history can we avoid simplifying our analysis, which would lead to erasing knowledge systems based on using land and nature in sustainable and equitable ways for each community and social group. This history shows that alienation from nature was vital for creating conditions of alienated labour, which Marx explains as the alienation of workers from their labour, labour processes, themselves, and the product of their labour in the economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844. Alienation from nature is the foundation of the other stages of alienated labour.

> The worker can create nothing without nature, the sensuous exterior world. It is the matter in which his labour realizes itself, in which it is active, out of which and through which it produces.
>
> But as nature affords the means of life for labour in the sense that labour cannot live without objects on which it exercises itself, so it affords a means of life in the narrower sense, namely the means for the physical subsistence of the worker himself.
>
> Thus, the more the worker appropriates the exterior world of sensuous nature by his labour, the more he doubly deprives himself of the means of subsistence, firstly, since the exterior sensuous world increasingly ceases to be an object belonging to his work, a means of subsistence for his labour; secondly, since it increasingly ceases to be a means of subsistence in the direct sense, a means for the physical subsistence of the worker. (Marx, 1994, p. 87)

It is interesting that in *Alienated Labour*, Marx specifically mentions that as long as the worker's interaction and relation with nature is for subsistence or themselves, that relationship is

not alienated as the person acts as part of nature (Marx, & Simon, 1994, pp. 58–68). Marx emphasizes that the worker is not separate from nature and that nature is the inorganic body of the worker. He does not expand on what this relationship contains besides sustaining the worker. His analysis has shortcomings, such as needing to understand the function and work of animals and plants besides their immediate life. I am referring to ecological systems in which each non-human being affects the rest of the ecosystem. However, his analogy of human nature as part of the same body refers to the understanding that they sustain each other as a whole system. Marx criticizes the capitalist system, which alienates humans from nature by making that relationship merely economical and for exchange value (Foster, 1997, p. 280). That process separates the worker from nature, and from that moment land and nature are commodified. The separation that leads to private property, the separation of workers from their product and the commodification of nature, turns nature against the worker and workers against nature.

Building on this conception of Marx, eco-feminists such as Carolyn Merchant (1980), explain how a scientific view of the world turned human relationship to nature into mechanistic one, leading to the ongoing exploitation of nature and land. At the same time, the systemic subjugation of women became the dominant social and economic pattern of society, as both women and nature were seen as passive beings. Social relations of domination and exploitation replaced the former sustainable relations. In Canada, many Indigenous communities were matriarchal systems and settler colonialism employed lots of violence to reinforce domination over women (Turpel, 1993, pp. 182–183).

Marxist feminists have shown that gender issues are an integral part of class struggle and class formation. Marxist feminists such as Maria Mies (2014) and Silvia Federici (2004) focused on women's knowledge of the land and how their power was erased within the process of

alienation from the land that destroyed traditional knowledge of using and living with the land. As Silvia Federici (2024) explains in her book *Caliban and the Witch*, European witch hunts explain the violent history of creating systemic patriarchy by taking away the power of women healers in their communities and accusing them of witchcraft. Although witch hunts was not common in all parts of Europe but punishing women who for leading anti-enclosure riots and destruction of women's practical knowledge of land and nature was part of destruction of commons. Such disempowerment led to the loss of many plant-based medicines and healing practices for women. Those practices then were replaced by modern medicine, and what considered to be scientific methods. For years women were banned from attending universities to study medicine nor science. Other socialist feminists such as Maria Mies (2014) expands on the theory of primitive accumulation to theorize the subjugation of women through the separation between productive and reproductive work and the division of labour on a global scale.

Through the lens of social reproduction theory (Bhattacharya. Ed.,2017), Marxist feminists have shed light on the devaluation of reproductive and subsistence work in the capitalist system as the second base of the capitalist system. They have brought attention to the plight of low-wage household workers, caregivers and unwaged workers excluded from the dominant narrative of working-class issues and struggles. Social reproduction theory has successfully brought the ongoing processes of separation from means of subsistence and reproduction into the spotlight of labour studies and working-class struggles.

However, the third base, which is land and nature, keeps coming up as women's work in the realm of social reproduction that relies more on interaction with nature and is land-based. Federici (2004) emphasizes that Marx treated primitive accumulation as a foundational process, "revealing the structural conditions for the existence of capitalist society" (p. 12). Although the

history of Marxist and socialist revolutionary thought has emphasized anti-capitalist worker movements with the aim of seizing the means of production, socialist feminists and Black feminists emphasize that means of subsistence, reproductive work and care work are as important as means of production; undermining such importance will only weaken working class movements. Black feminists specifically bring a gender and race analysis of class to the center by explaining underlying relations of the gendered and racial division of labour within capitalism. They explain that the racial division of labour, legacies of slavery and racism are also defining gender characteristics and the sorts of labour suitable for them in society (Davis, 1983; hooks, 1999; Collins, 1990, 2000; Lorde, 2007). Black feminists also explain how care work that falls under reproductive labour, low-paid labour and public social services are essential for their survival. Linking both notions of communal care and public services to subsistence work is essential to land use and how it is being managed, communally or as private property.

Some ecofeminists from the global south, or those who have conducted researched there, emphasize that the gendered aspect of knowledge of nature is linked to subsistence work (Shiva, 1988: Fortmann & Fairfax, 1990). In some communities, such knowledge of the uses of local trees and plants is much higher among women than men. The development projects that usually hire men to replace those local woods with monoculture plantations hurt women the most and contribute to poverty and the gender gap.

> In Sierra Leone a study by feminist foresters revealed that, on the average, local men could name only eight different uses of local species of trees, while local women could name thirty-two uses of the same species of trees. The epistemological claim is that women of Sierra Leone have "indigenous technical knowledge" (ITK) about forest uses and production *that is based on* their daily, lived, gendered experiences in connection with forest use and

management (Sally Fairfax and Fortmann 1990: 267). Their knowledge is borne from their situated, gendered, concrete, daily experiences as women. (Warren, 2014, para 45)

Recognizing and planning to open up space for these land-based practices (that are specific to each community) in any form of future planning is vital for both decolonial practices and breaking the processes of alienation. To create space and the possibility of learning and relearning land-based sustainable practices, it is crucial that communities take on collective ownership or stewardship of the land and engage in public organizing of resources. This argument brings us to ecosocialism. James O'Connor (1998, p. 331) defines ecosocialism as a theory that wants to organize society based on need, social equality, and environmental protection rather than profit, in which use value becomes more prominent than exchange value. According to Michael Lowy (2015), ecosocialism is a political movement with the core argument that having a sustainable economy that preserves the ecological equilibrium of the planet is in opposition to the destructive logic of the capitalist system. He defines ecosocialism as:

> Ecosocialism is an attempt to provide a radical civilizational alternative to what Marx called capitalism's "destructive progress." It advances an economic policy founded on the nonmonetary and extra economic criteria of social needs and ecological equilibrium. Grounded on the basic arguments of the ecological movement and of the Marxist critique of political economy, this dialectical synthesis—attempted by a broad spectrum of authors, from André Gorz (in his early writings) to Elmar Altvater, James O'Connor, Joel Kovel, and John Bellamy Foster—is at the same time a critique of "market ecology," which does not challenge the capitalist system, and of "productivist socialism," which ignores the issue of natural limits. (Lowy, 2015, pp. 19–20)

Ecosocialists emphasize that to solve the ecological crisis, we need to move toward democratizing the economy (Lowy, 2015, p. 20). They argue that mainstream political ecology and green politics do not challenge the capitalist destructive forces of productivism, which organizes markets based on profit and unlimited production. The current system is unable to provide adequate solutions. Throughout this thesis, I have mentioned many of those solutions and shown that they are more artificial, performative, or designed to sustain current fossil fuel extractivism and consumption structures. Ecosocialism provides solutions that include organizing a new society based on ecological values and rationality, democratic control, democratic planning, social equality and reorganizing the economy based on need rather than profit. This total restructuring of the economy confronts unlimited production and the productivism mindset. However, ecosocialists mainly build on Marx's notion of metabolic rift rather than alienation.

According to John Bellamy Foster (1997), the major environmental disaster of Marx's time was destroying soil through unsustainable agricultural practices during the second agricultural revolution from the 1830 to the 1880s, which led to the development of the fertilizer industry and soil chemistry. Harmful practices include monoculture farming to maximize production and simplify the process of farming as opposed to traditional farming, which includes planting different compatible crops together, rotating them and paying attention to the traditional knowledge of growing and farming. Profit-based practices lead to the exploitation of the earth to the point of failure to sustain its reproduction conditions. Foster (1997) expands on Marx's (1990) notion of the metabolic rift to refer to the climate crisis. Metabolic rift is a conceptual framework between human production and its natural conditions. Foster argues that through this concept, Marx developed a systemic approach to nature and environmental degradation by

raising the question of sustainability. According to Foster (1997), any future ecological vision must have three components. First, the theory of ecological crisis and its relation to human production. Second, the concept of sustainability is necessary for nature-imposed production, and third, the vision of the transcendence of ecological crisis establishes sustainability as a core part of any future society.

However, feminist, anti-racist and decolonial analyses of the democratization of the economy, collective ownership or stewardship of land and forms of degrowth ask the important question of whose voice, interest or opinion would become the dominant voice for change. For example, are there possibilities in Indigenous communities for the lost knowledge of women of colour? Would more-than-human beings and their habitats be prioritized in the ecosocialist vision of collective economies? Race-class-gender analysis has proven that if planning, research and analysis do not specifically engage with the complexities of the collective or the public, the danger is simplification at the cost of erasing practices and forms of mutual or communal care knowledge that exist in marginalized communities, which have been a necessary to their subsistence for survival. In such communities, closer and more sustainable relationships with the land exist, or there has been a conscious effort to revive these connections. As Laurie Adkin (1998, p. xii) states: “Struggles around conceptions of sustainable and desirable development are therefore struggles about who makes the decisions, which interests are defeated, marginalized, or never represented, and which interests predominate.” The struggle against the CGL pipeline contains the question of whose interest and priority. If alienated labour and nature are commodities that work against each other, it would be hard to mobilize workers. Building on feminist degrowth theory and ecosocialism, Akbulut (2024) calls for autonomy to accompany the democratization of the economy: “Democracy and autonomy within the economic realm are not

only principles worth pursuing in themselves, but they would also function as a force to curb and transform the socially and ecologically destructive dynamics of capitalist growth economies" (Akbulut, 2024, para. 18). Practices of autonomy become important for Indigenous sovereignty that is not based on ownership, but on stewardship of and kinship with the land.

In the next section I explain why radical environmentalism is needed rather than liberal environmentalism. I then explain the base of unity between labour, environment and Indigenous resistance movements.

Decolonizing Environmental Justice

To explore the strategic alliance of the environmental, Indigenous and labour movements, I have explained the underlying causes of injustice and exploitation of different social groups under capitalism. Oppression and its economic aspect (exploitation) become crucial to linking settler colonialism to the broader issues of the working class. In *Reconciliation Manifesto*, Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson (2017, p. 72) argue that Canadian settler colonialism has three pillars: dispossession, dependency and oppression. The dispossession of Indigenous communities could not happen without cultural genocide and cutting their ties to the land, which was the aim of residential schools, the reservation system, and the rigorous legal regimes and bans that were imposed upon the communities. In this section I show why distributive justice that is the center of mainstream environmentalism is not the right path forward.

Returning to land-based knowledge systems and forms of organizing communities is key for creating a mass solidarity movement across labour, environment and radical environmental groups. "Environmental justice (EJ) has several definitions but can generally be thought of as the

equitable distribution of environmental burdens and benefits across racial, ethnic, and economic groups" (McGregor, 2018, p. 4). Theorists such as Schlosberg (2004) have criticized distributive justice within environmental movements. They argue that liberal notions of justice fail to address the underlying socio-economic and political systems that contribute to climate change, environmental racism and interconnected systems of oppression. These critics suggest that focusing solely on distribution overlooks the root causes of these issues (Young, 1990; Fraser, 2001). With the new approach of the Canadian government and the oil and gas industry to partner with Indigenous communities in ownership of the projects, this view on environmental justice is there to sustain only the capitalist extractivist system with a touch of diversity. [22]Such a view on environmental justice and diversity harms communities, the environment and the labour. It reinforces the existing exploitative and oppressive relations while contributing to climate change and its resulting crises.

Deb McGregor explains that justice for Indigenous people is not possible without recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems for environmental governance and conservation. Reconciliation, as a form of justice, needs to include "a relationship with the Earth and all living beings" (Mc Gregor, 2018, p. 9). McGregor (2018) tracks the notion of mutual responsibility and obligation through different Indigenous writers such as Theresa Smith (1995) and John Borrows (2016), and the fact that those obligations are also towards more-than-human beings and land. Such values extend to Winona LaDuke's (1997) notion of Natural law, which defines proper

[22] For more information, see the Government of Ontario's plan: *True Partnerships: Building a Pathway for Future Generations*. While this is a new approach, similar strategies are being applied to projects elsewhere in Canada. For a recent example, see the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline: Simmons, M. (2024, August 24). *Indigenous leaders burn pipeline agreement, set up B.C. road blockade*. *The Narwhal*. https://thenarwhal.ca/gitanyow-hereditary-chiefs-burn-prgt-agreement/.

conduct as being understood by observing and understanding the natural world. There are numerous other references to such knowledge.

I want to bring it back to the notion of grounded normativity developed by Glen Coulthard (2014) and built upon by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) as a form of Indigenous anti-capitalism that is centred around a non-dominating relationship with the natural world. In practice, Hereditary Chiefs exercise traditional law and Indigenous title through a logic of stewardship over the land. This stewardship emphasizes responsibility toward the community's ability to return to Wet'suwet'en territories. It also included responsibility for maintaining sustainable habitats for salmon, caribou and other non-human beings. This sense of responsibility drove the resistance against the CGL pipeline. Indigenous sovereignty and legal systems become necessary to create the possibility of learning land-based knowledge and sustaining the continuation of such practices, which will then lead to reviving a culture, based on grounded normativity. Simpson (2017, p. 23) uses Nishnaabeg intelligence interchangeably with grounded normativity and argues that it is fluid, adaptable, non-linear and overlapping with networks of relationships that include global interdependence.

In the grounded normativity/ Indigenous Intelligence framework, Indigenous knowledge systems are mentioned; they refer to knowledge that is not alienated from nature, human and non-human beings. These knowledge systems have been interrupted but not eliminated.
The main purpose of residential schools were to disrupt the knowledge system and commit cultural genocide while the Indian Act was to force movements of communities into reserves to open the path for land grabs and extractivism. The dynamic process of resurgence and practice is not separated from reviving those knowledge systems. Being flexible is key to relearning from the land and pushing back against the alienation of the settler colonialist capitalist system.

When we say that we need to center the interests of the most marginalized people in our movement, it is important to avoid falling into the liberal notion of diversity and inclusion. This liberal approach often remains symbolic and focuses on colonial forms of recognition. Instead, we must create space for marginalized groups to actualize their visions within our movements. Otherwise, without praxis, such attempts lead to the homogenization of social categories and reinforce racialization, sexism, ablism and forms of exploitation and oppression that are attached to them and have opposite results to claims of social justice and combatting of stereotypes. An example is inclusion, which would reinforce the current structure rather than become a force of change.

To go beyond the fake stage of recognition, decolonial praxis then refers to making space for these systems of knowledge that are directly related to ways of life in a reciprocal relationship with the land. As Olufemi Taiwo (2020) emphasizes, no homogenous marginalized people exist. The argument of centring them can serve as the opposite of justice for them unless we create spaces, institutions and forms of relations that actively empower these groups to act for themselves, instead of just including them in current structures built upon their exclusion.

Decolonial praxis can unite our movements by centring land-based knowledge and practices beyond Indigenous communities. As Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022) says, “freedom is a place” (p.40). Gilmore explains that freedom is a place we need to create over and over again while referring to Marx’s (1994) quote, “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it” (p. 101). Gilmore's take on the quote is that how to interpret the world to change it is at the center of scholarly activism. Simpson (2017) also says “freedom is practice” (p. 18). Such freedom includes practices of learning from the land and unlearning capitalist and extractivist notions of nationalism that have infiltrated the working

class and have been working as a barrier to anti-capitalist forms of organizing, practices and solidarity.

What ecosocialism, Indigenous anti-capitalism and Indigenous knowledge systems teach us is that land and our relationship to it is as important, if not more important, than the other two backbones of capitalism. Separation from land and means of subsistence for many, including Indigenous communities, means cultural genocide, which is not just cultural but related to every aspect of their social, economic and political relations and experiences in a colonial context.

What Indigenous epistemologies, especially reciprocal relationships, harvesting protocols, and relations to more-than-human beings, teach us is in stark opposition to the view of the supremacy of humans over nature and non-human beings, which justifies domination. These non capitalist epistemologies provide a plan forward that to replace the current system. by reciprocal and land-based relationships that are against ownership of the land and based on stewardship of the land to maintain the sustainability of life, of people, rivers, land and more-than-human beings. In some ways, practicing decolonial ecologies becomes about opening space for these forms of anti-capitalism.

Alienated Labour and Fossil Fuel Extractivism

Most labour studies and labour organizations focus their attention and analysis on control over the means of production and working conditions. While these are extremely important, this approach provides a narrow understanding of class struggle. Especially in the settler colonial extractivist economy of Canada, in which there are existing practices of the mixed economy through the resilience of Indigenous communities who have maintained their harvesting rights and land-based practices. The staple-based economy of Canada brought systemic

commodification of land and nature as part of the economy and the whole project of state building. Land has thus always been a significant base of the capitalist, extractivist, settler colonial system in Canada. How can we bring land to the base of our labour movement resistance and analysis?

The Canadian economy relied more on fossil fuel extractivism in the mid-2000s, as deindustrialization and outsourcing manufacturing reduced the manufacturing sector's size (Almon & Tang, 2014, p. 6). While in most sectors, labour productivity was going down or not improving much, such as the service sector for example, lots of investment and resources were put into the extractivist economy of oil and gas and mining, refining and transport. Constant crisis in the global market drove prices of oil high enough to make tar sands and fracked gas profitable. However, in economic calculations oil and gas usually go together while oil has way higher prices than gas. "Mining in Canada saw the most notable increase in relative size, due primarily to the oil and gas extraction industries. Mining represented 5.6 percent of the nominal value added produced by the Canadian business sector in 1987. By 2008, it had more than doubled its share to 11.8 percent" (Almon &Tang, 2014, p.6).

Here, I aim to dispel the myth of job creation for Canadians and reveal the underlying effects of the nationalist narrative surrounding this sector. Labour productivity is a measure of the output, which is the value of goods and services produced during a specific period, divided by the number of hours worked to produce those goods and services. In Canada, GDP is used as the output measure, and it is broken down into three categories for input comparison.

The Canadian Productivity Accounts can be used to divide labour productivity growth into the part coming from increases in capital intensity, increases in skill levels of workers

(referred to here as a change in labour composition), as well as from all other sources—what is referred to as multifactor productivity (MFP) growth:

$\Delta GDP/Hours=(\Delta MFP)+Sk*\Delta(Capital/Hours)+Sl*\Delta LC$, (Baldwin, Gu, Macdonald, & Yan, 2014, p. 9)

In the above formula Δ represents the change over time, Sk refers to capital share in the production process and Sl refers to labour share in the production process.

Labour productivity and related measures										
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Oil and gas extraction [BS211]	310	335.2	406.6	394	395.3	383.7	425.4	401.7	386.6	356.4
Conventional oil and gas extraction [BS211113]	255.1	247	310	291.4	294.5	293.9	338.3	272.6	273.3	248.8

Table 1: Labour productivity and related measures by business sector industry and by non-commercial activity consistent with the industry accounts Source: Statistics Canada. 2024c.

When comparing oil and gas extraction with other industries, it is evident that this sector's labour productivity is very high, as most other economy sectors are below a hundred. However, oil and gas data are usually shown together, but if we separate natural gas from oil production, the profitability goes way down as gas prices keep collapsing (Trading Economics, n.d.).

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)3	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction [21]	231,854[A]	211,803[A]	189,823[A]	199,780[A]	203,599[A]	200,453[A]	186,400[B]	191,520[B]	206,607[B]	213,014[B]
Industrial aggregate including unclassified businesses [00-91N][5, 6]	15,625,234[A]	15,805,084[A]	15,989,076[A]	16,312,554[A]	16,668,033[A]	16,999,750[A]	15,597,060[B]	16,474,711[B]	17,518,723[B]	17,994,297[B]
Percentage of workers in mining, oil and gas in	1.48 %	1.34 %	1.19 %	1.22 %	1.22 %	1.18 %	1.20 %	1.16 %	1.18 %	1.18 %

comparison to all employment											

Table 2: Employment by industry. Source except percentage: Statistics Canada (2024b).

Comparing this chart with the percentage of the Canadian labour force in this sector shows that labour productivity is high mostly because of multifactor productivity (MFP), which includes land and other capital inputs, not just labour.[23] As evidenced in the chart in Table 2, while more or less 1.2% to 1.5% of Canada's working people are employed in this sector, the sector definitely gets disproportionate attention, media coverage and pro-oil and gas campaigns due to the importance of mining and oil and gas for Canada's GDP. Based on Statistics Canada's average salary based on the industry chart, it is safe to say the workers and contractors in this sector are relatively better paid and better compensated in comparison to the average worker in Canada, as they mostly are considered to be skilled workers who have to work with technology and heavy machinery (Statistics Canada, 2024a). However, there is not much data on migrant workers' payments in this sector to compare the salaries.

The above information shows that although this sector has significant labour productivity and a considerable effect on Canada's GDP, a tiny percentage of the Canadian labour force is employed by it. The disproportionate media and advertisement attention on jobs in this sector comes from the lobbying connection between the media and the oil and gas industry, intended to shape public opinion about this industry. In Chapter Two, I specifically elaborated on how the

[23] It is important to remember that, in Marx's terms, profits are being augmented here by land rents, which raises the measure of worker productivity. I thank David McNally for making this point about any earlier draft of this thesis.

government framed oil and gas pipelines as good for Canadians, setting a nationalist framework for an extractivist economy. Here, I expand on how similar lobbying relations exist to create dangerous nationalist rhetoric for the working class that fills the alienation from nature gap and pushes many workers to consent to pro-fossil fuel policies that are harmful to them.

These policies directly contribute to climate change. Climate change is creating a crisis for working-class people on many fronts. Climate change effects such as wildfires and storms directly impact workers, particularly farmers and fishers, by altering growing seasons and warming waters, affecting fish habitats due to temperature changes and affecting fishing due to changes in migration patterns (Barns, 2024, para 9–18). Climate change also drives food prices (Bank of Canada, 2024, para 7), disproportionately affecting the working class and the poor. The report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Strategy of Climate Change (2022) explains how food insecurity caused by climate change on a global scale disproportionately affects countries in the global south (FAO, 2022, pp. 5–8). Climate change also contributes to rising energy costs by making nuclear energy less efficient and more expensive (Portugal-Pereira et al., 2024). On a global scale, climate change is rendering vast areas of the Earth uninhabitable, either through rising temperatures or increasing water levels.

Elite political power, fossil fuel corporations and the media feed the narrative that expands alienation from land and the environment, and then fill in the gap with nationalism. Nationalism, in turn, reinforces the infrastructure of fossil fuel extraction. Fossil fuel extraction contributes to climate change, and climate change contributes to the rising price of food, and causes the rising cost of housing and social services that directly hurt the quality of life of working class people.

Tim Wood (2018) has explained the depth of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers role in creating pro-industry citizen advocates. In Chapter Three, I explained how most non-Canadian mega oil and gas companies are prominent members of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producer (CAPP). It is no secret that some of Canada's largest media networks, such as Postmedia Network, have connections to the oil and gas industry through investments or control by hedge funds with significant stakes in fossil fuels. Postmedia alone owns *National Post* and dozens of major city newspapers, including *Toronto Sun* and *Vancouver Sun*, as well as many local publications (Postmedia Network, n.d.). Postmedia's partnership with CAPP and its role in spreading biased information came under scrutiny in 2014 (Uechi & Millar, 2014).

The oil and gas sector has also become a hub for liberal, conservative alt-right and fascists, who also have excessive resources in misinformation and organizing sections of the working class who do not find other venues for explaining the economic crisis and more. The 2019 "United We Roll" truckers convoy displayed love for Canadian oil and hate for immigrants, a politics of ultra-nationalist hyper-extractivist tendencies (CBC NEWS, 2019, para. 1). Before the convoy began its move to Ottawa from Red Deer, Alberta, there was a surge in anti-Indigenous attacks in the town, then the convoy became a platform for alt-right, White nationalist, anti-immigrant and anti-Indigenous hate speeches, while Andrew Sheer the Conservative Party leader of the time gave a speech at their rally (LaDuke, & Cowen, 2020, pp. 246-248). One of their main demands was more oil and gas infrastructure and no carbon tax. This dangerous and harmful relation to land sees it as a resource to extract and destroy, creating a crisis. The crisis of climate change creates waves of migrations. The fascist mindset sees the solution in violent exclusionary policies and more militarization.

The basis of such a movement, although not significant in numbers but loud with resources such as media connections, political lobbies comes from glorifying the boom towns. Boom towns are small, primarily remote places that become resource towns for different extractivist projects nearby. These towns get a short economic boost for few years, while a project goes and turns their economy hyperactive for that period of time, with the uncertainty of the future and a very small middle class as control of those towns falls under the industry's managers (Stelter & Artibise, 2006). Boom towns provide an intense example of alienated labour from the land and nature that feeds into a mindset that includes going to boom towns for a specific amount of time, doing extractive work, making lots of money and leaving the local population to deal with the economic collapse of the town and pollution and destruction of the environment. "Hundreds of Canadian communities have disappeared in this way. Sometimes, industrial plants become obsolete. The future remains uncertain in all cases, and the boom-and-bust pattern plagues attempts for orderly, long-term development" (Stelter & Artibise, 2006, para. 15). Not everyone shares such nostalgia for boom towns as vibrant good times, as many of those towns do not have the proper infrastructure to support the population jump. An increase in the number of male workers in construction, oil and gas and security also comes with heightened rates of sexual and gender-based violence (Stern, 2021).

Canada's extractivist economy mainly affects areas far from metropolitan centres in where most urban working-class people live and labour movement hubs are found. The disconnection from the environment where the work is being conducted and where the workers live creates another layer of disconnection and alienation from nature. These sets of socio-economic relations of extractivism, accompanied in the context of settler colonialism, turn the oil and gas infrastructures into a modern forms of land grabs and theft of land from the communities

who live there. These projects create a shift in traditional land use that was sustainable and turn them into industrial wastelands.

In Chapter Two, I explained why extractivism in Canada is not just an economic approach but also an ideological one related to nationalism. In a way, nationalism fills in the gap of how Canadians are supposed to relate to land as a resource. A land that provides resources for the good of Canadians and creates imaginary boundaries that tie people together with so-called Canadian values that support this foundation. The national flag, national anthem and national army symbolize a national identity that is related to the land. Sovereignty and political control of the national state are protected by military and militarized borders that protect its citizens from others, such as foreigners and their interests. Extractivism is one of the pillars of the Canadian economy, and it is attached to nationalist views and values. To dismantle nationalism, labour struggle requires decolonizing workers' relationship to land and nature. This can happen only through system change that reinforces communal ownership or stewardship of the land, the means of subsistence, the means of production and the value of the land-based practices of different communities.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained that Marx's critique of primitive accumulation through which he mapped out three pillars of capitalism: separation from land, means of production, and means of subsistence. Marx, also in his manuscript, "Alienated Labour," explains how separation from land created alienation from the means of subsistence and led to the commodification of land and nature and labour power. Labour and land thus became opposites of each other. Through analysis of Canada's oil and gas sector, I explained how that alienated relationship of workers to land and

nature is filled by nationalist ideology. The political and global economic elite used nationalist ideology to mobilize the working class to support an extractivist economy. I then brought in the analysis of Marxist feminists, Black feminists, and global south feminists to explain how many communities practice land-based knowledge of reproduction and subsistence. I also explained how this land-based knowledge is the survival power of many marginalized communities. Ecosocialists' explanation that the government and capitalist system cannot provide a sustainable economic path brings up the necessity of democratic economic planning based on need and sustainable ecology. The decolonial notion of justice and degrowth feminists' calls on autonomy as part of democracy in order to open space and sustain possibilities for communities to practice their traditional land-based sustainable economies.

Settler colonialism and extractivism, as I explained in detail in Chapter Two, advances through the dispossession of Indigenous communities across three fronts: (1) privatization of land for cultivation, (2) the doctrine of discovery to create a White hetero-Christian society that replaces Indigenous societies, and (3) the prioritization of non-Indigenous readings and interpretations of the treaties that were made between Indigenous communities and the crown. Building upon extractivism based on settler colonialism, Canadian economy has created a layered form of alienation from nature and a hierarchy of social relations based on race, class and gender. Dismantling alienation through system change and creating a communal democratic and sustainable economy necessitates unlearning the oppressive, gendered, racist and colonial systems of social relations.

Conclusion

This dissertation results from more than a decade of organizing against fossil fuels while studying political theory and participating in labour organizing, which positions me as a scholar activist. In the preceding chapters, I delved into the research question: what are the possibilities for building strong Indigenous-environmentalist-labour solidarity?

To answer this research question on solidarity, I grounded my analysis in Unist'ot'en camp/village resistance to the CGL pipeline, as this important movement sits at the conjuncture of Indigenous resistance, environmentalism, and the labour movement in the context of settler colonial extractivism. I demonstrate how settler colonialism in Canada revolves around extractivism. This fact makes the struggle for the land critical and highlights how Canadian nationalism is an obstacle to Indigenous solidarity and environmentalism. My analysis shows that an anti-capitalist alliance of Indigenous, environmental, and labour movements is necessary. For labour, I specifically examine Marx's theory of alienated labour concerning land as one of the bases of ongoing primitive accumulation processes. Then, I emphasized the importance of analyzing and organizing land for working-class people in order to achieve solidarity and break the animosity of fossil fuel workers that appears in the form of nationalism versus Indigenous communities and environmentalists.

My methodology throughout this dissertation is rooted in a scholar-activist approach to research and active participation in movements to bring theory and action together. In contrast to classical objective researchers, such a position tries to shape the research to benefit communities in their struggles against colonial capitalist and extractivist forces and structures. This approach is a continuation of the philosophy of praxis, which Gramsci developed from Marx to provide a path so fascism does not win again. I ground such historicism of the movement in decolonial

historical materialism of race, class and gender analysis of the CGL pipeline in relation to land. This dissertation fills several gaps in politics, political ecology, and social movement studies by addressing the lack of focus on the critical position of land for the labour movement and providing examples of decolonial and sustainable forms of anticapitalism for environmentalists.

Discussions and contributions

Through an exploration of Wet'suwet'en reclamation of their territories, this dissertation shows how access to traditional territories and land leads to the question of what forms of land use bring Indigenous title and rights into conflict with settler colonial capitalism. This dissertation aims to support the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and free, prior, and informed consent protocols that provide the basis for Indigenous sovereignty. However, the Canadian government's use of critical infrastructure as a form of land grabbing, mineral rights, and IBAs that facilitate these processes, are in direct conflict with the rights of Indigenous people, especially over unceded territories. The colonial courts cannot reconcile Indigenous and colonial legal systems and consistently rule for the benefit and interest of the state and corporations. Violent militarized attacks on the Wet'suwet'en people and territories were staged to uphold the injunction for CGL pipeline, which was backed by nationalism perpetuated by concepts such as Canadian/public interest. However, that interest is the ruling class's and international corporations' interest. The small percentage of Canadian workers who are relatively better paid in comparison to the average worker become oppressors on the territories with the full support of CIRG and private security firms. However, the decade of constant resistance at Unist'ot'en camp/ village provided a permanent space of resistance for many allies from different social groups and backgrounds to go to the camp and build relationships. Those relationships and

vast networks became the backbone of strong grassroots media connections and organizing grounds for solidarity actions during Shut Down Canada. Shut Down Canada was the result of hundreds of supporters who went to the camp over the years and participated and actively practiced the complexities of unlearning and decolonization through the experience of camp and witnessing cultural revival and subsistence practices that shape Indigenous forms of anticapitalism. Practices that, instead of commodifying land and nature, create a reciprocal relationship to the land and more than human beings, and puts the community and, specifically, hereditary chiefs in the position of stewards of the land.

In Chapter Two, I delved into the political economy of the CGL pipeline to show the complex network of national and international financial institutions, such as banks and insurance firms, that make such projects possible. I use the three categories of emitters, enablers and legitimators to trace the matrix of corporations, banks, and national and international institutions that make multi billion fossil fuel projects possible. In parallel, I explained the security apparatus of the CGL project that the state's use of nationalism became the grounds for spending millions of dollars for militarized attacks on Wet'suwet'en territories and led to the criminalization of many land defenders and forceful removal of them from their lands. While I explained the attacks in Chapter Two, I explained the powerful resistance of Wet'suwet'ens to those attacks in Chapter Three as well as the mass response of allies and supporters that staged the largest solidarity actions in Canada during the period of the Shut Down Canada movement in 2020-2021.

To show the ideological practices of colonialism, I first explained Canadian settler colonialism through Coulthard's (2014) categories of force, fraud, and negotiations, patterns reflected in extractivist projects. That is why the colonial politics of recognition and

reconciliation does not support Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. This sets the stage for Chapter Three, which explores the necessity of direct action and mass organizing.

An important theme that repeats itself through this dissertation is how capitalism creates and perpetuates gendered, racialized and class-based social relations and the norms that accompany them. After the violent separation that happened through the processes of primitive accumulation, capitalism normalized this separation by the force of law and by perpetuating practices and norms of exclusion standing on the shoulders of pre-existing patriarchy, slavery and colonialism.[24] By "practices," I mean the mixture of civil society, market, and social relations. These practices normalize inequality through education, media and cultural organizations, and labour and economic activities, presenting themselves as common sense. In Chapter Three, I explained the complexities of the Shut Down Canada movement alongside the Unist'ot'en strategy of building a vast grassroots media connection that helped to combat the state media ban and mainstream coverage of the movement that could lead to further criminalization and scrutinization of the movement. Another aspect of combating Canadian nationalism that portrays the radical direct actions of Indigenous resistance and their supporters as unacceptable and criminal. In more than a decade of Unist'ot'en Camp, movement building paid off, and hundreds of direct actions were organized by supporters and allies of Wet'suwet'en resistance against CGL all over Canada and beyond. The period of 2020-2022 was marked by violent militarized attacks of RCMP on Wet'suwet'en territories but displayed rare moments of collective, diverse, simultaneous public rage against settler colonial extractivism. Although these

[24] By “force of law,” I mean family laws that imposed a nuclear heterosexual model of the home and gave men legal property rights over women. For instance, the laws that precluded women from participating in the public sphere prohibited them from obtaining an education or voting. A contemporary example is the laws that exclude racialized migrant workers from socio-political rights by limiting their access to citizenship. The colonial example of the Indian Act in Canada targeted Indigenous women who, if they married a white man, would lose their Indian status. In contrast, if a white woman married an Indian man, she would gain Indian status.

actions have not stopped the building of the CGL pipeline, they sent a strong message to similar projects and generated hope to stop the CGL pipeline in the future.

To some extent, this movement centred on decolonial practices within the environment that had some ongoing lessons for more privileged radicals who did not understand the importance of survival in the face of state violence.

In Chapter Three, I purposely used mostly grassroots media to fill in some of the gaps in the in coverage and challenging the mainstream narrative of the events. Creating a network of independent journalists, grassroots groups, networks of social media and websites alongside documentary makers that provided videos and news from Unist'ot'en and created a strong outlet to break the exclusion zones built by RCMP and attempts of mainstream media to criminalize land defenders.

This chapter also explains the violent attacks on Wet'suwet'en as part of a long legacy of settler colonialism's use of enclosure in the case of northern Canada, mostly for extractivist purposes. Also, I debunked the claim that natural gas is a sustainable alternative, building upon other scholars' critiques of sustainability as defined by corporations and, as a result, not helpful and, in many cases, more harmful, especially in cases of land grabs and disturbing local modes of economy.

In Chapter Four through an examination of Marx’s critique of the theory of primitive accumulation, I brought back land to the center of the labour movement and labour analysis. The ongoing attempts to eliminate non-capitalist forms of production and reproduction turn nature and land into commodities and led to the alienation of humans from them. In this chapter I brought together Marxist theory of alienation to eco socialist analysis of moving forward that builds an economy and society based on need, sustainability and justice. Theory of alienation

opens possibilities for eco socialism to be more compatible to Indigenous decolonial forms of anti capitalism that value land, and more than human beings, as kins to humans. I also brought in ecofeminist and black feminist views on land and work to connect care work, including the care work of environmentalists and grassroots communities, to the realm of sustaining work. Ecofeminists' criticism of science and dominant knowledge is important for undoing the common sense and ideology of capitalism and opening the path for decolonial knowledge that is in connection to land-based experiences. Mies state, "we cannot understand modern developments, including our present problems, unless we include all those who were defined into nature by the modern capitalist patriarchs: Mother earth, women and colonies" (1986, 75).

Throughout the dissertation, the notion of labour that goes beyond paid work and values subsistence, reproductive and care work, including caring for the environment, land and non-human beings, is emphasized. Undoing and unlearning the devaluation of these types of work is important for all anti-capitalists who follow race, class, gender and decolonial perspectives. Valuing these forms of work is directly connected to valuing land and the role of nature in our lives and can bring meaningful solidarity between radical environmentalists, the labour movement and Indigenous anti-capitalists as such solidarity benefits all through dismantling bases of capitalist colonialist oppressions.

Limitations and Future Trajectories

In the future, building on this dissertation, I want to examine the relations among Indigenous peoples' struggles for the non-capitalist organization of land and struggles for the fair distribution of resources, production, and decision-making power in commons and cooperatives. Questions that came to mind while writing this thesis, but I could not delve into them, are: What

can ongoing radical Indigenous resistance teach us about how to build larger, interconnecting movements? How do individuals engaged in anti-capitalist commons and cooperatives conceptualize Indigenous sovereignty and settler colonialism? How do Indigenous people engaged in radical resistance conceptualize commons and cooperatives? How can commons, cooperatives, and Indigenous resistance movements build solidarity? Also, how can these movements go beyond atomized limitations?

Through understanding and addressing the intertwined legacies of settler colonialism and capitalism in Canada. We can envision pathways towards a more just and sustainable future for all by foregrounding Indigenous sovereignty in building cooperative alternatives. There is minimal research on the effects of settler colonialism on non-Indigenous communities and workers attempts to create sustainable economies. As David Camfield (2019) explains, there is a gap in labour studies in terms of engaging with the notion and reality of settler colonialism and its effects on the Canadian working class.

Alternative economies that are in organic and dynamic relation with theories of social reproduction (Ferguson, 2019), grounded normativity (Coulthard, 2014), eco-socialism (Foster et al., 2011) and degrowth (Akbulut, 2023) provide a path forward to more just and equitable ways of living. Examples include empowering communities through sustainable self-determination (Corntassel, 2012) and participatory decision-making (Wright, 2004) such as Radical Indigenous resistance (Simpson, 2017) and anticapitalist commons and cooperatives (Jeppesen et al., 2014) are all part of movements for self-determination and self-sufficiency. These movements provide alternative subsistence through mainly mixed economies (National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health. (2020) that are either actively anti-capitalist and environmentalist or can be considered a part of the degrowth movement by downgrading the economic scale of production

and exploitation. Moving forward, more research is needed about how can these great initiatives can be shifted towards building a mass movement.

Concluding thoughts

Throughout this thesis, I explored many problematic aspects of our society that divide labour, environmental, and Indigenous sovereignty movements. However, I also want to emphasize the valuable work of many people who I have come across from different social groups, positions, and identities who are doing the care work, solidarity work and hard work of building the infrastructure of dissent so our movements can grow. Many union workers and labour movement organizers have shown up for Indigenous solidarity and environmental causes and vice versa. These connections develop the hope and support to create the solidarity networks needed to make fundamental changes in how we organize our society and our relationships to each other and the environment.

The history of settler colonialism and capitalist extractivism has destroyed many cultural and sustaining relationships to the land for every community. I tried to bring some aspects of this lost knowledge and the practices that are being revived or developed as well as the caring knowledge and practices that are being produced to build up the solidarity and power of the communities and people.

Building solidarity among movements is necessary to combat the nationalism, racism and sexism that have intensified in the face of ongoing economic and environmental crises. Undoing structural oppression and discrimination that benefits capital and elite economic and political groups both nationally and internationally will empower and sustain the communities and social groups to build relationship with the land in reciprocal and sustainable ways.

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