

## Artículo de investigación

**Cómo citar:** Kidd, D. (2020). *North American Extra-Activism and Indigenous Communications Practices*. En: *Mediaciones*, 25 (16). Pp. 222-245. <https://doi.org/10.26620/uniminuto.mediaciones.16.25.2020.222-245>

**Editorial:** Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios - UNIMINUTO

**Recibido:** 15 de julio de 2019

**Aceptado:** 30 de julio de 2020

**Publicado:** 16 de diciembre de 2020

ISSN: 1692-5688 | eISSN: 2590-8057

# North American Extra-Activism and Indigenous Communications Practices

## Extractivismo norteamericano y prácticas comunicativas indígenas

## Extratativismo na América do Norte e práticas indígenas de comunicação

### Dorothy Kidd

kidd@usfca.edu

Doctora en Comunicación  
Universidad de San Francisco,  
California.  
Estados Unidos de América.

### Abstract

There has been a wealth of research in Latin America on the most recent global intensification of extractivism, or the capitalist exploitation of natural resources. Some of this research has examined the resistance among front-line Indigenous and rural communities, and allied environmental groups, who are challenging the development of mega-scale mining, oil, gas, mono-agricultural, and related infrastructural projects. Researchers have noted many similar tactical repertoires that can take multiple forms (through direct action, media representation, and in legal, political, and educational forums) and extend across geographic scales (local, national, regional, and transnational). Communications is key to much of their work; however there has been far less research examining the communications practices in any detail. This article focuses on the communications practices in use in three Indigenous-led campaigns against extractivist projects in North America, the decade-old Unist'ot'en Camp in northwestern Canada, Idle No More, and the #NoDAPL of the Standing Rock Sioux. My findings indicate that a resurgent Indigenous movement, in concert with environmental and other settler allies, has adopted an array of communications practices that combine protective action on behalf of their lands and waters with the creation of new communities in place-based assemblies and social media and digital networks.

**Keywords:** extractivism, extra-activism, social movements, roots, routes, routers, compositional analysis, Indigenous communities.



## Resumen

Ha habido una gran riqueza en las investigaciones realizadas en América Latina sobre la más reciente intensificación global del extractivismo, o la explotación capitalista de los recursos naturales. Algunas de estas investigaciones han examinado la resistencia de las comunidades indígenas y rurales de primera línea, y los grupos ambientalistas aliados, que están desafiando el desarrollo de proyectos de minería a gran escala, petróleo, gas, monocultivos y otras infraestructuras relacionadas. Los investigadores han notado muchos repertorios tácticos similares, que pueden tomar múltiples formas (a través de acción directa, representación en medios y en foros legales, políticos y educativos) y extenderse entre las escalas geográficas (local, nacional, regional y transnacional). Las comunicaciones son clave para gran parte de su trabajo; sin embargo, ha habido mucha menos investigación que indague las prácticas de comunicación en detalle. Este artículo se centra en las prácticas de comunicación usadas en tres campañas lideradas por indígenas, contra proyectos extractivistas en América del Norte: el campamento, que ya cumple una década, Unist'ot'en Camp en el noroeste de Canadá, Idle No More y #NoDAPL del Standing Rock Sioux. Mis hallazgos indican que un movimiento indígena resurgente, en conjunto con aliados ambientales y otros pobladores, han adoptado una variedad de prácticas de comunicación que combinan la acción protectora en nombre de sus tierras y aguas, y la creación de nuevas comunidades de base, redes sociales y redes digitales.

Este artículo se deriva del proyecto de investigación en curso denominado "Social Movement Communication and Extractivism".

La autora ha declarado que no existen intereses en competencia.

**Palabras clave:** extractivismo, extra-activismo, movimientos sociales, raíces, rutas, enrutadores, análisis de composición, comunidades indígenas.

## Resumo

Tem havido uma grande quantidade de pesquisas feitas na América Latina sobre a mais recente intensificação global do extrativismo, ou a exploração capitalista dos recursos naturais. Algumas dessas pesquisas examinaram a resistência de comunidades indígenas e rurais da linha de frente e grupos ambientais aliados, que estão desafiando o desenvolvimento de mineração em grande escala, petróleo, gás, monocultura e outros projetos de infraestrutura relacionados. Os pesquisadores notaram muitos repertórios tácticos semelhantes, que podem assumir várias formas (por meio de ação direta, representação na mídia e em fóruns jurídicos, políticos e educacionais) e abrangem escalas geográficas (local, nacional, regional e transnacional). As comunicações são essenciais para grande parte do seu trabalho; entretanto, tem havido muito menos pesquisas investigando as práticas de comunicação em detalhes. Este artigo enfoca as práticas de comunicação usadas em três campanhas lideradas por indígenas contra projetos extrativistas na América do Norte: o acampamento, que já completa uma década, Unist'ot'en Camp no noroeste do Canadá, Idle No More e #NoDAPL de Standing Rock Sioux. Minhas descobertas indicam que um movimento indígena ressurgente, em conjunto com aliados ambientais e outros moradores, adotou uma variedade de práticas de comunicação que combinam ação protetora em nome de suas terras e águas, e a criação de novas comunidades de base, redes sociais e redes digitais.

**Palavras chave:** extrativismo, extrativismo, movimentos sociais, raíces, rotas, roteadores, análise de composição, comunidades indígenas.



## Introduction

There has been a wealth of research in Latin America on the most recent global cycle of extractivism, or the capitalist exploitation of natural resources, which is intensifying in every region of the world. A much smaller, but nevertheless significant body of work, documents the resistance to mega-scale mining, oil and gas extraction, large forestry and farming plantations, and associated infrastructure projects.<sup>1</sup> Among the notable findings are those about the key roles played by Indigenous communities and environmental justice movements, the similar modes and tactics utilized (direct action, media representation, and the use of legal, political, and educational forums) across geographic scales (local, national, regional, and transnational); and especially, for our purposes, the importance of communications, although few studies have examined the communications practices in any detail (Llanos Arias, 2014).

The current cycle of resistance to extractivism in North America parallels contemporary movements taking place in Latin America: there too, Indigenous and environmental movements play key roles, have expanded the scope and geographic scale of their strategies and have utilized similar communications practices. Nevertheless, although the dominant actors, both corporate and state, and the prevailing rationales are very similar, and although there are significant network ties with challengers in Latin America, there has been very little exchange of knowledge between the two regions, at least from a research perspective. This gap in knowledge was clear when, in late 2019, I spent time as a visiting professor at Uniminuto in Bogotá, Colombia; the students and faculty there knew much about the negative impact of North American corporations and the policies of its governments regarding extractivism in Latin America, but they knew little about the negative impact of extractivism within North America itself, almost nothing about the resistance to it, and even less about the communications practices.

This article thus focuses on the communications practices of anti-extractivist resistance movements, or what I call *extra-activism* and what Anna Willow and other critical ethnographers have dubbed *ExtraACTIVISM*.<sup>2</sup> I examine the communications practices used by Indigenous-led groups in three inter-connected cases: the ten year long Unist'ot'en Camp in the Wet'suwet'en Indigenous territory in northwestern Canada, the Idle No More movement, and the opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline (#NoDAPL) in the territory of the Standing Rock Sioux in the U.S. Far from simply opposing extractivist projects, they have taken up a historical responsibility to protect and extend Indigenous

---

1 Among the studies, see Alanís (2013), Barcia (2017), Bebbington (2015), Bebbington and Bury (2013), Brand et al. (2016), Broad and Fischer-Mackey (2017), Caria and Dominguez (2015), Conde (2017), Gudynas (2018), Hogenboom (2015), Jalbert et al. (2017), Llano Arias (2014), Ødegaard and Rivera (2019), Özkaynak et al. (2015), Pérez-Rincón et al. (2019), Raftopoulos (2017), Svampa (2015), Vásquez (2014), Veltmeyer and Petras (2014), and Walter and Martinez-Alier (2010).

2 I first used this term *extra-activism* in the introduction to the special issue of the journal *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* (Kidd, 2016). See Willow (2019: 3), for her elaboration of the term *ExtraACTIVISM*.



governance over their lands and waters, economies, laws, knowledges, and cultures. In each of these cases, they have employed a panoply of communications practices that range from face to face and body to body encounters, to news and music videos and the creation of new communities in digital social networks.

This article has biographical, political and intellectual roots. In the 1980s, I worked for Indigenous communications groups in northern Canada and became aware of the imbrication of the Canadian state in colonial practices of resource development and my own subjectivity and status as a white settler in that. In 2011, I listened as Indigenous scholars Audra Simpson, Glenn Coulthard, and Alfred Taiaiake spoke about the resurgence of Indigenous projects of art, scholarship, and land-based practices for self-determination. In 2015, Coulthard said, “Indigenous land-based direct action is positioned in a very crucial and important place for radical social change... in settler-colonial political economies like Canada, which is still very much based on the extraction and exploitation of natural resources” (Epstein, 2015).

## Methodology

Inspired by these scholars, I began to develop a longer research project on the communications practices of extra-activist movements. Its first phase was a review of historical and current extra-activist struggles and a content analysis of dominant news representations of these (Kidd, 2014a; Kidd, 2014b; Kidd, 2016). The second phase has involved a study of the specific communications practices adopted by extra-activist movements, including videos (Kidd, *In Press*),<sup>3</sup> and counter-mapping (Kidd, 2019) and their assemblage in communications commons (Kidd, 2020).

In this article, I take an interdisciplinary approach. First, I draw on autonomist Marxist compositional enquiry.<sup>4</sup> I outline the historical development of extractivism in North America; I then examine the content, development, and circulation of three recent Indigenous-led extra-activist struggles – Idle No More, the Unist’ot’en Camp in Wetsuwet’en Indigenous territory in northwestern Canada, and the Standing Rock Sioux campaign against the Dakota Access Pipeline in the U.S. Second, I build on the vocabulary and methodological practices of the emerging field of social movement communications.<sup>5</sup> I document the hybridized

---

3 Thanks to Kelsey Mays for her research support during this phase.

4 Compositional analysis was first utilized by autonomist Marxists in the 1970s, and this approach was updated by Nick Dyer-Witheford (2008) to address communications over an enlarged horizon of struggles being pursued by anti-capitalist movements around the globe. In the larger study, my questions include the global political economy of extractivism; the content, direction, and circulation of communications among extra-activists; and the relationships among and between different movements. See Downing (2013) for a similar protocol.

5 This study draws on the work of Downing (2013), Costanza-Chock (2013), Mattoni (2013), Lim (2018), and Treré 2019.



backstage and front-stage nature of communications, as well as the old and new, online and offline, and alternative and corporate nature of media (Treré, 2019), and also describe the roots of the struggles and the communications routes and routers in each case (Lim, 2018). Finally, I discuss the implications for studies of social justice communications.

## Extractivism in North America

The roots of current extractivism conflicts go deep. Extractivism was of course the *raison d'être* of the European colonial project, and this legacy is part of the DNA of North America. The settler governments of both the U.S. and Canada, much like in Latin America, intervened on behalf of the extractive industries, providing the military force to first secure land and resources by dispossessing Indigenous peoples. They then enacted corporate-friendly legislation and tax incentives for extractivist activities, and they financed and built the transportation and telecommunications infrastructure necessary to exploit and export the raw commodities to global markets at a huge cost to Indigenous peoples and the environment as a whole. In the U.S. the Doctrine of Discovery entrenched the legal groundwork after the fact for the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the hyper-exploitation of the natural world (Gilio-Whitaker, 2019, pp. 56–57). The two nation states of the U.S. and Canada then enacted similar legal regimes that transformed what had been communally stewarded territories into individual privately held plots of land (Rueck, 2014, p. 353).

In ways and with results that were often un-documented, Indigenous communities and nations resisted the enclosure of their territories and the un-making of their societies, as part of the defense of their “collective and life-centered projects of subsistence commoning” (Turner & Brownhill, 2004). Most Indigenous communities understood their territory to be a collective ecology held in common by an ethical framework and complex system of reciprocity and obligations, necessary to ensure their survival and wellbeing for all time (Coulthard, 2014). However, they were largely unable to withstand the combined onslaught of arms, missionaries, miners and oil prospectors, and government bureaucrats. Some, including among the Sioux, took up arms, while others signed treaties in the hopes of ensuring peace and rights to land, foodstuffs, healthcare and education (Estes, 2019). In Canada, where two of the struggles I examine have taken place, many Indigenous first nations never ceded sovereignty to the colonial government. Moreover, those groups who did sign treaties, often under dubious conditions, never gave up their own customs, spiritual beliefs, and complex practices of production and social reproduction on the land, although many were forced to take their practices underground to avoid repression.

## Oil Pipelines

Indigenous resistance to oil pipelines in North America dates back at least to the battle in 1968 against the Trans-Alaska pipeline (Gilio-Whitaker, 2019, p. 2), followed

closely after by the Dene, Inuit and Métis downstream in the MacKenzie Valley in Canada (Kidd, 2019). Then during the 1980s, oil and natural gas fracking around the world began to be promoted by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank as part of the Washington neo-liberal consensus; 90 national governments were strongly encouraged to adopt corporate friendly laws and taxation policies for extractivist companies, and to deregulate their environmental and labor laws with the argument that potential profits could provide employment, tax revenue, trickle down wealth, and spill-on effects for local and national economies (Kidd, 2016).

The renewed exploitation of oil and natural gas was stepped up on both sides of the Canada-US border at the turn of the millennium. On the US side, the dirty oil from the Bakken shale oil is transported more than a thousand miles across four states via the Dakota Access pipeline and other pipelines. On the Canadian side, pipelines deliver the oil and natural gas to the western ports of BC for export to China, south to the US, and east to urban centers.<sup>6</sup> Oil and natural gas pipelines are particularly vulnerable to contention as they stretch very long distances, linking people through rural and urban, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. What neither the US or Canadian governments, nor the fossil fuel industry counted, on was the slow but steadily growing movement among front-line communities and their supporters against the pipelines and the larger ideology of extractivism (Kidd, 2016; Klein, 2014).

## Idle No More

In November 2012, a small group of women educator-activists (three Indigenous and one white) organized a teach-in Saskatchewan.<sup>7</sup> They called themselves “Idle No More,” and declared that they would not sit silently while the Harper government violated its agreements with First Nations and reversed environmental regulations in order to facilitate the development of more oil and nuclear projects. They addressed Indigenous peoples and their supporters directly through grassroots forums rather than through the existing First Nations political institutions. Using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, they urged people to organize “to advocate for our Mother (the land), the Water (giver of life) and those generations that have yet to come” (Coates, 2015, 18–19). Indigenous youth and settler allies in centers across Canada and the U.S. quickly responded, orchestrating “assemblages of SNS, various web platforms, and independent media channels” to circulate “messages, memes and actions that destabilized colonial efforts across First Nations lands,” according to Pascua Yaqui scholar Marisa Duarte (2017, 6).

---

6 The Alberta tar sands stretches over 230 square miles and not only encompasses the extraction of oil, but also includes hydroelectric power grids, water and highway transportation corridors, pipelines, and networks of digital and financial capital investment. The tar sands is one of the greatest global contributors to global warming; it is toxic for living beings, as huge volumes of water are extracted from nearby waterways in order to separate the oil from the tarry substance called bitumen.

7 See Coates (2015, 7–9) for a description of their educational and organizing experience.



Their core practices did not, however, have their roots in social media but in face to face and body to body encounters and discussions.<sup>8</sup> Most notable in this context were the flash mobs (rapid assemblies) that would suddenly take over street intersections, shopping malls, and public squares. On these and other occasions, dancers, singers, and drummers performed the Round Dance, a dynamic and fluid Indigenous cultural form that is relatively simple to learn and that can involve as many or as few dancers and drummers as there are available. Others set up teach-ins, community-led conferences, and public panels, many of which were live-streamed or took place in dialogues on social media. Some communities blockaded trains and automobile traffic. As this movement spread, new participants re-purposed the images, frames, symbols, and tactics that were most important to them (Wood, 2015, 619). All of these material, space-based practices entailed highly visual narratives that were first circulated on social media and then began to receive coverage by the dominant public service and commercial media (Coates, 2015).

The movement also showed large leaps in scale. At its height in January 2013, 3000 people gathered in front of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, Canada's capital city, while 265 simultaneous rallies were held across North America, Australia, Europe, and Asia. These demonstrations not only expressed their opposition to and protest against the unjust treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada and internationally but also often inserted their own local demands. Many groups invoked the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the right to say no to development on their territory (Gilio-Whitaker, 2019, 873).

The specific composition of Indigenous peoples in Canada can partly account for Idle No More's rapid growth and the routes that it took as it developed. The 600 First Nations in Canada are grouped according to state-defined categories, namely, as registered or status Indians, non-status Indians, Metis, and Inuit. Of the members of these groups, 45% of registered status Indians live in reserve-based communities, with 55% living off-reserve in urban centers. Despite their diversity of interests, First Nations people share many social and political ties, along a widespread discontent with the appalling living conditions both on and off the reserves and with existing governance structures, both settler and Indigenous. In addition, half of the First Nations population are under 25 years old and are enthusiastic users of social media; this group functioned as the first routers of this movement, through both top-down and bottom-up networks (Wood, 2015, 620).<sup>9</sup>

Idle No More established a new relationship with non-Indigenous allies and especially with the environmental movement. Before this period, few non-Indigenous

---

8 See Treré (2019, 60) for a discussion of the concept of body-to-body communication first developed by Fortunati.

9 See Merlyna Lim (2018) for a longer discussion of the role of "routers" in contemporary social movements.

organizations understood the critical importance of land and sovereignty rights for First Nations, nor did they accept their leadership (Gilio-Whitaker, 2019; Wiles, 2017). As Glen Coulthard (2014) has noted, Idle No More changed the dynamic in this area. They inspired a national movement that engaged in de-colonial politics, grounded in a critical refashioning of Indigenous customs and a collective relationship with the land, together with an understanding of sovereign legal and political traditions. A new set of Indigenous movements now actively reject the colonial politics of recognition, arguing that negotiating with the Canadian state only leads to greater political and economic assimilation as Indigenous territories become reduced to sums of individually owned tracts of property.

Cree scholar and activist Alex Wilson has described Idle No More's highly participatory, decentralized form of organization as rhizomatic, borrowing from the French theorists Deleuze and Guattari.<sup>10</sup> In particular, she has likened it to the *weegess* plant (known as the muskrat root or wild ginger in English), which “grows in the swamps and is used by Cree people as a medicine with spiritual significance. It links us to our origin story and embodies and elicits a special energy. The root grows laterally, in a non-hierarchical way. When you break off one piece, new tendrils grow, and so it is continually regenerating” (cited in Hearne, 2017, 13–14). While Idle No More itself has waned as a movement, the dense clusters of offline and online social and political ties and communications infrastructure that it left behind have made the mobilization of Indigenous communities easier than before, and it has re-emerged like a rhizome within the trans-national networks that organized the Unist'ot'en camp and Standing Rock, as described below.

## Pipelines

Canada is one of the most energy-intensive industrialized nations in the world and one of those most dependent on fossil fuel. Its population remains divided over how to deal with this. The Trudeau-led Liberal Party, currently in power, has continued to invest in extractivist projects, although exhibiting a very different sense of political optics than Harper's Conservative Party had. Internationally, they speak in support of greater environmental regulations, and at home, they have developed several initiatives to achieve reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. At the same time, they continue to support oil and natural gas developments in western Canada, justifying their actions as necessary for national sovereignty and security, especially with an increasingly protectionist southern neighbor. In 2018, the Trudeau government brought down even more controversy when it purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline from Texas-based energy giant Kinder Morgan for 4.5 billion Canadian dollars (\$3.5 billion US) with the expected goal of nearly tripling the amount of oil transported through Indigenous territories in British Columbia.

---

10 French theorists Deleuze and Guattari used the terms “rhizome” and “rhizomatic” to describe a political and cultural model distinct from the linear and hierarchical tree-branch-root model. The Rhizomatic model is dynamic and non-hierarchical; ruptures can occur, but rhizomes can then grow again in multiple entry nodes.



There have been multiple campaigns against these pipelines across Canada. In British Columbia (BC), Indigenous nations and environmental, citizens', and other social justice organizations, along with municipal councils, have mobilized against the pipelines intended to transport tar sands oil from Alberta and fracked gas from northern British Columbia. Many First Nations have banned such expansionist projects, articulating their sovereignty through orders such as the Save the Fraser Declaration, the International Treaty to Protect the Salish Sea, and the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion (West Coast Environmental Law Association, 2017). In 2020, a wave of national protests in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation resulted in actions in front of the BC Legislature in BC, with serious disruptions of ferry and rail lines, and at several international border crossing with the US. The major hub of this cycle of contention is the Unist'ot'en Camp.

## The Unist'ot'en Camp

The Unist'ot'en are one of five clans of the Wet'suwet'en,<sup>11</sup> a matrilineal First Nation with a complex system of hereditary chiefs entrusted with stewarding their territory to support the subsistence, trade, and customary needs of their members (Temper, 2019, 99). The Wet'suwet'en continue to act to protect their land, water, and territorial sovereignty, and like most Indigenous Nations in British Columbia, they never signed a treaty with the colonial authorities or ceded jurisdiction. In 1984, the Wet'suwet'en and the neighboring Gitksan went to court to litigate their rights to the 58,000 square kilometers of their combined territory. The eventual decision by the Supreme Court of Canada was a landmark in several respects (Temper, 2019; McCreary & Turner, 2018). Although the Court did not resolve the larger question of Indigenous land rights, they did recognize that the hereditary chiefs and clans had a claim to territorial sovereignty and that their knowledge systems (oral histories, songs, and maps) should be considered legal evidence.

Over the last decade, the stakes have increased, as seven companies introduced plans to build pipelines through Wet'suwet'en territory. When the hereditary land titleholders of the Wet'suwet'en and other Indigenous Nations refused consent, the federal government and the pipeline companies simply went around them and approached the band councils, who constitute a parallel system of local Indigenous governance established by the settler state. Many of the band councils signed agreements with the pipeline companies because of the promise of jobs and investment, as a remedy for the extremely high level of Indigenous poverty and unemployment.

The Unist'ot'en Camp is perhaps the longest-running community of resistance among the current cycle of Indigenous-led actions against North American oil and gas

---

11 The five clans of the Wet'suwet'en are the Gilseyhu (Big Frog), Laksilyu (Small Frog), Gitdumden (Wolf/Bear), Laksamshu (Fireweed), and Tsayu (Beaver). The Wet'suwet'en are also sub-divided by the Canadian government's band councils (Moricetown Band, Burns Lake Band, Hagwilget Village Council, Nee Thai Buhn Band, Skin Tyee Nation, and Wet'suwet'en First Nation). The Unist'ot'en are members of the Gilseyhu (Big Frog Clan) and Moricetown band (Temper, 2019, 99).



pipelines. The Unist'ot'en describe themselves on their website as the "toughest" of the Wet'suwet'en, with territories that were not only "abundant" but "treacherous."<sup>12</sup> Critical of the band council system, they instead follow the directive of their hereditary Wet'suwet'en leaders. In 2009, after conferring with hereditary leaders, they built a traditional pit-house or wood cabin within their territory, siting it on the GPS coordinates of the planned Enbridge Northern Gateway bitumen pipeline near Houston, British Columbia.<sup>13</sup> Over the last decade, they have built additional cabins, a permaculture garden, a solar-powered mini-grid, and a healing lodge as part of reconstituting their bonds with the land and other species. The Unist'ot'en extended an invitation to land defenders and environmental and social justice activists from around the world and have welcomed people of all races, religions, nationalities, classes, genders, orientations, and gender identifications.

Based within their own Indigenous epistemologies and practices, the Unist'ot'en are challenging the supremacy of the Canadian state and white settler society and the extractivist ideologies of the pipeline companies. Their spokesperson Chief Hawilhkát, who is also known as Freda Huson, says that they are not protesting but simply living on their own land and following their own laws. In a short video called "A Cultural Mission," she describes the camp as a place of cultural resurgence and reconnection of people with the land."<sup>14</sup>

The Unist'ot'en have ruptured the discourse and framing of previous environmental protests led by non-Indigenous people. According to Toghestiy, a hereditary chief of the Wet'suwet'en:

[The camp] was created with the idea of resistance in mind, and also building a strong community from all walks of life from all over the planet... This idea of signing petitions, of walking peacefully at a protest downtown is something that's going to make a difference. And it sure made people more aware but the majority of people stop there...The radical politics that we're promoting forces people to take it a step further and physically make a difference on the ground... This planet, the beautiful Mother Earth needs people to be awake, to look after her, to build relationships with her and to grow with her (Beyond Boarding, 2017).

Following the practices of their Traditional Chiefs and Matriarchs, everyone must seek their permission to enter their territory, and they maintain a physical checkpoint at the Widzin Kwah (Morice River). Blockades have been a commonly used tactic among Indigenous groups in Canada. However, the Unist'ot'en have reframed the practice.

---

12 <https://unistoten.camp/about/wetsuweten-people/>

13 Timeline of the campaign, Unist'ot'en Camp: <http://unistoten.electricembers.net/timeline/timeline-of-the-campaign/>

14 "A Cultural Mission," <https://unistoten.camp/media/video-gallery/>.



Instead of calling it a blockade, Chief Hawilhat calls it “a gateway to understanding truth and meaningful decolonization” (Temper, 2019, 108). Every visitor is screened at the bridge with what the Unist’ot’en call the Reclaimed Free, Prior, and Informed Consent protocol.<sup>15</sup>

The Unist’ot’en take advantage of social media and videos to share their knowledge, represent their perspectives and mobilize support. They have collaborated with media activists to produce a series of videos which circulate on their own Facebook pages and websites and on independent and commercial sites, including SubMedia, the Aboriginal People’s TV Network (APTN), Al-Jazeera TV, Vice and, the EJOLT project.<sup>16</sup> One of the videos playfully features a young Indigenous boy wearing a Batman suit. Before he is given permission to enter the camp, he must answer the following five questions. Who are you? Where are you from? What is your purpose in coming here? Do you work for industry or government that is destroying our lands? How will your visit benefit the Unist’ot’en people?<sup>17</sup>

Another set of videos documents their ongoing efforts to protect their land from incursions by pipeline company personnel and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). These videos resemble the radical video genre of *sousveillance* in which activists turn their cameras on the authorities who are surveying them (Robé, 2017). However, rather than exhibiting fast-moving scenes of violent confrontations, these films feature long, slow shots in which Chief Hawilhat calmly remains in the foreground while white male security and pipe-line personnel appear minimized in the background. Here, her message is “You need permission to enter our territory and we did not grant it.”<sup>18</sup>

---

15 In the Beyond Boarding video entitled “Rights versus Responsibilities,” Mel Bazil, a Gitxan and Wet’suwet’en first nations activist and teacher, refers to the legal precedents used by other Indigenous groups such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the Canadian Supreme Court decisions. Nevertheless he notes that:

Indigenous laws, responsibilities are “take what you need and leave the rest”, and that means you only take what you need...It’s not [a] new [idea]. What’s new is remembering what those protocols were and what they can be today, especially in the face of contemporary and future proposals by this capitalist society to access what they call resources. These are not resources. This is a life force, a life force that we have relationships to. We don’t own it. We don’t own the rivers. We don’t own the salmon.

We have a relationship with these worlds.

(Hannah Campbell. Beyond Boarding. Inside the Unist’ot’en Camp Blockade. August 29, 2014, 3. <https://watershedsentinel.ca/articles/inside-the-unistoten-camp-blockade/>)

16 Many of the videos were produced by SubMedia, a radical media collective, with others produced by individual Indigenous activists, the Aboriginal People’s TV Network, and Al-Jazeera. Those circulated on YouTube had anywhere from 4,000 to 21,000 views; an Al-Jazeera short had 323,000. The Facebook versions have been seen millions of times.

17 Unist’ot’en camp. Preparing for Your Visit. <https://unistoten.camp/come-to-camp/preparing-for-your-visit/>.

18 Their website includes text, videos, and maps that outline their governance structure, and the principles on which they are operating. See <http://unistoten.camp/about/governance-structure/>



Much like Idle No More, they are engaged in de-colonial politics, grounded in a critical refashioning of Wet'suwet'en customary relations with the land. Their primary focus is their land-based encampment and healing center. However, they have broadened the geographic scales of their resistance with their website and social media. They address impacted communities across the length of the entire pipeline, from those at the extraction sites to other marginalized communities along the route to the port cities on the Pacific coast (McCreary & Turner, 2018). As founding member Mel Bazil put it, "We don't only think of ourselves, we think in solidarity with neighboring nations and the world around us, and when we got an understanding of the proposed fluids that would be transported in these pipelines, we realized this was a danger for the whole world, particularly communities affected by the tar sands and fracking" (Campbell, 2014).

For their first eight years, the Unist'ot'en camp contributed to significant victories within their own territory and throughout North America. They discouraged investment in the proposed pipelines: five of the seven were cancelled, put on hold, or forced to reroute. Then in late 2018, the scope of their struggle changed when TC Energy secured a legal injunction to push their Coastal Gas Link fracked gas pipeline through. The Unist'ot'en, began to work more closely with other Wet'suwet'en clans, and quickly stepped up their legal, political and media actions. The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs launched a legal challenge, arguing that the provincial government must assess the pipeline project's harms, including the violence against Indigenous women, a key finding of the recent Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which found direct links between extractive industries, "man camps" and increased violence against Indigenous women. In January 2019, they began negotiations with the Trudeau government, and in April 2019 Chief Howikhat spoke to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Then, in February 2020, the RCMP moved into their territory and arrested several land defenders. A major upsurge of demonstrations in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en ensued across Canada and the US. An Indigenous-youth directed mobilization of Indigenous youth in Victoria, BC, the capital city, that led to a postponement of the opening of the provincial parliament. Using hashtags such as #ShutDownCanada, #Wet-suwetenStrong, and #LandBack, other Indigenous nations, students, environmental and extra-activists took a series of decentralized actions, shutting down ferry lines, the national rail service and sea ports in Metropolitan Vancouver and waging demonstrations, teach-ins, and student walk-outs (Bracken, 2019). A group of over 200 Canadian lawyers and legal scholars argued that the Canadian courts have ignored the requirement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, even though Canada has signed on to the UN resolution (Jacobs, McAdam, Neve & Walia, 2020). As a result of all the actions, federal, provincial and local governments are negotiating with the Wet'suwet'en traditional leadership and government-appointed band councils. As I write this in August 2020, the conflict over the pipelines has not been resolved. Nevertheless, the Unist'ot'en model of a land-based encampment, has been adapted by Indigenous led extra-activist groups across North America, including the Standing Rock Sioux.



## Standing Rock

The Standing Rock Sioux are Lakota/Teton people, part of the Oceti Sakowin (literally seven Council Fires) whose territories once spanned hundreds of miles (Estes 2019, 3); and who today number 100,000 to 160,000 people in the U.S. and Canada (Walker & Walter, 2018: 401-402). The Standing Rock Sioux territory lies in what is now called North and South Dakota, bordered on the east by the Missouri and Cannonball Rivers which they depend on for drinking water, irrigation, recreation, and fishing. In April 2016, the Indigenous youth group ReZpect Our Water started a social media campaign to stop the proposed Dakota Access Oil Pipeline (DAPL) threatening to harm these water sources and cultural and sacred sites (thus the hashtags #standingrock, #NoDAPL, #mniwiconi and #waterislife). Soon after, Standing Rock Sioux historian LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, her grandchildren, and other women leaders set up the camp of the Sacred Stones on their traditional territory as a center for direct action, spiritual resistance, cultural preservation, and defense of Indigenous sovereignty.<sup>19</sup> By the fall of 2016, as many as 20,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous supporters had joined them to form three collectively governed camps, with 1.3 million actively participating in hundreds of hundreds of #NoDAPL Facebook pages (Cappelli, 2018, Brígido-Corachán, 2017).

Standing Rock, has had significant ripple effects far beyond the pipeline itself, raising the profile for extra-activist and environmental justice movements across North America and internationally, similar to what the Battle of Seattle in 1999 did for the global justice movement. Due to their actions, the pipeline was temporarily halted by the Obama Administration in late 2016, before being reinstated in January 2017, as one of Donald Trump's first acts as president of the United States. Then, in July 2020, as I write this, a federal court has once again halted the project due to environmental concerns (Earth Justice, 2020).

Standing Rock commanded more media attention than any other Indigenous movement in the recent history of North America (Walker & Walter, 2018; Brígido-Corachán, 2017); and may have reached an even larger number through their own self-generated media. They were supported by a very broad-based set of social and political movements. All nine tribes of the Oceti Sakowin backed the #NoDAPL Water Protectors, even though members of some of the neighboring tribes work in the oil fields, and benefit from oil production.<sup>20</sup> They were also supported by every single Native American nation (a first) and

---

19 The river's Lakota name is Inyan Wakangapi Wakpa, "River that makes the Sacred Stones." This area was home to burial grounds, sacred sites and trading places which were historically important for Sioux, and also the Arikara, the Mandan and the Northern Cheyenne (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, p. 72).

20 The pipeline also affects the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Tribes (MHA Nation) in North Dakota and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes, all of which have officially supported the #NoDAPL protectors. Although many members of the MHA Nation in Fort Berthold support oil production, and some work in the oil fields, they have symbolically and materially aided the Standing Rock movement and are themselves fighting the construction of two new oil and gas pipelines that will go underneath Lake Sakakawea, their main water supply (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, p. 85, fn. 6).

380 other Indigenous nations from around the world (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, 77), as well as environmental and anti-racist movements, students, musicians, celebrities, and U.S. military veterans, among others (Steinman, 2019). New relations were forged with settler allies and environmental groups in the U.S., many of whom had hitherto ignored the critical importance of Indigenous sovereignty, land, and rights (Wiles, 2017; Brígido-Corachán, 2017; Steinman, 2019) and subsumed previous Indigenous mobilizations within the broader environmental movement, “bolstered (and exacerbated) by stereotypes of the ‘ecological Indian,’” (Gilio-Whitaker, 2019, 867).

In his book, *Our History is the Future*, Nick Estes outlines the long roots of the current conflict. He draws a direct line between the Sioux struggles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century over dispossession and today’s resistance at Standing Rock (2019). From first contact with European settlers, the Sioux consistently asserted their customary ways of living and political sovereignty. However, they were unable to withstand the violence of the combined colonial settler forces of the resource extraction industries (gold, logging, cattle, uranium), the U.S. Military, and especially the massacre of ten to fifteen million buffalo on which they depended (Walker & Walter, 2018, Gilio-Whitaker, 2019, Estes, 2019). In 1899, Congress further subdivided their remaining territories into six, one of which was the Standing Rock reservation (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, 72). The Sioux continued to resist. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they fought back against the building of hydro-electric dams that dislocated even more people, and flooded their lands, eliminating timber, grazing and agricultural land (Estes 2019, 10-12). In the last decade, many Lakota supported the campaign against the Keystone XL pipeline, including the resistance camp on the Cheyenne River Reservation (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, 76).

## The encampments

The efforts of the Standing Rock Sioux to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline featured a range of strategies from legal actions and political lobbying at the local courthouse, state capital and in Washington; two cross-country relay runs; direct and active resistance to the construction of the pipeline, and extensive decolonizing educational and media practices (Cappelli 2018, Brígido-Corachán 2017). The encampments provided the hub of many of these activities during 2016. Nick Estes describes the daily collective practices in the main camp as befitting a “fully functioning city”, but based in an ethos of intergenerational care giving and generosity (2019, 58-59). By the fall of 2016, the site housed over 20,000 people who were living in camping tents, trailer homes, or traditional teepees, with provision of food, health, and healing centers, as well as educational activities for children and adults. With guidance from the Standing Rock Sioux elders, people learned how to withstand a harsh environment under constant police surveillance, multiple incursions of violent security forces, and some very cold weather.

The Standing Rock youth had been involved in the earlier movements of Idle No More and Black Lives Matter, and they encouraged creative cross-racial and transnational mobilizations, and mediated forms of representation (Brígido-Corachán, 78-79). Women took important roles in all aspects of camp life, and governance. Two-Spirited



people, an umbrella term for Indigenous people who identify as LGBTQAI+ led some of the prayers and marches, in the camp council and participated as medics, in the school, security, food preparation (Estes, 61-62). A steady rotation of young Indigenous men kept the fires going, several free camp kitchens provided three meals a day, and a donations tent equipped everyone with clothes, tents and essentials to keep everyone warm (Estes, 2019, 58-59).

They changed the language and practices of contention, inscribing those that represent respectful ethical relations with water and natural ecologies as vital for human wellbeing. Rather than calling themselves protesters, they identified as water protectors, and a water ceremony was celebrated every morning at the Sacred Stone camp. They prayed and fed the sacred fire, and shared their food with their ancestors (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, 77). Ground rules and action principles were posted throughout the camps, saying: ‘Water is sacred’; ‘We are peaceful and prayerful’, ‘This is a ceremony, act accordingly’ (Brígido-Corachán, 2017). Reasserting these traditional practices strengthened kinship relations and brought Oceti Sakowin youth closer to traditional Lakota and Dakota culture (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, 76).

Much like Idle no More and the Unist’ot’en camp, Standing Rock was a site of comprehensive decolonial education. There was a fully functioning day school with activities for children, youth and adults. An “unprecedented concentration of Indigenous knowledge keepers” presented an anticolonial curriculum about Indigenous treaties, language, song, dance, math, history, nonviolent direct action and water defense (Estes, 2019, 60). Some of the younger women focused their work on teaching and healing with youth against the ravages of alcoholism, sexual violence, suicide, and abuse that they linked to the oil boom and man camps (Brígido-Corachán 2017, 78).

The Standing Rock encampments were far from conflict-free. There were clashes and tensions between different factions over tactics regarding the pipe-line (Steinman, 2019). Some wished to focus on legal action in the courts and at the state capital. Others were critical of the tribal council and of any engagement with the colonial state; instead, they initiated more direct action, blocking work machinery and putting people on the front line to stop construction (SubMedia, 2017). There were also tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, increasing in the fall when the encampments filled with thousands of non-Indigenous people. The Standing Rock Sioux had encouraged non-Indigenous participation with the expectation that everyone should follow their protocols and norms (Gilio-Whitaker 2019, Steinman 2019). However, there were accounts of drug and alcohol use, which was strictly prohibited. Another cultural clash played out in tensions over appropriate dress. Women are expected in Lakota tradition to wear long skirts, especially during prayer and ceremony; yet many non-Indigenous women showed up in pants. It became such an issue that some of the Indigenous women organized sewing brigades to make skirts for those without them (Gilio-Whitaker, 2019, 123).

The Standing Rock encampments provided the space and time for people to gell and grow new collective imaginaries and develop narratives to spread them. The hybrid

networks of on/ offline communicative spaces allowed, as communications scholar Merlyna Lim has written, for a collective imaginary to emerge from a process that was both cognitive and corporeal (2018); and which involved a specific political focus (108) as well as more everyday concerns (108). At Standing Rock, participants constructed these new collective imaginaries through a complex process that combined group education and critique about the resource industries plans and the US government's role in enclosing and displacing the Oceti Sakowin; and at the same time their own historical memories of iconic leaders and collective resistance, and of how to live together in their own territories. Finally, as Estes and Coulthard emphasize, their collective imagining allowed them to project themselves beyond the present to envision a different, more desirable future.

## Media Practices

The Standing Rock media practices followed a time-line that has become the norm for social justice movements in North America in the last decade. The youth led the way as first responders and routers, using social media to reach and expand their networks. Soon after a small corps of Indigenous and non-Indigenous radical media-makers (Unicorn Riot, Digital Smoke Signals, Indigenous Rising, Renegade Media and the Women's Indigenous Media Group), began to produce and distribute short videos via Youtube, and to inventively use their social media channels. News teams from Al Jazeera's *AJ+* and *Russia Today* (RT), as well as independent media outlets such as *Mother Jones*, and *Democracy Now* then began to cover it, especially during the summer of 2016 when a group of young activists organized a relay race to Washington DC to submit a petition of 140,000 signatures (Brígido-Corachán 2017, 72). Later in the fall, another set of activist crews employed drone cameras to film clashes with security forces, providing unedited, wide-angle documentation that proved difficult for law enforcement to challenge and also visually confirmed what the Standing Rock Sioux had said about the proximity of the pipeline to their primary water source and burial sites (Rafsky, 2017). Not until September, when law enforcement and private security working for Energy Transfer attacked the water protectors with pepper spray, water cannons, and rubber bullets, did the dominant commercial media begin coverage.

Brígido-Corachán has documented the work of Indigenous Rising and Indigenous Rising Media who provided important examples of decolonizing media representation, "reshap[ing] the Indigenous subject in the national and global imaginary" and representing a radical form of visual sovereignty (80). Indigenous Rising Media emphasized community, land-based activity, creativity, and everyday resistance in their portrayal of camp life. They created new visual formats for digital channels that challenged Western narratives, deliberately avoiding colonialist tropes of vast and uninhabited landscapes and warriors on horseback, and instead recombining older historical imaginaries with contemporary media aesthetics (70-71). For example, Indigenous Rising Media created several Facebook albums that trace their connection to their anti-colonial era resistance, one of which honors Brenda White Bull, the granddaughter of Sitting Bull,



who last brought the Sioux tribes together against the US government at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (82).

In contrast, when the dominant commercial media did show up, many of their reports did not significantly change the long-standing protest paradigm used for coverage of social movements. Many news reports led with photos and videos of violent confrontation between private security forces and the unarmed water protectors; and featured analyses with police and official government spokespeople, and/or non-Indigenous allies who did not challenge the ideology of capitalist extractivism, nor the belief in the neutrality of the state's legal apparatus (Walker & Walter, 2018).<sup>21</sup> The increased space given to video coverage was also due to the controlling role of Facebook and Google in the news ecology; leveraging their duopoly of the digital advertising market, both corporate digital giants encouraged commercial news publishers to use video to attract viewers, and by 2016, many news organizations were embedding videos in their coverage as a general practice (Moore, 2017).

## Social media practices

Rooted in the land-based mobilization, the Standing Rock narrative was circulated around the world through thousands of supporters acting through an extensive array of digital media as “routers” (Lim 2018). The hashtag #StandingRockIsEverywhere was created by a collective of Indigenous and Black Lives Matter activists, to include all of the dimensions at Standing Rock and resonate with issues in Indigenous territories in the US and beyond (Lane 2018, 208). The hashtag #mniwiconi (water is life) embodied the understanding that water is a material resource which is essential for health, wellness, irrigation, and human survival, and amplified their message and identification as water protectors, not protesters, again emphasizing caring and solidarity, not conflict. Other hashtags, such as #noDAPL and #mniwiconi (water is life), brought attention to the struggle against the pipeline and underscored the importance of water in environmental justice discourse.

At least 1.3 million people shared photographs, videos, Indigenous stories and commentaries with communities upstream, forwarded online syllabi, graphics and animations, and/or participated in discussions and made statements of solidarity (Hearne 2017, Cappelli 2018, Steinman, 2019, Brígido-Corachán, 79). The digital networks provided partic-

---

21 See the comparative content analysis of Fox News and the *New York Times* (Walker and Walter, 2018). Walker and Walter contend that both news outlets provided some coverage of Indigenous people and of their allies. The *New York Times* was more comprehensive and sympathetic. They framed the story as one of law and order and privileged governing authorities over Indigenous water protectors (413). Although the *v* highlighted issues of justice, it did not question the underlying capitalist extractivist logic, nor did it challenge the neutrality of the state's legal apparatus. While they did include quotes from some Indigenous people, many of the reports focused on celebrity endorsements and the at times privileged voices of supporters who knew little about the Sioux experience and did not historicize the colonial legacy of land dispossession, genocide, and racism against First Peoples (Walker & Walter, 2018, 413).



ipants with the space to create and articulate new rhetorics (Cappelli 2018). Musicians and celebrities also participated by creating music videos, some of which attracted millions of viewers on Youtube and other platforms. Indigenous and allied academics created a free online syllabus for Standing Rock to enable educators to bring its lessons to classrooms. Social media reports and especially the videos drew more young supporters to the encampments and prompted solidarity actions in other places across North America and in other world regions.

The Standing Rock encampments were ultimately disbanded in early 2017 and the pipeline project proceeded after one of Donald Trump's first orders as president. Undaunted, the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies continued to mobilize in other arenas. They successfully lobbied several European banks to withdraw their financing of the DAPL project, partly due to the strong connection made with representatives from the Sámi people who had participated in the encampments (Brígido-Corachán 2017, Johnson and Kraft 2017). A petition campaign prompted several banks to sell their shares and abandon their support of other Energy Transfer Partners (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, 74). Then in 2018, the Standing Rock Sioux went back to court to contest Energy Transfer's application to double the pipeline's capacity, arguing that the company has one of the worst records for oil spills (Faith, 2019). In July 2020, in a major victory, a federal judge in the Washington D.C. District Court ordered the owners of the Dakota Access Pipeline to halt operations until the government conducts a full environmental review (Earth Justice 2020).

## The Standing Rock Bump

The Standing Rock mobilization was circulated around the world via the movement's own communication routes and those of the dominant commercial media. The Standing Rock story invigorated movements against extractivism across the region and the globe. Anti-pipeline campaigns across the U.S. and Canada now refer to themselves as the next Standing Rock, and its legacy is carried forward in the collective imagination of all who participated. The social and political ties have deepened within and across Indigenous and environmental movements, establishing bridges and communication networks that continue to facilitate collective action, many of which operate outside of the status quo of state-tribal relations (Steinman, 2019, 1086). The #NoDAPL movement also significantly altered the larger public debate about Indigenous sovereignty and environmentalism in the U.S. and Canada (Brígido-Corachán, 2017, 74). In both countries, a renewed green new deal movement has embraced a vision of much more substantial systemic changes to promote social, political, and environmental justice. Groups such as the Indigenous Environmental Network have supported these changes and nevertheless challenged those leading the Green new deal to engage even further with land-based Indigenous struggles.<sup>22</sup>

---

22 See the statement of the Indigenous Environmental Network on the Green New Deal. <https://www.ienearth.org/green-new-deal/>.



## Conclusion

These three cases of extra-activism represent a new high point for social justice media thus far. Led by an alliance of members of Indigenous and environmental justice movements, they incorporated a hybrid communications repertoire, which combined communications practices based on building place-based communities with those occurring in cyberspace. Importantly, their place-based practices were not focused narrowly on saying no but prefigured another vision of collective production, social reproduction, and spiritual connection, based on rejuvenating long-standing Indigenous knowledges, protocols, and practices. They created a new collective imaginary and ontology to combine educational, spiritual, and community-building actions in both material and immaterial ecologies (Federici, 2019).

Indigenous leaders were keystone actors, with Indigenous women and youth playing leadership roles. In each of the three cases given in this article, Indigenous leaders have drawn from the protocols and teachings of traditional elders, and in all three cases, many of the groups involved operated autonomously from government-organized band councils and tribal governments. The historical relationship with non-Indigenous movements has been altered. Settler allies have been confronted with the need to challenge existing political and environmental analyses, support Indigenous claims for territorial and anti-colonial justice, and incorporate Indigenous practices and knowledges (Temper, 2019).

All three movements reached a new scale by moving out from locally based struggles across the country and hemisphere and then internationally. Like the anti-austerity protest cycle of 2011, this group of extra-activism movements demonstrates how social movements can, if only for a short time, control much of their own communications and media, temporarily by-passing the dominant media to reach a wider public and affect decision-makers. Through their media, much like the Latin America communities affected by extractivism (Llano Arias, 2014, 158-159), they linked the quotidian negative effects of extractivism and of colonialism on their livelihoods, the dispossession of their land, and their cultural identities. Nevertheless, as the legacy of Standing Rock shows, it is still necessary to have recourse to the dominant U.S. corporate news media to achieve international awareness.

These three cases and the cycle of extra-activism they represent are contributions to a new imaginary of environmental justice, forming a growing movement around the world. They challenge capitalist ideologies based on the extraction of natural resources for the good of the few and question the taken-for-granted arguments of governments from the left and the right to support resource exploitation in the name of trickle-down economics, the national interest, or national security. Further, they have begun to portray the possibilities of another set of approaches beyond dependence on fossil fuels and the commodification and exportation of non-renewable resources.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to Kelsey Mays for her work in reviewing video documentaries.

## References

- Alanís, E. (2013). Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the Extractive Industry: Jurisprudence From the Inter-American System of Human Rights. *Goettingen Journal of International Law*, 5, 187–214.
- Barcia, I. (2017). *Women Human Rights Defenders Confronting Extractive Industries: An Overview of Critical Risks and Human Rights Obligations*. Association for Women's Rights in Development and Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition. [https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/whrds-confronting\\_extractive\\_industries\\_report-eng.pdf](https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/whrds-confronting_extractive_industries_report-eng.pdf).
- Bebbington, A. (2015). Political Ecologies of Resource Extraction: Agendas Pendientes. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, 100, 85-98.
- Bebbington, A., & Bury, J. (2013). *Subterranean Struggles: New Dynamics of Mining, Oil, and Gas in Latin America*. University of Texas Press.
- Beyond B. (2017). Rights Versus Responsibilities with Toghestiy and Mel Bazil. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w43j30S1yDI>.
- Bracken, A. (2020). "Protests go mainstream as support for Wet'suwet'en pipeline fight widens." *The Guardian*, February 24, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/14/wetsuweten-coastal-gaslink-pipelineallies>.
- Brand, U., Dietz, K., & Lang, M. (2016). Neo-Extractivism in Latin America: One Side of a New Phase of Global Capitalist Dynamics. *Ciencia Politica* 11(21), 125–159.
- Brígido-Corachán, A. (2017). Material Nature, Visual Sovereignty, and Water Rights: Unpacking the Standing Rock Movement. *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 50(1), 69–90.
- Broad, R., & Fischer-Mackey, J. (2017). From Extractivism towards *buen vivir*: Mining Policy as an Indicator of a New Development Paradigm Prioritising the Environment. *Third World Quarterly* 38(6), 1327–1349.
- Campbell, H. (2014). Video: Beyond Boarding. Inside the Unist'ot'en Camp Blockade. <https://watershedsentinel.ca/articles/inside-the-unistoten-camp-blockade/>
- Cappelli, M.L. (2018). Standing With Standing Rock: Affective Alignment and Artful Resistance at the Native Nations Rise March. *SAGE Open*, July-September, 1–13.



- Caria, S., & Domínguez, R. (2015). Ecuador's *buen vivir*: A New Ideology for Development. *Latin American Perspectives* 43(1), 18–33.
- Coates, K. (2015). *#IdleNoMore and the Remaking of Canada*. University of Regina Press.
- Conde, M. (2017). Resistance to Mining: A Review. *Ecological Economics* 132, 80–90.
- Costanza-Chock, S. (2013). Transmedia Mobilization in the Popular Association of the Oaxacan Peoples, Los Angeles. In B. Cammaerts, A. Mattoni, and P. McCurdy (eds). *Mediation and Protest Movements*. Intellect Books, pp. 95–114.
- Coulthard, G. (2014). *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Downing, J.D. (2013). Towards a Political Economy of Social Movement Media. *Democratic Communiqué* 26(1), 17–28.
- Duarte, M. (2017). Connected Activism: Indigenous Uses of Social Media for Shaping Political Change. *Australasian Journal of Information Systems* Vol. 21, 1–12.
- Dyer-Witheford, N. (2008). For a Compositional Analysis of the Multitude. In W. Bonefeld, ed. *Subverting the Present Imagining the Future: Insurrection, Movement, Commons*. Autonomedia, 247–266.
- Earth Justice (2020). The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Litigation on the Dakota Access Pipeline. <https://earthjustice.org/features/faq-standing-rock-litigation#timeline>.
- Epstein, A. (2015). The Colonialism of the Present: An Interview with Glen Coulthard. *Jacobin*, January 13.
- Estes, N. (2019). *Our history is the future: Standing Rock and the Dakota access pipeline, and the long tradition of indigenous resistance*. Verso Books.
- Federici, S. (2019). *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*. PM Press.
- Gilio-Whitaker, D. (2019). *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*. Beacon Press.
- Gudynas, E. (2018). Nuevas coyunturas entre extractivismos y desarrollo. Los límites del concepto de populismo y la deriva autoritaria. *Ecuador Debate* No. 105, pp. 23–45.
- Hearne, J. (2017). Native to the Device: Thoughts on Digital Indigenous Studies. *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 29(1), 3–26.

- Hogenboom, B. (2015). Latin America's Transformative New Extraction and Local Conflicts Review Essay. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* (99), 143–151.
- Jacobs, B., McAdam, S., Neve, A., & Walia, H. (2020) Settler governments are breaking international law, not Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, say 200 lawyers, legal scholars. *The Star*.
- Jalbert, K., Willow, A., Casagrande, D., & Paladino, S. (2017). *ExtrACTION: Impacts, Engagements, and Alternative Futures*. Routledge.
- Kidd, D. (2014a). We Can Live without Gold but Not without Water. In A. L. Roth & M. Huff (eds.) *Project Censored 2014*. PM Press, pp. 223-243.
- Kidd, D. with Fugazzola, C. (2014b). Dreaming Joe Hill: Insurgent Communications in Contests over Our Common Resources. In D. Leadbeater, ed. *Resources, Empire and Labour: Globalization Crises and Alternatives*. Fernwood Publishing, pp.304-318.
- Kidd, D. (2016). Extra-activism. *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*. Vol. 28, No. 1, 1–9.
- Kidd, D. (2019). Challenging Knowledge-Making in the Extractive Zone. *Information, Communication & Society* Vol. 22, No. 7, 954–970.
- Kidd, D. (In press). Mobilizing with Video in the Extractive Zone. In C. Robé & S. Charbonneau (eds). *InsUrgent Media from the Front: A Global Media Activism Reader*. University of Indiana Press.
- Kidd, D. (2020). Standing rock and the Indigenous commons, *Popular Communication: The International Journal of Media and Culture*, 18(3), 233-247.
- Klein, N. (2014) *This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate*. Simon & Schuster.
- Lane, T. (2018). The Frontline of Refusal: Indigenous Women Warriors of Standing Rock, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 31(3), 197–214.
- Lim, M. (2018). Roots, Routes, and Routers: Communications and Media of Contemporary Social Movements. *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, 20(2), 92–136.
- Llano Arias, V. (2014). Communication practices and citizens' participation in the Colombian water movement. [Ph. D. Dissertation], University College Dublin, pp. 1–267.
- Mattoni, A. (2013). Repertoires of Communication In Social Movement Processes. In: B. Cammaerts, A. Mattoni, & P. Mc Curdy (eds.). *Mediation and Protest Movements*. Intellect, pp. 39-56.



- McCreary, T., & Turner, J. (2018). The contested scales of Indigenous and settler jurisdiction: Unist'ot'en struggles with Canadian pipeline governance. *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. 99, No. 3, pp. 223–245.
- Moore, H. (2017). The secret cost of pivoting to video. *Columbia Journalism Review*. [https://www.cjr.org/business\\_of\\_news/pivot-to-video.php](https://www.cjr.org/business_of_news/pivot-to-video.php).
- Ødegaard, C., & Rivera, J. (eds). (2019). *Indigenous Life Projects and Extractivism: Ethnographies from South America*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Özkaynak, B., Rodriguez-Labajos, B., Aydın, C.İ., Yanez, I., & Garibay, C. (2015). Towards Environmental Justice Success in Mining Conflicts: An Empirical Investigation, EJOLT Report No. 14.
- Pérez-Rincón, M, Vargas-Morales, J., & Martínez-Alier, J., (2019). Mapping and Analyzing Ecological Distribution Conflicts in Andean Countries. *Ecological Economics* Vol. 157, pp. 80–91.
- Rafsky, S. (2017). Eyes in the Sky: Drones at Standing Rock and the Next Frontier of Human Rights Video. Witness Media Lab, November 2. <https://lab.witness.org/projects/drones-standing-rock/>.
- Raftopoulos, M. (2017). Contemporary Debates on Social-Environmental Conflicts, Extractivism and Human Rights in Latin America. *The International Journal of Human Rights* 21(4), 387–404.
- Robé, C. (2017). *Breaking the Spell: A History of Anarchist Filmmakers, Videotape Guerrillas, and Digital Ninjas*. PM Press.
- Rueck, D. (2014, September). Commons, enclosure, and resistance in Kahnawa: Ke Mo-hawk Territory, 1850–1900. *The Canadian Historical Review*, 95(3), 352–381. doi:10.3138/chr.2556.
- Steinman, E. (2019). Why was Standing Rock and the #NoDAPL Campaign So Historic? Factors Affecting American Indian Participation in Social Movement Collaborations and Coalitions. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (42), 7.
- Submedia. (2017). Killing the Black Snake: Behind the Scenes of the #NoDAPL Struggle. <https://sub.media/video/trouble-season-1-episode-1/>
- Svampa, M. (2015). The 'Commodities Consensus' and Valuation Languages in Latin America. *Alternautas* 2(1), 45–59.
- Temper, L. (2019). Blocking Pipelines, Unsettling Environmental Justice: From Rights of Nature to Responsibility to Territory. *Local Environment* 24(2), 94–112.



- Treré, E. (2019). *Hybrid Media Activism: Ecologies, Imaginaries, Algorithms*. Routledge.
- Turner, T., & Brownhill, L. (2004). We want our land back: Gendered class analysis, the second contradiction of capitalism and social movement theory. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, 15(4), 21–40. doi:10.1080/1045575042000287307.
- Unist’ot’en Camp. (2020). Background of the Campaign. <http://unistoten.camp/no-pipelines/background-of-the-campaign/>. Last consulted Sept. 14, 2020.
- Vásquez, P. (2014). *Oil Sparks in the Amazon: Local Conflicts, Indigenous Populations, and Natural Resources*. University of Georgia Press.
- Veltmeyer, H., & Petras, J. (2014). *The New Extractivism: A Post-Neoliberal Development Model or Imperialism of the Twenty-First Century?* Zed Books.
- Walker, J., & Walter, P. (2018). Learning about Social Movements through News Media: Deconstructing New York Times and Fox News Representations of Standing Rock. *International Journal Of Lifelong Education* 37(4), 401–418.
- Walter, M., & Martinez-Alier, J. (2010). How to Be Heard When Nobody Wants to Listen: Community Action against Mining in Argentina. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue canadienne d'études du développement* 30(1–2), 281–301.
- West Coast Environmental Law Association. (2017). Brief on Legal Risks for Trans Mountain. <https://www.wcel.org/publication/kinder-morgan-canada-limited-brief-legal-risks-trans-mountain>.
- Wiles, T. (2017). Standing Rock’s Ripple Effects. *High Country News* 49(1), 4–19.
- Willow, A. (2019). *Understanding ExtrACTIVISM: Culture and Power in Natural Resource Disputes*. Routledge.
- Wood, L. (2015). Idle No More, Facebook and Diffusion. *Social Movement Studies* 14(5), 615–621.