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Pipeline Dreams and Nightmares: Media Representation of Indigenous Peoples and the Trans Mountain Expansion Project

Résumé

Depuis l'achat de l'oléoduc de Trans Mountain par le gouvernement fédéral canadien en mai 2018, un débat animé a été généré sur notre dépendance continue aux combustibles fossiles. Les peuples autochtones constituent une partie prenante clé dans ce projet d'expansion qui vise à tripler le montant de bitume dilué transporter de l'Alberta vers la côte pacifique de la Colombie-Britannique. Les nations au coeur de la zone pétrolière de l'Alberta ont eu une relation longue et difficile avec les impacts de l'extraction des sables bitumineux, cependant, beaucoup se sont maintenant rangés du côté de l'industrie pétrolière, car elle a joué un rôle important dans le développement d'une base économique sûre pour les nations. À l'inverse, de nombreux peuples autochtones vivant le long des 1 150 kilomètres de l'oléoduc s'opposent au projet d'expansion, exprimant clairement leur inquiétude quant aux risques associés, notamment les déversements de pétrole. Cet article cherche à explorer les façons dont les points de vue autochtones ont été dépeints à travers un examen de 368 articles publiés par Radio Canada, le Canadian Television Network et l'Aboriginal Peoples Television Network de 2018 à aujourd'hui. La seule conclusion claire est que, comme il n'existe pas de corps homogène ou contigu de peuples autochtones, il n'y a pas de consensus autochtone partagé sur l'avenir du pétrole sur et sous leurs terres.

Abstract

Since the federal government's landmark purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline for \$4.5 billion in May 2018, a heated debate has generated over our continued dependence on fossil fuels. A key stakeholder in the expansion project that seeks to triple the flow of diluted bitumen from Alberta to British Columbia's Pacific coast are Indigenous Peoples. Nations in the heart of Alberta's "Oil patch" have had a long and difficult relationship with the impacts of tar sands extraction, however, many have now sided with the oil industry as it has played an important role in both developing a secure economic base for Nations while providing communities with a new-found sense of agency. Conversely, many Indigenous peoples along the 1,150-kilometer pipeline oppose the expansion project, clearly expressing their concern for the associated risks, namely oil spills. This article

represents identifies the ways in which Indigenous views have been portrayed through a review of 368 news articles published by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Television Network, and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network from 2018 to the present day. The only clear conclusion is that as there is no homogenous or contiguous body of Indigenous peoples, there is no shared Indigenous consensus on the future of oil on and beneath their homelands.

Introduction: To Build or Not to Build?

The Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project (TMX) is one of the most controversial energy-infrastructure endeavours in modern Canadian history. The 1,150-kilometre pipeline transports diluted bitumen—a dense form of petroleum—from Edmonton, Alberta in the east to its western terminus in Burnaby, British Columbia on the Pacific Ocean. Since its initial construction in 1953, the pipeline has enabled the export of Canadian oil to foreign markets other than the US, which currently receives 99% of Canada's oil exports at a discounted price, resulting in a suggested loss of \$15 billion annually (APTN National News 2018a). In 2012, then owners Kinder Morgan Canada proposed tripling the capacity of the pipeline to approximately 890,000 barrels per day (bbl/d) in order to increase foreign exports (Trans Mountain Corporation n.d.). After initial government approval in 2016, large-scale protests opposing the project took place across the country and when the Government of British Columbia threatened to restrict the flow of oil through the pipeline on its territory, Kinder Morgan Canada halted investment in the project, leading to the landmark \$4.5 billion purchase of the pipeline by the federal government on 29 May 2018 (Francis 2018). Suddenly, Canadian taxpayers became the unlikely owners of a major pipeline expansion project. This led to a veritable explosion of voices opposing and supporting the project, notably from the 129 Indigenous Nations living along the proposed pipeline expansion route (House 2018). While many decried the TMX, citing the danger of potential spills due to increased oil flow and the harm exponential tanker traffic at the pipeline terminus would cause, others considered it to be an opportunity, namely to generate considerable revenue for their communities. When the government announced that it was looking to sell the pipeline shortly after its purchase, several Indigenous-led groups stepped forward to propose purchasing the TMX, a first in Canadian history (Pimentel 2019).

As many other major non-renewable energy projects, the TMX has been anything but smooth. Over the past four years, the project has been quashed due to insufficient consultations with impacted Indigenous Nations along the route and an inadequate marine environmental impact assessment, reapproved, halted due to extreme weather events, and has been the topic of fierce debate during the last two

federal elections (2019 and 2021), featuring prominently across local, national, and international news outlets. I suggest that the TMX is a flashpoint issue due to the fact that it represents a paradox in current environmental policy making. While the adverse impacts of the fossil fuel industry are well known and transitioning towards renewable forms of energy have been prioritized, the Canadian government has invested billions of dollars into the expansion of an existing piece of infrastructure part of what Carola Hein (2021) has termed the global petroleumscape, a layered physical and social landscape that comprises the diverse spaces of petroleum facilitating its ubiquity and continued use in everyday life. The key argument being made by the federal government is that the TMX is a project of national interest that will fund Canada's ongoing green transition—i.e. depend on oil exports now in order to wean off of them later (Trudeau 2019). Opponents have fiercely criticized this plan and have pointed to the hypocrisy of a government that has touted its plans to tackle the climate emergency by further perpetuating the extraction and distribution of fossil fuels.

These differing views have been at the forefront of media coverage, especially since the federal government's purchase of the pipeline in May 2018. Given the important role Indigenous Peoples have played thus far in both supporting and opposing the project, this paper presents and analyzes how Indigenous views of the TMX have been and continue to be discussed on the Canadian national stage. In order to do so, news articles from three national news outlets, the Canadian Television Network (CTV), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) are analyzed over a four-year span, dating from the initial pipeline purchase until this paper's initial submission (May 2022), representing the first comparative study of these three national broadcasters concerning this topic, all of which were chosen due to their freely accessible online content available to both Canadian and international audiences. The main questions at hand are how this widely distributed online content differs across these three national news providers and how the representation of key themes and actors can shape both public opinion and policy (Miller 2008; Skea 1993; Ramos 2006), serving what Adams (2017) has called a "metaphysics of encounter" between the mainstream public and stories and peoples on the ground.

The study is two-pronged in its approach as it first gathers, compares, and contrasts news data concerning the TMX and Indigenous Peoples, and secondly breaks down three prominent themes that arise, namely the clear geographic divide of opinions between British Columbia and Alberta, the tension between fostering economic development and ensuring environmental protection, and the difficult task of upholding the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples. This analysis is supplemented by the direct views of the various Indigenous actors as stated by themselves. By doing so, the paper seeks to identify which news outlet most effectively engages with content related to Indigenous views of the TMX and subsequently how coverage can better reflect the portrayal of Indigenous views.

Drawing on previous work concerning Indigenous Peoples and media coverage (Wilkes et al. 2010; Miller 2008; Budd 2021; Karsgaard/MacDonald 2020), this paper builds on the existing literature and provides a valuable contribution by 1) providing a new framework for studying online news content, which could be useful for future studies involving Indigenous views or involvement in major projects, and by 2) engaging with the TMX, a case study that provides ample inspiration, motivation, and illustration (Siggelkow 2007) to better understand the precarious pursuit of furthering fossil fuel projects in order to finance a green transition, and how resistance toward and support for such projects is represented across the media landscape.

Literature Review

As with all components of settler society, Indigenous Peoples and the media have had a long and often tenuous relationship. Given the broad spectrum of both news providers and mediums (from newspaper to online content and social media), the representation of Indigenous views of key events, projects, or issues is presented in diverse ways from a variety of angles. Due to the prominence of Indigenous issues in settler societies such as Canada, Indigenous Peoples and issues feature prominently across the media landscape. As Miller (2008) suggests in his study of the Ipperwash standoff in 1995, news coverage is a key factor in both public perception and government action (see also Skea 1993; Ramos 2006). As many 'clashes' or standoffs take place in remote areas, media coverage provides the general public with the only exposure to the issues at hand, and thus carries significant importance on how issues and actors can be framed. While reporters have the responsibility of serving as independent verifiers of facts, the media has often promoted racist ideologies in maintaining narratives of white dominance or victimization (Miller 2008). Thus Indigenous Peoples have often been framed as a threat to national interests throughout various standoffs in Canadian history, almost exclusively involving land disputes such as the Oka crisis of 1990, the Gustafsen Lake and Ipperwash standoffs in 1995, the Grand River land dispute in 2006, the Wet'su'we'ten dispute over the Coastal GasLink pipeline starting in 2019, and now also in relation to protests to the TMX. Miller therefore formulates a framing model that can help us better understand how Indigenous views or positions are presented in the media. He identifies three categories within this model: 1) Indigenous Peoples being portrayed as troublemakers or disruptors; 2) Indigenous Peoples portrayed as having legitimate grounds for a dispute; and 3) Indigenous Peoples portrayed as disputing or quarrelling amongst themselves (Miller 2008). He concludes that stories relating to category 1 (and to a lesser extent category 3) are the most picked up, while those in category 2 are not. While his research focuses primarily on the Ipperwash standoff of 1995, the framing model does provide a suitable framework for analyzing other disputes between Indigenous Peoples and the settler state.

Wilkes et al. (2010) also make an important contribution to the topic of Indigenous representation in Canadian media. Their study considered newspaper coverage of Indigenous standoffs and protests between 1985 and 1995, a period of major mobilization by Indigenous Peoples in Canada, characterized by standoffs over land disputes that garnered extensive media coverage (Ramos 2006). They point to the importance that significant media attention provides in elevating a story to the national level and that ongoing coverage of an event or issue signals its importance and increases the likelihood that a broader audience will gain an understanding about the event (Wilkes et al. 2010). Moreover, as they suggest, the media seeks to present stories that are dramatic and sensational, providing high “news value,” that is if the story is of relevance, immediacy, novelty, innovation, or is dramatic (Wilkes et al. 2010). The TMX contains all of these criteria and therefore makes it a particularly valuable case study of a major project involving Indigenous Peoples and the country as a whole. While Wilkes et al. cover a range of events over a ten-year period, they focus on precise events such as the Oka, Ipperwash, and Gustafsen Lake crises, which were relatively short in their duration, thus variations of longer events were ignored and do not speak to shifts in coverage over time, something that this study attempts to do by focusing on one event over a four-year period. Furthermore as is the case with Miller (2008), focus is placed on newspaper coverage rather than online news content. Wilkes et al. recognize this, and state that online news media has dramatically changed the nature of news production, which represents an important new avenue of research, especially in terms of how Indigenous views are represented across the media landscape. As Clark suggests, “Canadian research on media representations of minorities has focused more on newspaper coverage than television, despite legislation calling on broadcasters to reflect the country’s ‘multicultural and multiracial nature’ on the air waves” (2014, paragraph 1). Relating to human geography, Adams (2017) suggests that questions of representation are increasingly central to geographic scholarship. Communication (such as news media) is not merely the transmission of ideas and information between places and agents, it is also in event in which two or more agents encounter each other and come away altered by the event, forming the basis of what he suggests is an emerging “metaphysics of encounter” (Adams 2017). Human geographies, he continues, are dynamic processes of becoming rather than static patterns, giving priority to flows—of information, oil, and capital in the case of this study. This new metaphysics of encounter encourages “people [to] engage with a wide range of different media and simultaneously encounter other people and things, near and far, still or mobile, perpetually redefining ‘here’ and ‘there’” (Adams 2017, 371). I suggest that online news coverage plays a vital role in this metaphysics of encounter as it brings issues of national interest occurring in potentially remote locales (such as most of the TMX) into contact with both national and international audiences.

Given the importance of the TMX to national interest, there have been several studies that have touched upon its relevance and representation through various

mediums. Two studies of particular relevance are Budd (2021) and Kaarsgard and MacDonald (2020). The former reviews newspaper coverage, specifically relating to the Federal Court of Appeal's decision to quash TMX approval in 2018, while the latter focuses on discussions occurring over social media (specifically on Instagram) leading up to the purchase of the pipeline in 2018. As Kaarsgard and MacDonald suggest, a wide range of narratives emerge when considering social media content related to the TMX, including pro-pipeline discourses but also competing anti-pipeline ideals of Indigenous sovereignty, critiques of the settler state, mainstream environmentalism, and local pride and protectionism (2020). This paper builds upon these studies by focusing on the comparison of online news stories from three different national outlets, but differs significantly in that it addresses a later period of the project, namely from the TMX's landmark purchase by the federal government in May 2018 to May 2022, covering a four-year period that saw a wide range of court challenges, protests, and construction milestones of the pipeline. The following section provides a detailed overview of the TMX and briefly situates the events that have taken place and garnered significant media coverage, specifically in relation to Indigenous Peoples.

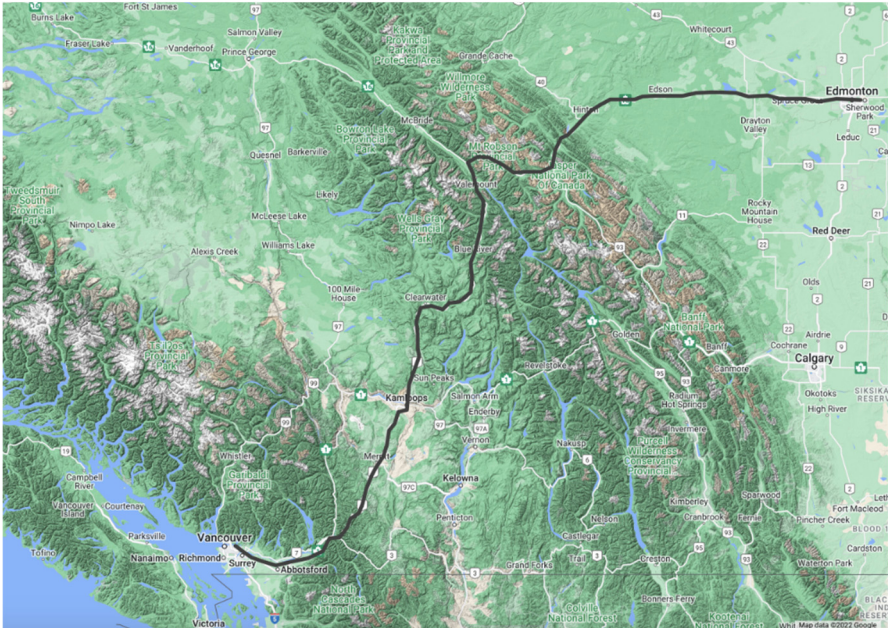
Overview of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project

The TMX like previous major pipeline proposals such as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline in Canada and the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines (DAPL) in the United States, has become a topic of fierce debate within Canadian society. While the former pipelines were ultimately cancelled due in large part to the efforts of Indigenous activists, the TMX differs significantly in two regards. First, it is a project that seeks to expand an existing pipeline—the original Trans Mountain pipeline built in 1953—and second, it has received a great deal of support from most of the Indigenous Nations located along the pipeline route. Here, Carola Hein's concept of the petroleumscape is of particular relevance. The petroleumscape embodies the diverse spatial emanations of oil, including refineries, storage sites, pipelines, office buildings, gas stations, and all oil-related infrastructure, which together form the constitutive elements of a global network connected through their relation to this single commodity and its group of industrial players (Hein 2021). Hein further suggests that “[t]he physical structures and spaces of oil require extensive investment, and once funding has been sunk into the soil or the seafloor, economic and governance systems tend to reinforce earlier investments” (2021, 7). This statement relates well to the Trans Mountain Pipeline, which has been transporting diluted bitumen from Alberta's tar sands for nearly 60 years. Despite the fact that tripling the flow of oil from 300,000 to 890,000 bbl/d represents a massive undertaking, the pipeline's existing presence has seemingly made it easier to argue for its continued use, especially as a means of tripling Canadian exports to countries other than the United States.

Nevertheless, the project is extremely controversial given that it further encourages the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels, and places greater environmental risks on the natural environments and communities located along the route who would be severely impacted by a potential spill. Many of those impacted by tar sands extraction and the TMX have been Indigenous Peoples as both are located in the heart of traditional First Nations and Metis territories who have been historically displaced by the Canadian settler state. As Simpson asserts, “settler colonialism is predicated on a territorial possession by some, and thus, a dispossession of others” (2011, 205). Willow has termed the tar sands as a form of ‘extractive imperialism’ that “reproduces the colonialism of old, with symbolic and material benefits continuing to flow into already empowered (and usually distant) hands and local peoples continuing to bear disproportionate environmental and social burdens” (2016, 4). However, while the adverse impacts of the tar sands have generated fierce opposition and criticism by many Indigenous leaders and environmental groups worldwide (Preston 2017; Huseman/Short 2012), they have come to represent a key economic driver for many Indigenous Nations, serving as an important source of revenue for education, housing, and infrastructure projects for communities that have longed faced inadequate support from the federal government. As Tsing questions, “What emerges in damaged landscapes, beyond the call of industrial promise and ruin?” (2015, 18) She suggests that people living in damaged landscapes, such as the tar sands, often develop a form of ‘contaminated diversity’ that “implicates survivors in histories of greed, violence, and environmental destruction” (Tsing 2015, 33). As a result, in the face of large-scale environmental change and extractivism, oil has come to symbolize a means of achieving a better future for many Indigenous Nations after 150 years of colonial rule. It is therefore unsurprising that projects such as the TMX, which seek to expand the export capacity of bitumen and increase revenues that will contribute to both community development and Indigenous agency, are supported by leaders making what could be interpreted as the best out of a bad environmental situation (Romero 2019). This is precisely why the tar sands debate and, by extension, the debate over the TMX, is fraught with differing stakes and views within Indigenous Nations. It is important to recognize here that the ongoing project of settler colonialism has indeed facilitated the spread of the global petroleumscape.

The Trans Mountain Pipeline was first built in 1953 to transport diluted bitumen from the tar sands to the Pacific coast, with an initial capacity of was 150,000 bbl/d. In order to increase the flow and generated revenues, the pipeline was upgraded in the early 2000s as a means of doubling its capacity to its current level of 300,000 bbl/d (The Canadian Press 2018). The owner of the pipeline at the time, Kinder Morgan Canada, a subsidiary of the US-based Kinder Morgan located in Texas, pressed for further expansion in 2012, this time pushing for a much more ambitious upgrade that would nearly triple the pipeline’s capacity to a flow of 890,000 bbl/d (The Canadian Press 2018). Following a detailed review process, Canada’s National Energy Board

(NEB—now known as the Canada Energy Regulator) recommended approval of the project, which was in turn granted by the newly-elected Liberal federal government in November 2016 (The Canadian Press 2018). This came as a considerable surprise as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had billed that his government as one that would address both the threat of climate change and push for reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, two areas of policy that had been arguably neglected during the previous ten years of conservative rule under Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Linnitt 2015).



Map 1: The 1,150-kilometer Trans Mountain Pipeline. The expansion project seeks to twin the existing line shown here (map heading—North). Source: Author; pipeline route specifications (Natural Resources Canada 2020).

Meanwhile, the following year, a new provincial government was formed in British Columbia through a coalition of the New Democratic and Green parties, which staunchly opposed the TMX, creating uncertainty for the project amongst Kinder Morgan shareholders (The Canadian Press 2018). The provincial government suggested passing legislation that would restrict the flow of oil on its territory, launching a bitter feud between Alberta and British Columbia, including a short-lived ban of B.C. wine and the passing of ‘turn off the taps’ legislation that enabled Alberta to stop its flow of oil altogether to B.C. (APTN National News 2018b). This uncertainty led to Kinder Morgan suspending non-essential spending on the project in April 2018. It was at this point that the federal government stepped in, announcing on 29

May 2018 that it would purchase the pipeline and expansion project using \$4.5 billion of taxpayer money (APTN National News 2018a). Overnight, Canadians became the owners of a major fossil fuel investment project, which was celebrated by some and lauded by others, resulting in a new wave of national protests. Opponents were quickly appeased when the Federal Court of Appeal quashed the initial project approval, citing two main concerns: the lack of meaningful consultation with the 129 Indigenous Nations along the pipeline route and the inadequate environmental impact assessment that had been conducted in relation to the potential impacts of exponential tanker traffic (up to ten times the current amount) in the Burrard Inlet, which is home to a vulnerable community of Southern resident killer whales (Federal Court of Appeal 2018). This led to a renewed round of consultations in late 2018 and early 2019, which then Natural Resources Minister Seamus O'Regan called "the most comprehensive consultation ever undertaken for a major project in Canada's history" (APTN National News 2020a, paragraph 20), and the drafting of a robust marine protection plan in the event of a potential spill. While the government considered other possible alternatives to the TMX, the NEB made it clear that existing pipelines were running at maximum capacity and that the only way to realistically get more oil to market was to build more of them (Blackburn 2019).

In June 2019, despite continued opposition from many levels, including several B.C. First Nations such as the Tsleil-Waututh Nation located at the pipeline terminus, which is arguably the highest-risk point of the pipeline (Hamelin 2019), the federal government approved the TMX for a second time, with construction beginning again in December. Further legal challenges ensued, but finally, in July 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the government had corrected the deficiencies outlined by the Federal Court of Appeal in 2018, thus making way for the project's construction (Pashagumskum 2020). Despite a number of delays and a ballooning cost (now estimated at \$21.4 billion), the TMX is slated for completion in the third quarter of 2023 (Stephenson 2022). Using the case of the TMX, this paper now considers how the views of Indigenous Peoples concerning the project are represented across three national news outlets in Canada. The next section provides a detailed methodology of the study and the reasoning behind the choice of the three national news outlets, which represents the first comparative study of its kind.

Methodology

To effectively capture the main media discourse related to Indigenous views of the TMX, news stories from three major Canadian national news outlets were collected, namely from the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and the Canadian Television Network (CTV). The body of data this paper considers relates specifically to the news articles published online through each of the three television and media outlets' 'News' sections. The main rationale for this decision is that online content from these outlets is freely

accessible to all Canadians, and as a result has a significant reach across both television and online platforms.

Selected News Outlets

The choice of media news outlets requires further explanation. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was selected as it is Canada's publicly owned (and funded) news and information service. The news outlet was founded in 1941 and as their mission statement shares: "We are rooted in every region of the country and report on Canada and the world to provide a Canadian perspective on news and current affairs." (CBC News 2021, paragraph 1) Important to note is that the federal broadcast regulator, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) requires broadcasters to uphold cultural diversity and enhance opportunities for 'marginalized' groups such as women, visible minorities, Indigenous Peoples, and people with disabilities (Clark 2014). In line with the CRTC's mandate, CBC News states that it "is committed to accurately reflecting the range of experiences and points of view of all citizens. All Canadians, of whatever origins, perspectives and beliefs, should feel that our news and current affairs coverage is relevant to them and lives up to our principles" (2021, paragraph 6), and continues to state that "[w]e have a special responsibility to reflect regional and cultural diversity, as well as fostering respect and understanding across regions" (2021, paragraph 7). While CBC is recognized as among the most neutral news providers, striving to provide unbiased news coverage, it has often been the target of public scrutiny, especially from the Conservative Party of Canada, who have argued for the defunding of CBC, which they suggest caters to a center-left audience (Platt 2020; Barber 2008).

The second Canadian national news outlet selected for this study is the Canadian Television Network (CTV), which unlike CBC, is Canada's largest privately owned television network, founded in 1961 and acquired by Bell Canada Enterprises (BCE Inc.) in 2000, the country's largest communications company. Also operating in regions across the country, Bell Media, a subsidiary of BCE Inc., states that "CTV News is Canada's most-watched news organization both locally and nationally, and has a network of national, international, and local news operations" (Bell Media 2022, paragraph 1). While CBC is portrayed as center-left leaning, CTV is often considered as catering to a more center-right audience (Barber 2008). CTV's mission statement shares that "CTV News is committed to producing journalism that is accurate, fair and complete," and that their "journalists act with honesty, transparency, and independence, including from conflicts of interest" (CTV News 2022, paragraph 1). In its diversity statement, CTV News differs from CBC by specifically mentioning certain groups, stating, "[a]s part of Bell Media, it is a core principle of CTV News to represent ethnocultural groups, Indigenous people and persons with disabilities in a balanced and accurate manner" (CTV News 2022, paragraph 2). They continue by stating that "Our commitment to diversity is also reflected in the types of stories we report" (CTV News 2022, paragraph 3), while also providing examples of news stories covering

diversity, namely the recent Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry.

The third and final news outlet considered in this study is the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). Compared to CBC and CTV, APTN is a significantly smaller news provider, which like CBC is publicly funded. Launched on 1 September 1999, APTN was the result of many years of various pilot projects that sought to produce Indigenous-related content for and by Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In 1998, a CRTC report stated that a national Indigenous channel should be “widely available throughout Canada in order to serve the diverse needs of the various Indigenous communities, as well as other Canadians” (APTN 2022, paragraph 20). The CRTC Committee on Extension of Service to Northern and Remote Communities concluded that “Canada needed to step up and provide Indigenous Peoples with opportunities to preserve their language and culture through broadcasting and other communications.” (APTN 2022, paragraph 31) As APTN states, this was seen as a major catalyst of change for Indigenous broadcasting and led to the creation of a TV newscast dedicated to sharing stories of Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous Peoples (APTN National News 2019). Since 2002, APTN National News has been running Monday-Friday newscasts, covering stories from an Indigenous perspective and reaches over 10 million households in Canada (APTN 2022). As suggested by its mission statement, it is committed to producing content for and by Indigenous Peoples, and I would also advance that it serves as an important source of education and awareness for non-Indigenous Canadians, acting as a means of engaging with Indigenous content and worldviews. Despite the fact that it publishes significantly fewer news articles when compared to CBC and CTV News, given that this study focuses on the representation of Indigenous views of the TMX, APTN News’ inclusion as one of the main sources of news articles is crucial, as will become clear in the following presentation of results.

Search Criteria

Using the online news databases of APTN, CBC, and CTV News, keyword searches were performed, using the entry ‘trans mountain pipeline.’ Additional searches with ‘tmx’ and ‘pipeline’ were also performed, however the sheer amount of results related to the ‘trans mountain pipeline’ entry produced a total of approximately 3,000 news articles. The period selected for this study comprises all news stories relating to the TMX from 29 May 2018 to 29 May 2022. The start date of the study period relates to the date the federal government announced its purchase of the TMX, thus propelling the issue to new heights in the Canadian media landscape given that Canadian taxpayers were now directly tied to the project. The end date of the study period relates to just before this paper was submitted, completing a four-year block.

Results

According to the search criteria, filtering news articles relating to the TMX from the period of 29 May 2018 to 29 May 2022, a total of 2,848 articles were retrieved across the three national news outlets included in this study. CTV News published the largest number of articles (1,496), with CBC News publishing slightly fewer (1,284) and APTN News publishing a fraction compared to the two larger news outlets (73), due in part to its smaller size and operating capacity. An important consideration to note is that while APTN and CTV News articles appeared in reverse chronological order upon keyword searches facilitating a clear cut-off point of 29 May 2018, CBC News articles were sorted using another algorithm, potentially related to degree of accuracy, which necessitated sifting through 2,954 articles related to the 'trans mountain pipeline' entry published on the website database.

Following this initial search, all articles within the study period were consulted and those relating to Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and groups were identified, significantly diminishing the gap of coverage between all three national news outlets. Given these criteria, CBC News produced the largest number of articles (167), followed by CTV News (157), and finally APTN News (44). When compared to the entire body of articles relating to the TMX, this reveals an interesting trend.

As APTN News offers the highest percentage of articles relating to both the TMX and Indigenous Peoples (60%), followed by CBC News (13%), and CTV News (10%), these numbers confirm APTN News' commitment to providing news coverage from an Indigenous perspective, while also highlighting both CBC and CTV News' commitment to feature content reflecting diversity, albeit at a much lower rate.

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the number of articles relating to Indigenous Peoples and the TMX that have appeared per year within the study period of 2018 to 2022. Evidently, 2018 and 2019 account for the largest number of articles due to the initial pipeline purchase and the subsequent legal challenges. Following the Supreme Court's decision in July 2020 that the government had sufficiently carried out meaningful engagements with Indigenous Peoples, the number of articles drastically reduces as the project was then able to proceed unhindered by legal action. In addition, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, public focus on the TMX decreased, so much so that the Alberta Energy Minister, Sonya Savage suggested that "Now is a great time to be building a pipeline because you can't have protests of more than 15 people" (Weber 2020, paragraph 4), referring to the wave of protests that had occurred at different worksites and cities prior to the pandemic.

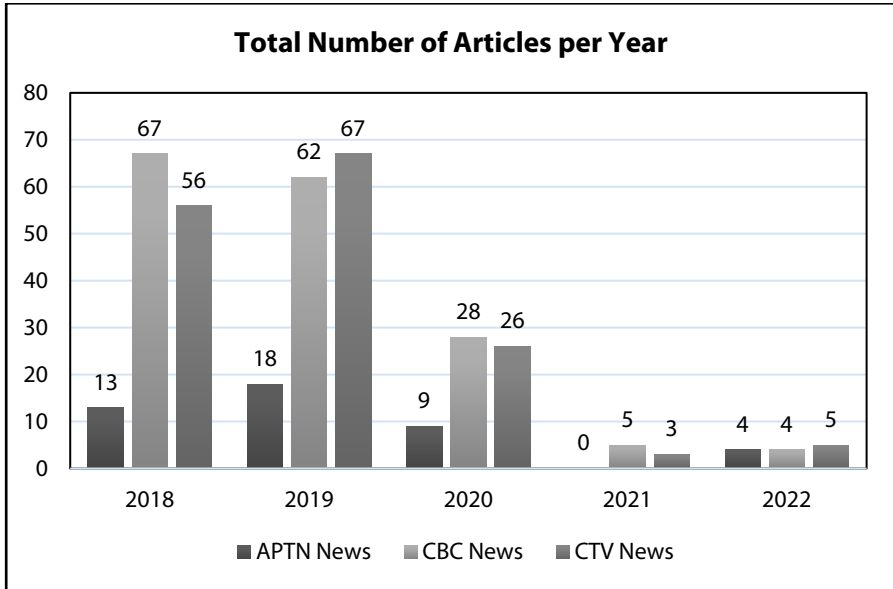


Figure 1: Total number of articles per year (2018–2022). Source: Author.

Returning back to the content of the articles, once those relating to the TMX and Indigenous Peoples were identified, they were coded according to four main categories: 1) Supporters, 2) Opponents, 3) Both, and 4) General Information. The purpose of these categories is to identify which groups are the subject of the news articles, namely interested parties who support the project, those that oppose it, articles whose main focus considered both groups, and finally articles relating general information regarding the TMX, including information detailing its construction and cost updates, technical problems, and background information about impact assessments and approval processes. These thematic codes are featured in *table 1* according to total number and total percentage regarding the representation of interested parties in the news articles. As can be seen across all three national news outlets, there are a greater number of articles that focus on opponents of the TMX. Kaarsgard and MacDonald (2020) have suggested in their study of Instagram posts relating to the TMX from July 2011 to July 2018 that this is likely related to the pipeline's existing approval, with public discussion focused more so on movements of resistance (despite the ten-month period between August 2018 and June 2019, when the TMX's fate was uncertain due to the Federal Court of Appeal's temporary quashing of the project's approval).

Of particular interest in *table 1*, is the total number of articles relating to supporters of the TMX by CTV News (45) and the total number of articles representing both predominant views by CBC News (14). The former perhaps reflects CTV News' slight

center-right political leaning with a focus on the economy, with many articles centering on the various Indigenous business ventures seeking to purchase the TMX. Conversely, CBC News published far more articles that considered both sides of the issue for a total of 14 (compared to 5 by CTV News and 1 by APTN), perhaps reflecting CBC’s attempt to maintain politically unbiased reporting (Barber 2008).

	Codes				
	Supporters	Opponents	Both	General Information	Total
Number of stories					
APTN News	13	27	1	3	44
CBC News	35	71	14	46	167
CTV News	45	72	5	35	157
Percentage of stories					
APTN News	30%	61%	2%	7%	100%
CBC News	21%	43%	8%	28%	100%
CTV News	29%	46%	3%	22%	100%

Table 1: Representation of thematic codes as total number and total percentage of stories. Source: Author.

When considering the percentage of stories related to the different interested parties, it is clear that APTN News articles focus more on coverage of supporters and opponents of the project, accounting for 30% and 61% respectively. When reviewing the individual articles, it becomes clear that APTN News carries out many in-depth and one-on-one interviews with different actors connected to the TMX. Both CBC and CTV News also included in-depth analysis of different actors’ perspectives, but a greater share of reporting was given towards articles detailing general information of the TMX.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the geographic representation of the articles by total number and percentage. Three main regions were identified and coded: British Columbia, Alberta, and Canada as a whole. As the TMX is located within British Columbia and Alberta, articles relating specifically to these two provinces accounted for the majority of articles across all three national news outlets (APTN—57%, CBC—64%, and CTV—66%). A greater number of articles reflected views from Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia as opposed to those in Alberta, and as is demonstrated, there is a clear geographic distinction between views of Indigenous Peoples located in these two provinces. Articles coded to the Canada category related to multiple Canadian geographies, namely articles concerning the general consultation process across the country and opinions of political leaders outside of British Columbia and Alberta.

Geographic Regions				
	British Columbia	Alberta	Canada	Total
Number of Stories				
APTN News	19	8	17	44
CBC News	74	32	60	167
CTV News	68	36	53	157
Percentage of Stories				
APTN News	43%	18%	39%	100%
CBC News	45%	19%	36%	100%
CTV News	43%	23%	34%	100%

Table 2: Geographic representation of articles by total number and total percentage of stories. Source: Author.

Finally, *table 3* presents the results specifically related to British Columbia and Alberta. The data clearly demonstrates that articles concerning Indigenous views of the TMX coming out of British Columbia reflect the views of opponents to the project (accounting for 92% of the total number of articles), while Indigenous views from Alberta reflect supporters of the TMX (accounting for 97% of the articles). This clearly suggests a geographic divide between Indigenous views of the TMX.

Provinces			
	British Columbia	Alberta	Total
Number of Stories			
Supporters	12	74	86
Opponents	145	2	147
Percentage of Stories			
Supporters	3%	97%	100%
Opponents	92%	8%	100%

Table 3: Geographic representation of supporter and opponents by province through total number and total percentage of stories. Source: Author.

Analysis

The narratives of these various actors, both for and against the TMX, have been represented more or less consistently across the three national news outlets, with a greater representation of opponents over supporters, likely due to the pipeline's official sanctioning thus giving a larger voice to those resisting the project (Kaarsgard/MacDonald 2020). However, a closer reading of the wording of the titles

does provide some notable differences between APTN, CTV, and CBC News. For instance, CTV News articles concerning protest actions appear to be more sensational as suggested by titles such as “Confrontation erupts outside AFN convention” (CTV News 2018c) or “Indigenous group calls pipeline activist’s arrest a ‘declaration of war’” (CTV News 2018b). Drawing on Miller’s framing model of Indigenous news coverage (2008), it therefore becomes apparent that these stories fall within Frame 1, where Indigenous Peoples are considered troublemakers. One particular story concerning the occupation of a provincial park in British Columbia by the Tiny House Warriors (a grassroots organization opposing the pipeline) shows the contrast between CTV and CBC News headlines with the former publishing an article titled “Indigenous pipeline protesters take over BC Park, displace campers” (CTV News 2018a) labeling the group as pipeline protesters and emphasizing the negative impact of displacing visitors to the park while the CBC title was worded as “Secwepemc First Nation’s ‘Tiny House Warriors’ occupy provincial park in Trans Mountain Protest” (Dimoff 2018), identifying the First Nation with which the group is associated and not mentioning the displacement of campers.

Another clear difference between CTV and both CBC and APTN is the use of terminology. Several CTV News articles refer to Indigenous Nations as First Nations groups or simply as protesters as suggested by the titles “First Nations groups drop out of appeal against Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion” (Villani 2019), “Lawyer says Indigenous groups didn’t approach pipeline consultation in good faith” (Smart 2019), and “Pipeline protester interrupts Trudeau fundraising speech in Vancouver” (Kane 2019). More reflective use of language does seem to occur later on as with this example of a 2020 article titled “Indigenous land defenders shut down major intersection and port access in Vancouver” (Miljure 2020), which does not label opponents as simply protesters, but the often preferred title of land and/or water defenders and protectors. CBC and APTN News articles were more consistently reflective of naming practices throughout the four-year study period, often identifying specific Nations and titles such as “Stó:lō First Nation eyes claim over Lightning Rock site in path of Trans Mountain” (Barrera 2020) or “Coldwater Chief Lee Spahan addresses PM about water concerns with Trans Mountain pipeline (CBC News 2018), and “B.C. Water Protector hopes Trudeau has a change of heart” (Hamelin 2019). These news stories demonstrate a greater attention to the fact that Indigenous Peoples do have concerns regarding the TMX, thus falling within Frame 2 of Miller’s model, where Indigenous Peoples are framed as having a legitimate dispute (2008).

When reporting on supporters of the project, CTV News also reported differently than CBC and APTN News, using for instance direct quotations of supporters within the article titles such as this example “‘We need it’: Indigenous group holds pro-pipeline rally in Northern Alberta” (Romero 2019), emphasizing the supporters’ view that the pipeline is a necessity, whereas the CBC reported the story as “Indigenous-led truck convoy rolls through Northern Alberta to support pro-pipeline movement” (Riebe 2019). The CBC also used many direct quotations in headlines such as “‘I wanna

own this thing': Meet the Indigenous groups trying to buy the Trans Mountain Pipeline" (Purdon and Palleja 2019), but also placed more emphasis on direct quotations from opponents such as these articles titled "Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion 'a real stinker,' Indigenous leaders say" (Lindsay 2018) and "'We'll continue to win': How Indigenous leaders reached new heights in 2018" (Sterritt 2018), referring to the Federal Court of Appeal's quashing of the government's TMX approval earlier that year.

While APTN News published significantly fewer articles than CTV and CBC News, their content often differed from the former two national news outlets in that it provided more in-depth and one-on-one features of various supporters and opponents of the project. Examples include interviews with Water Protector Will George from the Tseil-Waututh Nation opposed to the pipeline, "'If it has to get ugly, it will get ugly': opponents of the Trans Mountain get set to continue fight against pipeline" (APTN National News 2020b), and a "Nation-to-Nation" feature interview with Metis leader David Chartrand "Trans Mountain pipeline 'important for this country' says Metis leader" (Ward 2020). This reflects both APTN's mission statement of producing content for and by Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and affirms Clark's suggestion that reporters originating from the communities being reported, "bring their experiences, viewpoints and contacts in their communities to bear on the news content" (2014, 8). Several of the news articles also included video clips from the APTN National News broadcasts, which featured opponents walking along the Burrard Inlet or Indigenous entrepreneurs in offices, depicting the news outlet's ability and desire to meet directly with Indigenous stakeholders in their own environments. While these views have been featured across the various national news outlets, their portrayal has differed in terms of terminology and the choosing of quotations or actors featured.

The following discussion outlines three key themes that arise in the media coverage: the clear distinction of views between British Columbia and Alberta, the tension between fostering economic growth and ensuring the protection of the environment, and the challenge of respecting free, prior, and informed consent. By consulting the available positions of the various Indigenous stakeholders involved in the TMX, the discussion suggests, which news providers most accurately present the views of Indigenous Peoples.

Discussion

Following the review of the articles across APTN, CBC, and CTV News, it is clear that the TMX is a deeply divisive issue that touches upon several key debates surrounding fossil fuel extraction, climate change, economic development, environmental protection, and Indigenous rights and sovereignty. This discussion engages with three prominent themes in the media regarding Indigenous Peoples and the TMX. Additionally, it contrasts the depiction of Indigenous actors in the dispute, with their own supplemented online materials, in order to identify which news outlet most

effectively represents their views. Relating to the first theme, *table 3* depicts a clear geographic divide between views coming out of Alberta and British Columbia. This is likely due to the heavy involvement and investment of Indigenous Nations and businesses in the oil and gas sector in Alberta that live in the “Oil Patch” as opposed to the Indigenous Nations in British Columbia that are located far from the sites of extraction and who would be severely impacted should an oil spill occur. However, over the course of the last four years, an increasing amount of First Nations, including most in British Columbia have signed benefit agreements with Trans Mountain Corporation, signaling support from the leadership level.

As demonstrated in *table 2*, representation of this geographic divide focuses more on the stories coming out of British Columbia (APTN—43%, CBC News—45%, and CTV News 45%), publishing twice as many articles originating from there as opposed to Alberta (APTN—18%, CBC News—19%, and CTV News—23%). This further reiterates Kaarsgard and MacDonald’s (2020) argument that opponents of the TMX are more prominently featured, as is the case across the three national news outlets considered in this study (APTN—61%, CBC News—43%, and CTV News—46%), which is nearly twice as much as the coverage of the project’s supporters (APTN—30%, CBC News—21%, and CTV News—29%). As Wilkes et al. (2010) point out in their study of newspaper coverage of Indigenous protests, most tend to occur in British Columbia where Indigenous land title was never comprehensively extinguished, thus resulting in a myriad of legal fights when it comes to project development such as the TMX. As a result, the majority of actors lobbying against the project are located in British Columbia.

The most prominently featured Indigenous opponents of the TMX are the Tsleil-Waututh-Nation, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and several active land and water protectors, such as Kanahaus Manuel and Will George. Over the course of the past four years of media coverage, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation has challenged the TMX every step of the way. This is no surprise, as the Nation’s traditional territory is located directly on the Burrard Inlet and at the TMX’s western terminus where diluted bitumen is loaded onto tankers for marine shipping across the Pacific Ocean. As a result, the Nation is most at risk if a spill should occur, having potentially catastrophic effects on the marine environment. As stated by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation Sacred Trust Initiative, which was created in 2012 to stop the TMX by any lawful means necessary, “[c]onstruction of the Trans Mountain pipeline will irreparably harm TWN [Tsleil-Waututh Nation] environmental and cultural values [...] TWN has a sacred, legal obligation to protect, defend, and steward the water, land, air, and resources in their territory.” (Tsleil-Waututh Nation Sacred Trust Initiative n.d., paragraphs 2–3). Following the government’s reapproval of the TMX, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, along with three other BC First Nations—the Squamish Nation, Coldwater Indian Band, and the Ts’elxwéyeqw Tribes—submitted a case before the Federal Court of Appeal once again, however this time, the Court sided with the government, stating in its February 2020 ruling that the federal government had meaningfully engaged with Indigenous

Peoples and had remedied the flaws in its initial consultation process (Federal Court of Appeal 2020). The First Nations then brought this to the Supreme Court of Canada, which refused to hear the case, thus exhausting all possible legal recourses to halt the TMX. Despite the rulings, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation continues to vehemently oppose the project.

Another key actor fighting against the project and based in British Columbia is the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), an important representative body of First Nations Peoples in British Columbia. UBCIC Grand Chief Stewart Phillip has repeatedly called on the federal government to stop the project, which according to the UBCIC represents an “unacceptable and egregious risk to the clean and healthy ecosystems many Indigenous Peoples and British Columbians’ livelihoods depend upon” (Union of BC Indian Chiefs 2017, paragraph 4). Grand Chief Stewart has been a central figure in the fight against the TMX, having been arrested at protests and has suggested that “The Trudeau government’s fanatical determination to build this disastrous pipeline and tanker project is boorish and disheartening” (Union of BC Indian Chiefs 2018, paragraph 2).

Aside from direct opposition from First Nations governance authorities, several land and water protectors feature prominently across all three news outlets. Two key figures are Secwepemc activist Kanahaus Manuel and Will George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. Manuel is the founder of the ‘Tiny House Warriors’ grassroots organization that has built ten tiny houses along the 518-kilometre stretch of the pipeline that crosses through Secwepemcul’ecw, the traditional unceded territory of the Secwepemc in the BC Interior in order to disrupt the pipeline expansion (Tiny House Warriors 2020). Arrested several times, Manuel is in fact directly mentioned in many of the articles including “Indigenous group calls pipeline activist’s arrest a ‘declaration of war’” (CTV News 2018b). While Manuel has focused on the protection of land and inland waterways, Will George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation has focused more so on protecting the coastal waters of the Burrard Inlet at the heart of his Nation. Member of the ‘Protect the Inlet’ grassroots organization, George has confronted the prime minister at town halls and has participated in various protests in and around Vancouver including the blockade of the Ironworkers Bridge alongside Greenpeace activists in 2018, which temporarily stopped tanker traffic in the Burrard Inlet (CTV News Vancouver 2019; APTN National News 2018c). George was recently arrested and given a 28-day jail sentence for not respecting a court injunction prohibiting protests at the TMX terminus in May 2022. In response, Tsleil-Waututh Nation Sacred Trust Initiative spokesperson Reuben George stated that “Tsleil-Waututh law tells us we have an obligation to protect and defend our land, water, and territory so that future generations of Tsleil-Wautuh people can thrive. Will George is a protector, not a protester” (Tsleil-Waututh Nation Sacred Trust Initiative 2022, paragraph 7). Both George and Manuel demonstrate that Indigenous Peoples are aware of the media’s need for dramatic and newsworthy events, which the protests such as the tiny house- and bridge blockades accomplished (Wilkes et al. 2010). As

mentioned in the results section, the way the Nations and individual activists are portrayed has differed across the media landscape, with some instances of their being called disrupters and others as land and water protectors, which also fits well into Miller's proposed framing model where the media often frames Indigenous Peoples as either troublemakers or interested parties with a legitimate dispute (2008). It was found that APTN's coverage provided the most direct one-on-one representation of the TMX opponents, with full features on both Manuel and George (Brake 2018; Hamelin 2019), confirming Grote and Johnson's assertion that Indigenous-led media provides a multi-dimensional and more holistic understanding of the Indigenous experience as suggested in their study of Indigenous resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline (2021).

Conversely, while coverage of Indigenous supporters was at times less than half of that of Indigenous opponents, several features were carried out on the Indigenous-led groups vying to purchase the pipeline, representing a potential major shift in the relationship between Indigenous Nations and the oil and gas sector. This touches upon the second prominent theme across news coverage, the tension between fostering economic growth and environmental protection. As Bosworth found in his consideration of the DAPL, "mainstream media in the early 2010s largely fitted this struggle not into the survivance of Native Nations and US settler colonialism, but rather into a traditional narrative of US environmental politics: the economy versus the environment" (2021, 672; see also Kojola 2017 concerning the Keystone XL pipeline in media coverage). This becomes clear when reviewing the stories concerning the TMX. While activists and political organizations in BC are portrayed as focusing on the protection of the environment, their Indigenous counterparts in Alberta are portrayed as supporters of economic development. With official endorsements from provincial Indigenous governance bodies such as the Métis Nation of Alberta (Métis Nation of Alberta 2021), the unique history of oil and gas development in Alberta and its role within Indigenous Nations and communities becomes apparent. After nearly 60 years of tar sands extraction on the traditional territories of First Nations and Metis Peoples in Northern Alberta, Nations have come to live with the industry, which has provided jobs and capital for communities. Despite active opposition to tar sands extraction in the province from the grassroots level (Preston 2017), many Nations have embraced the oil and gas sector. Referring back to Tsing (2015), this could be interpreted as the adaptive art of living on a damaged planet, where faced with seemingly unhindered resource extraction, Indigenous Nations have made the best out of a bad environmental situation, such as the Fort McKay First Nation located in the heart of the tar sands extraction zone, which prides itself as "among Canada's leading First Nations when it comes to working collaboratively with industry. The Nation has a successful and long-established record of relationship building with the various oil sands mining companies that operate in our traditional territory" (Fort McKay First Nation 2022).

As alluded to above, the potential role of Indigenous support and capital make the case of the TMX particularly unique. Following the announcement that the federal government would seek a new buyer for the pipeline, Indigenous-led investment groups stepped forward to bid on the project, first signaling their willingness to purchase an equity stake followed by a proposition to acquire the entire pipeline. These include Project Reconciliation, the Western Indigenous Pipeline Group (now known as Chinook Pathways), the Iron Coalition (which has since dropped out) and recently Nesika Services, a not-for-profit venture. Based in Calgary, Alberta, the Canadian oil and gas sector's main administrative centre, Project Reconciliation has been at the forefront of media coverage, and identifies itself as being a "100% Indigenous-owned initiative to acquire 100% of Trans Mountain Corporation including the Trans Mountain Pipeline and Expansion Project," which it argues "moves Canada's Indigenous peoples from managing poverty, to being firmly and genuinely 'at the table' as material equity partners with Corporate Canada" (Project Reconciliation 2022, paragraph 1). With many Indigenous Nations having already invested capital into various components of the petroleumscape, such as storage tank farms and shorter pipelines (Government of Alberta 2017), Indigenous ownership of the Trans Mountain Pipeline would represent the most significant investment to date of Indigenous capital into oil-based futures. Evidently, this tension has manifested itself in various ways across the country but especially within Indigenous Nations. Given the clear tension between economic development and environmental protection, and the prevailing debate around appropriate policy to mitigate the increasing impacts of climate change, especially in British Columbia, which has recently experienced both catastrophic flooding and heat waves, the idea of investing into fossil fuels and the petroleumscape is not one taken lightly. While groups such as Project Reconciliation have maintained that they are "ready, willing and able" to purchase the pipeline (Stewart 2022, paragraph 9), they also argue that the pipeline can be used as a right of way for future energy use, once fossil fuels are no longer extracted. This appears to be a precarious line of logic when considering post-oil futures.

This tension between environmental protection and economic development connect to the third major theme under study here, that of the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples. MacGregor (2021) has suggested that the protection of Indigenous rights and the planet's health go hand in hand, while Whyte (2020) states that the climate crisis is in fact related to an astonishing failure to attend to just relationships with Indigenous Peoples. The vast spatial transformations and associated pollution caused by the extraction of the tar sands and its subsequent shipment through pipelines such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline have required that Indigenous Nations such as the Fort McKay First Nation to adapt to life in a damaged landscape. Does this necessarily mean that all Indigenous Peoples along the pipeline route must do the same?

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is enshrined under Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which as of 21 June 2021, has been adopted into Canadian law under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Government of Canada 2022). Hughes (2018) posits that the respect of free, prior, and informed consent is a pathway to autonomy and full recognition of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. “Free” denotes the absence of pressure or coercion to decide, “prior” ensures that enough time is given to make a decision, and “informed” corresponds to an adequate knowledge of both the risks and implications of a potential project or decision (Hughes 2018). As Budd suggests in his review of newspaper coverage related specifically to the Federal Court of Appeal’s decision to quash the approval of the TMX approval in 2018, the pipeline “represents a significant test of the Canadian government’s willingness to extend the paradigm of reconciliation to include a respect for Indigenous People’s right to free, prior, and informed consent” (2021, 129). Opponents of the project have cited the disrespect of this right as a major reason why the project should not move forward. As previously mentioned, the Tiny House Warriors sought to block construction crews as a means of asserting Secwepemc law and jurisdiction, emphasizing that “We have never provided and will never provide our free, prior and informed consent—the minimal international standard—to the Trans Mountain Pipeline Project” (Tiny House Warriors 2020, paragraph 4). The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, also directly reference this, emphasizing the lack of free, prior, and informed consent of all Nations along the route and the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure (Union of BC Indian Chiefs 2017, paragraph 4). By ignoring these legitimate concerns, the Canadian government could very well perpetuate what Youdelis (2016) has termed the antipolitics of Indigenous consultation that produces mechanisms which deny Indigenous Peoples’ voice and political agency.

This raises an important challenge, whose voice should be heard? Does approval from recognized (and legislated) Indigenous governance bodies such as Band Councils of individual First Nations sufficient? Or must entire communities provide consent? Certain experts suggest that free, prior, and informed consent should not be considered as a “veto power” to projects but rather that establishing consent should be the objective of consultations (Hughes 2018). That said, it is considered necessary that all parties strive to reach a consensus in good faith, something the government accused the Tsleil-Waututh Nation of not doing in its renewed round of consultations in December 2019, while the latter suggested the government had withheld information regarding TMX plans, and as a result infringed on its right to free, prior, and informed consent (Smart 2019). The question remains, does one Nation’s refusal out of 129 First Nations represent grounds to veto a project? Given the pipeline expansion’s near completion, it would appear not to be the case.

Conclusion: Listening to Stories from the Land and Water

Indigenous Peoples and issues are widely featured and represented across Canada's media landscape. However, as Miller (2008) has suggested the way they are framed through differing news coverage can either depict Indigenous Peoples as troublemakers, as fighting amongst themselves, or as Peoples and Nations with a genuine dispute when it comes to contentious events or projects. The aim of this study was to build on the available research concerning representation of Indigenous views in the media by focusing on the case study of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project (TMX), a multi-billion-dollar state-owned endeavour that seeks to triple the flow of diluted bitumen originating from Alberta's tar sands to the Pacific coast, opening up exports to markets other than the US. In order to effectively capture how Indigenous views concerning the TMX were represented across the Canadian media landscape, the online content of three national news outlets, the Canadian Television Network (CTV), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) was consulted and analyzed. By doing so, the paper responds to Clark (2014), in focusing on the representation of Indigenous Peoples from Canada's leading television broadcasters rather than primarily focusing on newspaper coverage as has largely been the case. This study therefore represents the first of its kind to compare and contrast the views coming from these three specific national news providers.

The main research questions related to how Indigenous views differed across the three news outlets, what main themes arose the coverage over time, how closely the coverage actually represented the views of Indigenous Peoples, and as a result, which news outlet most effectively represented these views. A total of 2,853 news articles over the past four years (May 2018 to May 2022) were consulted from the news databases of CTV, CBC, and APTN, representing the period from when the TMX was initially purchased, causing an exponential rise in its media coverage, up until the initial submission of this paper. This longer period of study thus accounts for variations of coverage over time, a challenge in previous research as suggested by Wilkes et al. (2010). Specifically, 368 articles concerning the TMX, were identified as relating directly to Indigenous Peoples, which served as the primary data set under review.

Three key themes arose, namely the geographic divide between Alberta and British Columbia (with stories focusing more so on supporters in the former and on opponents in the latter), the tension between economic development and environmental protection, and finally the issue of respecting the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and Nations. While greater coverage of Indigenous views, both supporting and opposing the project was reported through CTV and CBC News, APTN News' coverage of Indigenous views of the TMX was found to provide in-depth, one-on-one insights into opponents such as land defenders and water protectors, while also effectively representing the supporters of the project

such as the Indigenous-led groups vying to purchase the pipeline. Touching upon Adams' (2017) notion of metaphysics of encounter, peoples—and in this case a mainstream national audience—come into contact with different actors and issues, such as those connected to the TMX. It is therefore suggested that if we are to truly understand the views of Indigenous Peoples, it is worthwhile to listen to what they say directly from the land or the water's edge (in this case), something APTN does an effective job of doing, as suggested by its guiding mission statement of sharing stories of Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous Peoples (APTN National News 2019). As Grote and Johnson (2021) suggest, Indigenous-led media offer a multi-dimensional and more holistic understanding of the Indigenous experience. Given that the APTN provides freely accessible content (both visual and written), it is suggested that if mainstream Canadian society (or international audiences for that matter) wish to engage with Indigenous issues in the media, they should privilege Indigenous media outlets in addition to consulting the published materials of the actors themselves. As this study centers exclusively on national news coverage of the TMX, further research comparing local and regional news coverage, in addition to broader international coverage represents a promising pursuit. Nevertheless, this paper serves as a blueprint for future studies and its use of news coverage from three prominent Canadian news outlets provides a model to compare centre-right, centre-left, and Indigenous media, which can be of particular relevance to further research regarding the tensions between economic development, environmental protection, and the respect of Indigenous rights.

Relating back to the case study of the TMX and Indigenous views of the project, since the federal government's purchase of the pipeline in 2018, the TMX is a project that connects all Canadians in a way, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and makes them part and parcel to what Hein (2021) has termed the global petroleumscape. Given the increasing value of Western Canadian Select, the diluted bitumen shipped from the tar sands (Alberta Energy Regulator 2021), and the rising need for energy, it appears that the demand for Canadian oil is likely to grow. While some Indigenous Nations become more heavily involved in the industry, others continue to fight for more rigorous environmental protection and clean-energy alternatives. With the TMX slated for completion by 2023, its impacts both negative and positive are unclear. Will the dreams of Indigenous investors to purchase the pipeline and become the owners of this megaproject come true or will the nightmares of land and water defenders and protectors come to pass? This remains to be seen.

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