

ACTIVISTS OR ACTIVE THREATS?: HOW THE STATE SECURITIZATION OF  
CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS ENVIRONMENTAL AND INDIGENOUS  
ACTIVISTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

by

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B.A., Thompson Rivers University, 2019

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
(Political Science)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
(Vancouver)

August 2020

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Activists or Active Threats?: How the State Securitization of Critical Infrastructure Impacts Environmental and Indigenous Activists in Canada and the United States

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in	Political Science
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## **Abstract**

Environmental and Indigenous activists in Canada and the United States opposing extraction projects such as pipelines are being targeted by states and corporations. The securitization of critical infrastructure in Canada and the United States has enabled the use of security measures against these activists. The post-9/11 security environment facilitated a broad recognition of threats and permitted the use of a range of security measures. In this environment, policies emerged securitizing critical infrastructure, meaning that it was discursively constructed as a valued object under threat thus necessitating the use of exceptional measures to protect it.

While public discourse establishes the securitization of critical infrastructure, private documents reveal the intentions and specific targets of these policies. In practice, the Canadian and American governments target environmental and Indigenous activists because they impede extractive critical infrastructure which operate in states' and corporations' economic interests. The use of security measures and their focus on environmental and Indigenous activists can be seen during confrontations like those in Standing Rock and Wet'suwet'en.

Policies and actions in Canada and the United States have been influenced by their past treatment of environmental and Indigenous activists, government interests in extractivism, and the post-9/11 security environment. These historical, political, and economic factors shape the nature of the security policies, the actors executing the security measures, and which activists are targeted using particular measures. Though this research charts differences between Canada and the United States, it finds that, ultimately, the consequences of critical infrastructure securitization are similar in the two countries. There are global implications for the use of securitization to justify the repression of environmental and Indigenous activists related to environmental politics and the replication of this process in other countries. This research offers

further evidence for the intertwined interests of governments and corporations in extraction and the lengths that they are willing to go to advance them. Environmental and Indigenous activists are an important voice in protecting the environment, biodiversity, and self-determination; without them, governments and corporations will have even greater power to pillage and pollute.

## **Lay Summary**

Confrontations between security agencies and environmental and Indigenous activists over pipelines in Canada and the United States have drawn international attention in recent years. These events show that governments have justified the use of security measures against activists. After 9/11, when threats were interpreted broadly and expansive security practices were put into place, the conditions were right to go after old opponents to state and corporate interests like environmental and Indigenous activists. By claiming that critical infrastructure is threatened by terrorism or extremism, governments authorized activists to be targeted. Environmental and Indigenous activists protesting pipelines (a type of critical infrastructure) are treated as security threats in Canada and the United States when their only threat is to the profits that extraction projects provide for states and corporations.

## **Preface**

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Elena Plotnikoff.

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## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank the faculty and staff in the Political Science Department at UBC. I owe special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Peter Dauvergne for his support and guidance, Dr. Lisa Sundstrom for chairing my committee and helping me to further understand my work through her thoughtful comments and questions, and Dr. Erin Baines and Dr. Katia Coleman for the kindness that they extended to me during my time here. I am thankful for the professors from my undergraduate studies for all of their encouragement, especially Dr. Wilson Bell, Dr. Robin Tapley, and Dr. Robert Hanlon.

I owe the deepest gratitude to my family, Sylvia, Lorne, Kara, Sophia, Elizabeth, Lucy, and Dale for their love, patience, and belief in me.



## **Dedication**

*To Grandma, for everything.*

## 1. Introduction

Social media surveillance, group infiltration, reporting systems, threat profiles, drone technology— are these techniques used by security agencies in unstable regions or for deadly domestic threats? No, these are some of the methods used by Canadian and American security agencies and private security firms in response to the supposed threat of environmental and Indigenous activists. I will address the question of how these repressive measures have been justified in two seemingly advanced democratic countries, finding that the securitization of critical infrastructure has enabled the use of security measures against environmental and Indigenous activists to ensure ongoing extractivism in Canada and the United States (US).

The securitization of critical infrastructure provides legitimacy to repressive measures that protect extractivism at the expense of activists. Securitization means that an audience has accepted that a valued object is threatened and that this threat must be handled using exceptional measures.<sup>1</sup> The use of securitization in this context has serious implications for government accountability, the protection of human rights, particularly Indigenous rights, and environmental protection. Discourse analysis is used to study securitization because securitizing moves follow a rhetorical structure to convey the importance of an object, the urgency of the threat, and demand a security response.<sup>2</sup> Through the analysis of state discourse in both public documents such as legislation and policy papers as well as private documents from security agencies, I will examine

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Buzan et al., 26, 177.

how security measures against environmental and Indigenous activists have been justified and how the protection of critical infrastructure preserves extractivism.

For the purposes of this paper, extractivism means not only the act of extracting natural resources but its role in the capitalist system which commodifies and privatizes nature and encourages ongoing consumption. Critical infrastructure refers to systems and facilities that provide a variety of functions for health, safety, and the economy. Though critical infrastructure includes a wide range of assets related to agriculture, transportation, and utilities, the actions of security agencies against environmental and Indigenous activists mainly applies to energy infrastructure such as pipelines. The security state is the network of security agencies, national and regional police, corporations, and private security firms that work with one another through intelligence sharing, reporting systems, databanks, and surveillance strategies.<sup>3</sup>

Government documents portray threats to critical infrastructure with a variety of classifications including “eco-terrorists”, “Aboriginal extremists”, and the “anti-petroleum movement”. For the purposes of this paper, I will be using the terms environmental and Indigenous activists to refer to the groups that Canada and the US use security measures against. Environmental and Indigenous activists are examined together because they are aligned in opposition to extractive infrastructure like pipelines and have both been targeted by security agencies. It is important to note, however, that the aims of environmental activists and Indigenous activists do not always align. Environmental activists do not always recognize and champion Indigenous rights and not all Indigenous activists are environmentalists. The term Indigenous refers to a diverse range of people, traditions, identities, and cultures. Though some

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan, *Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2018) 3.

security documents refer to specific Indigenous populations, they are often grouped together without distinction. When a matter relates to a specific nation or territory such as the Standing Rock Sioux Nation or Wet'suwet'en, I will be specifying them as such.

The US has played a central role as a creator and promoter of security norms, especially post-9/11, and provided the model for the securitization of critical infrastructure. Current critical infrastructure policies emerged from a security environment in which threats were interpreted broadly and a wide range of exceptional measures became available. There were factors prior to 9/11 that helped form this security environment in America. The corporate influence on security policies and the labelling of environmental activists as “eco-terrorists” shaped the application of critical infrastructure security policies to environmental and Indigenous activists. Therefore, while America provides the model for the securitization of critical infrastructure, additional historical, political, and economic factors influenced policies and actions in a manner that will differ in other countries.

Canada is influenced by and interconnected with the US on matters of security and the economy. After 9/11, Canada introduced new security policies, including on matters of critical infrastructure. While the securitization of critical infrastructure has been used in both Canada and the US to justify security measures against environmental and Indigenous activists, there are differences in the security environments. Canada and the US are both settler colonial countries, but Canada's security operations have been focused more on Indigenous activists both before and after 9/11. The Canadian government must balance its interests in extractivism with contradicting aims of appearing as an Indigenous ally whereas the US does not similarly pursue an image of reconciliation. Though corporations appear to influence security objectives in both

countries, in Canada, government agencies play the main role in enacting them while in the US, private contractors and corporations participate more directly.

Canada and the US have similar policies, ties to extractivism, and security targets but the security measures which are used, the security actors responsible for administering them, and the activists that they are used against differs. The case studies of Standing Rock and Wet'suwet'en illustrate these differences while highlighting how the impacts of these practices align.

Ultimately, the comparison of Canada and the US shows that the consequences of the securitization of critical infrastructure are equivalent in the two countries as they repress and deter opposition, and advance extractivism. These impacts indicate that the securitization of critical infrastructure could produce similar consequences in other countries.

Critical infrastructure policies influenced by the US have been introduced in several countries in the Global North. These countries do not necessarily have the same forms of environmental or Indigenous activism that are present in Canada and the US, but securitization could still be utilized to remove and deter opposition to extraction. There are countries in South America that, like Canada and the US, are deeply involved with extractivism. These countries have targeted environmental and Indigenous activists before to protect extractivism and could look to new ways to justify these practices using the securitization of critical infrastructure. Additionally, extractivism has global environmental impacts and the repression of those who challenge it enables the extractivist system to continue to carry out its destruction.

This research draws on numerous literatures including security studies, global environmental politics, and social movement research. Previous research has established the

political power of extractive industries in the Global North and South.<sup>4</sup> The opposition to extractive projects, particularly by environmental and Indigenous activists, has been accounted for in many different countries, including Canada and the US.<sup>5</sup> There have been analyses of post-9/11 security measures in Canada and the US, some of which address their impacts on critical infrastructure or social movements.<sup>6</sup>

There have also been studies that combine these fields, particularly by connecting critical infrastructure protection to the repression of Indigenous activists in Canada. Anne Spice discusses how linking critical infrastructure to national security has allowed for the repression of Indigenous dissent.<sup>7</sup> Shiri Pasternak and Tia Dafnos examine how Canada approaches Indigenous sovereignty with a strategy of risk management to justify broad exertions of power.<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey Monaghan and Kevin Walby claim that critical infrastructure protection allows the government and private corporations to collaborate and rationalize the surveillance of opponents

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<sup>4</sup> See John Owen and Deanna Kemp, *Extractive Relations: Countervailing Power and the Global Mining Industry* (London: Routledge, 2017); Evaristus Oshionebo, "Corporations and Nations: Power Imbalance in the Extractive Sector," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 77, no. 2 (2018): 419-446; and Tomas Frederiksen and Matthew Himley, "Tactics of dispossession: Access, power, and subjectivity at the extractive frontier," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 45 (2020): 50-64.

<sup>5</sup> See Kirk Jalbert, Anna Willow, David Casagrande, and Stephanie Paladino, *ExtrACTION: Impacts, Engagements, and Alternative Futures* (New York: Routledge, 2017); John Devlin, *Social Movements Contesting Natural Resource Development* (London: Routledge, 2019); and Suzana Sawyer, *Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> See Andrew Lynch, Nicola McGarrrity, and George Williams, *Counter-Terrorism and Beyond: The Culture of Law and Justice After 9/11* (London: Routledge, 2010); Christopher Murphy, "Securitizing Canadian Policing: A New Policing Paradigm for the Post 9/11 Security State?" *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 32, no. 4 (2007): 449-475; and Stephen Collier and Andrew Lakoff, "The Vulnerability of Vital Systems: How 'Critical Infrastructure' Became a Security Problem," in *Securing 'the Homeland': Critical Infrastructure, Risk, and (In)Security*, ed. Myriam Dunn and Kristian Soby Kristensen (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Anne Spice, "Fighting Invasive Infrastructures: Indigenous Relations against Pipelines," *Environment and Society* 9, no. 1 (2018): 40-56.

<sup>8</sup> Shiri Pasternak and Tia Dafnos, "How does a settler state secure the circuitry of capital?" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 4 (2018): 739-757.

to the energy industry.<sup>9</sup> Andrew Crosby and Monaghan establish that critical infrastructure discourse is the latest strategy of the Canadian government to criminalize Indigenous activism.<sup>10</sup>

This research will address the understudied American securitization of critical infrastructure as it influenced the policies and security measures of other countries including Canada. I will examine security measures against environmental and Indigenous activists to further show how extractivism impacts these actions. I will add to the literature through my examination of Canada and the US, charting the origins of the securitization of critical infrastructure and the security measures introduced post-9/11. Through comparison, insights are gained regarding how the security history of a country, international trends, and political and economic circumstances influence the securitization of critical infrastructure. These findings can then be applied to analyses of other countries.

This paper will proceed as follows; first, I will discuss the process of securitization, how it necessitates certain actions, and how it is reflected in discourse. Next, I will establish the centrality of extractivism to Canada and the US, its roots in settler colonialism, and how this aligns with government and corporate interests. I will then discuss how the security state took shape post-9/11 in Canada and the US. Afterwards, I will engage in a discourse analysis of public and private documents from Canada and the US which show the securitization of critical infrastructure. Next, I will look at the security measures used against environmental and Indigenous activists during the protests in Standing Rock and Wet'suwet'en. In the section following, I will examine the global implications of the securitization of critical infrastructure in

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<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Monaghan and Kevin Walby, "Surveillance of Environmental Movements in Canada: Critical Infrastructure Protection and the Petro-Security Apparatus," *Contemporary Justice Review* 20, no. 1 (2017): 51-70.

<sup>10</sup> Crosby and Monaghan, *Policing Indigenous Movements*.

the context of Europe, Australia, and South American countries. Lastly, I will explore alternative ways of conceptualizing critical infrastructure and extractivism before concluding.



## 2. Securitization

Securitization, as conceptualized by the Copenhagen School, involves the legitimization of exceptional means to defend a valued object. Security threats are discursively constructed by an authoritative actor using security language to compel a political community to recognize the threat.<sup>11</sup> If the threat is recognized, the response is shifted from normal politics to security politics where exceptional measures are permitted.<sup>12</sup> Successful securitization entails actions related to policing, surveillance, and the violation of rights and rules that a democratic government would otherwise be expected to abide by.<sup>13</sup>

Discourse is used to study securitization since securitizing moves follow a “grammar of security” in which a serious and imminent threat is described that can only be dealt with using exceptional measures.<sup>14</sup> Discourse can be defined as a “specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities”.<sup>15</sup> Social realities are not merely described but are created; they produce actions and exercise power.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, discourses are historical and exist within particular cultural and social contexts.<sup>17</sup> As I will elaborate further, the post-9/11 environment in the extractivist, settler colonial societies of

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<sup>11</sup> Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 491.

<sup>12</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, 33-35.

<sup>13</sup> Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, 32-33.

<sup>15</sup> Maarten Hajer, *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1995) 44-45.

<sup>16</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Random House Publishing, 1978).

<sup>17</sup> Michael Meyer, “Between Theory, Method, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches in CDA,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage Publications, 2001).

Canada and the US provided the conditions for critical infrastructure to be conceptualized as under threat and for environmental and Indigenous activists to be considered threats.

Securitization entails further questions such as what must be protected, what threatens it, and who accepts the existence of a threat. The specific referent object is critical infrastructure, but it represents a larger way of life facilitated by extractivism. Post-9/11, countries, their citizens, and the liberal, democratic, capitalist way of life were believed to be in need of protection. Critical infrastructure was included as a threatened object in this context because its obstruction or destruction could be life threatening and it would also impede regular capitalist functions. Though critical infrastructure can be threatened by a variety of factors such as weather events and lack of maintenance, security policies are concentrated on the threat of intentional sabotage to critical infrastructure. The audiences accepting security measures to protect critical infrastructure against terrorism were politicians, and the citizens they represent, who supported new security policies. The audience accepting that environmental and Indigenous activists specifically threaten critical infrastructure is limited to security agencies and corporations as they were the creators and recipients of this specific discourse, not the wider public.

Not all security moves are made within the public eye, yet they still fit this security model.<sup>18</sup> Post-9/11 an initial securitizing move was made in the US and other countries that claimed that there was a serious and urgent threat to their way of life which necessitated measures that had to be kept secretive. In the legislation that emerged from this period in Canada and the US, critical infrastructure was included as an object threatened by terrorism and hence its protection is primarily dealt with in the realm of security. Later discourse from security agencies

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<sup>18</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, 28.

specifying environmental and Indigenous activists as threats to critical infrastructure was not public. However, the construction of activists as threats was still authorized by the post-9/11 security conditions which allowed security measures to operate out of the public's view.

Though the Copenhagen School advocates for studying public discourse to prove securitization without concern for underlying motives, I expand my aims. Beyond establishing the securitization of critical infrastructure in public discourse, I also examine documents that were intended to be kept out of public view as they illustrate how environmental and Indigenous activists have specifically been targeted and how this was done to protect extractive industries. Given the secretive nature of these matters, the accessibility of information was limited. For public documents, I analyze national publications, policies, and legislation. The private government and corporate documents that I examine were leaked or published through news reports or other researchers. Prior to the examination of this discourse, I will review some conditions that facilitated the securitization of critical infrastructure including the importance of extractivism, the past treatment of environmental and Indigenous activists, and the features of the post-9/11 security states in Canada and the US.

### 3. Extractivism and the Settler State

Under extractivism, natural resources are a commodity whose production is necessary for capital accumulation and consumption.<sup>19</sup> Extractivism extends back to the foundations of modern capitalism and has carried forward to the present day with the same characteristics of exploitation and unrestricted growth. Extractivism has global dimensions. Imperialist countries exploited resources in colonies in South America, Africa, and Asia to support their capitalist development, patterns which have continued to this day. Countries in the Global North rely on extraction in the Global South to fuel their consumption, and resource rich countries in the Global South rely on exporting natural resources to sustain their economies.<sup>20</sup>

The movement of resources is not exclusively from the Global South to the Global North, however. Extractivism crosses borders in many ways as countries in the Global North engage in extractivism domestically as well as internationally. Regardless of the country, extractivism is marked by inequality. Extractivism most benefits corporations and those in power while negatively impacting the communities where the extraction takes place in ways relating to their health, safety, and human rights.<sup>21</sup> In Canada and the US, extraction projects are commonly

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<sup>19</sup> Allan Schnaiberg, *Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

<sup>20</sup> Maristella Svampa, *Neo-extractivism in Latin America: Socio-environmental Conflicts, the Territorial Turn, and New Political Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 12; and Eduardo Gudynas, "Extractivisms: Tendencies and consequences," in *Reframing Latin American Development*, ed. Ronaldo Munck and Raul Delgado Wise (London: Routledge, 2018), 67.

<sup>21</sup> The negative impacts of extractive industries are extensive, some of which include violence against women and girls, see Victoria Sweet, "Extracting More than Resources: Human Security and Arctic Indigenous Women," *Seattle University Law Review* 37, no. 4 (2014): 1157-1178; direct and indirect impacts on health outcomes, see Ted Schrecker, Anne-Emanuelle Birn, and Mariajose Aguilera, "How extractive industries affect health: Political economy underpinnings and pathways," *Health & Place* 52 (2018): 135-147; and other violations of human rights, see Sumudu Atapattu, "Extractive Industries and Inequality: Intersections of Environmental Law, Human Rights, and Environmental Justice," *Arizona State Law Journal* 50, no. 2 (2018): 431-454.

located in marginalized communities with dominantly poor, racially marginalized, and Indigenous populations.<sup>22</sup>

Settler colonialism in Canada and the US is based on accumulation and private property.<sup>23</sup> In the present day, settler states still expect unimpeded access to Indigenous lands and resources to exploit and extract from for profit.<sup>24</sup> Private corporations remove the resources from Indigenous lands, supported by settler governments who praise the economic opportunities for citizens.<sup>25</sup> The vested interests of governments and corporations in extraction compel the use of security measures to address actions that impede this process.<sup>26</sup>

The protection of critical infrastructure is also the protection of the underlying ideologies of extractivism which corporations and governments in Canada and the US seek to preserve. The operation and expansion of critical infrastructure, specifically energy infrastructure, fuels consumptive ways of life and access to the market. Oil and gas account for 5.6% of Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) and approximately 8% of the US' GDP.<sup>27</sup> Data from 2018 shows that Canada was the fourth largest exporter of crude oil and fifteenth largest importer while the US was the seventh largest exporter and second largest importer.<sup>28</sup> Though these numbers are

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<sup>22</sup> For more examples of environmental racism in the US, see Sarah Mittlefehldt, "Wood Waste and Race: The Industrialization of Biomass Energy Technologies and Environmental Justice," *Technology and Culture* 59, no. 4 (2018): 875-898; for Canada, see Natalia Ilyniak, "Mercury Poisoning in Grassy Narrows: Environmental Injustice, Colonialism, and Capitalist Expansion in Canada," *McGill Sociological Review* 4 (2014): 43-66.

<sup>23</sup> Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) 77.

<sup>24</sup> Coulthard, 77.

<sup>25</sup> Jen Preston, "Neoliberal settler colonialism: Canada and the tar sands," *Race & Class* 55, no. 2 (2013): 43.

<sup>26</sup> Crosby and Monaghan, *Policing Indigenous Movements*, 64.

<sup>27</sup> "Energy and the economy," Government of Canada, May 26, 2020, <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/science-data/data-analysis/energy-data-analysis/energy-and-economy/20062>; and American Petroleum Institute, "Oil & Natural Gas: Supporting the Economy, Creating Jobs, Driving America Forward," 2018, [https://www.api.org/~media/Files/Policy/Taxes/DM2018-086\\_API\\_Fair\\_Share\\_OnePager\\_FIN3.pdf](https://www.api.org/~media/Files/Policy/Taxes/DM2018-086_API_Fair_Share_OnePager_FIN3.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> "Crude petroleum in Canada," The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed on May 28, 2020, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/52709/reporter/can>; "Crude petroleum in United States," The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed on May 28, 2020, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/52709/reporter/usa>.

significant, they alone do not account for the importance of extraction in Canada and the US. Government leaders work in collaboration with extractive corporations to boost job creation or GDP figures for political support, to receive financial contributions from such corporations, or because of their personal interests and investments in extractive industries.<sup>29</sup> Oil and gas companies operating in Canada and the US devote substantial amounts time and money lobbying politicians.<sup>30</sup> In 2019, oil and gas companies spent over \$125 million dollars lobbying American politicians.<sup>31</sup> In Canada, though lobbying contributions are not publicly available, records show that oil and gas companies and associations enjoy frequent meetings with politicians.<sup>32</sup> Corporations further influence governments to act according to their established interests in extraction.

Threats to the extractivist system like those coming from environmental and Indigenous activists which challenge not only the expansion of infrastructures but the ideologies of extraction, are pacified so that governments and corporations can continue to benefit from it. In Canada and the US, this has been done through the construction of environmental and Indigenous activists as security threats to critical infrastructure.

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<sup>29</sup> See William Carroll, "Canada's Carbon-Capital Elite," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 3 (2017): 225-260; and Richard Brown, "Political activities of oil and gas firms in the United States," *Energy Sources, Part B: Economics, Planning, and Policy* 13, no. 6 (2018) 291-300.

<sup>30</sup> "Oil & Gas: Lobbying, 2019," OpenSecrets.org, accessed on May 28, 2020, <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/lobbying.php?cycle=2019&ind=e01>; and Richard Girard and Murray Dobbin, "Canada's Oil Lobby," *Canadian Dimension* 49, no. 1 (2015): 34-37.

<sup>31</sup> "Oil & Gas: Lobbying, 2019."

<sup>32</sup> Nicolas Graham, William Carroll, and David Chen, "Big Oil's Political Reach: Mapping Fossil Fuel Lobbying from Harper to Trudeau," Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, November 2019, [https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office%2C%20Saskatchewan%20Office/2019/11/ccpa-bc\\_cmp\\_BigOil\\_web.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office%2C%20Saskatchewan%20Office/2019/11/ccpa-bc_cmp_BigOil_web.pdf).

#### 4. The Security State

Following the 9/11 attacks in New York City, the US and several of their allies, including Canada, fortified security states characterized by the policing and surveillance of groups perceived to be threats, a blurring of criminal/extremist/terrorist categories, information sharing across police and security networks, and expanded police mandates.<sup>33</sup> Successful securitization permits exceptional actions and this environment facilitated new and expanded security measures.

Those who contradicted the prevailing capitalist, extractivist logic had been targeted by security agencies in Canada and the US previously. The surveillance of Indigenous activists is not a distinctly post-9/11 practice. Indigenous people asserting their sovereignty and protecting their land have been policed by settler colonial states from the beginning of colonization.<sup>34</sup> Colonial policies were implemented to survey and control Indigenous peoples, carried out by departments and policing forces which exist to this day.<sup>35</sup> Environmental activists have previously been pursued by security agencies, particularly in the US. Throughout the 1990s, corporations that were criticized and vandalized by environmental activists lobbied for serious security measures against them.<sup>36</sup> It was not until the post-9/11 environment facilitated the broader security mandate and impetus for results that environmental activists were pursued as “eco-terrorists” but this process demonstrates the alliance between the government and corporations on matters of security and the weakened distinction between criminal and terrorist

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<sup>33</sup> Colleen Bell, “Surveillance Strategies and Populations at Risk: Biopolitical Governance in Canada’s National Security Policy,” *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 2 (2005): 148.

<sup>34</sup> Gord Hill, *500 Years of Indigenous Resistance* (Oakland, PM Press, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Such policies include the 1887 Dawes Act in the US and the 1876 Indian Act in Canada. Colonial departments include what is now the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the US and the department now known as Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

<sup>36</sup> Will Potter, “The Green Scare,” *Vermont Law Review* 33, no. 4 (2009): 676.

activities.<sup>37</sup> While there are features of the security state that predate 9/11 and environmental and Indigenous activists have previously been targeted by these measures, the post-9/11 period marks an important transition because there was widespread recognition of a threat, more expansive security measures were legitimized, and these security measures were authorized to take place out of the public's view.

#### 4.1 Security Measures in the US

The security state in the US involves agency and stakeholder collaboration to pursue wide mandates using secretive and heavy-handed measures. The Patriot Act, passed shortly after 9/11, authorized an expansive set of security measures and provided large budgets and organizational structures to enact them.<sup>38</sup> The Patriot Act allowed surveillance and information gathering like wiretaps and weakened the need for probable cause or transparency.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, collaboration between government agencies was encouraged and institutionalized. The US government supported fusion centers which facilitate intelligence sharing between local,

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<sup>37</sup> Examples of security measures include the pursuit of terrorism charges for environmental activists, see Potter, "The Green Scare," 673-675; the use of private security firms hired by corporations to watch and infiltrate environmental organizations, see James Ridgeway, "Black Ops, Green Groups," *Mother Jones*, April 11, 2008, <https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2008/04/exclusive-cops-and-former-secret-service-agents-ran-black-ops-green-groups/>; and the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act pushed by corporate lobbyists to expand the definition of terrorism to include offenses which cause an animal enterprise to lose profit, see Rebecca Smith, "'Ecoterrorism'? A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists," *Environmental Law* 38, no. 2 (2008): 554-555.

<sup>38</sup> Fully named the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act.

<sup>39</sup> Sharon Rackow, "How the USA Patriot Act Will Permit Governmental Infringement Upon the Privacy of Americans in the Name of 'Intelligence' Investigations," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 150, no. 5 (2002): 1653.



state, and federal agencies as well as the private sector.<sup>40</sup> These fusion centers allow for the exchange of information that certain agencies would not otherwise have access to.<sup>41</sup>

## 4.2 Security Measures in Canada

The presence of a serious attack close to home and pressure from the US as Canada's major defense and trade partner influenced Canada to expand their security state.<sup>42</sup> Similar to measures introduced in the US, Canada's 2001 Anti-terrorism Act expanded police powers, the scope of surveillance, and the budgets provided for security purposes.<sup>43</sup> With the expansion of police powers, matters of conventional crime and matters of national security became muddled.<sup>44</sup> Canada's security network, like the US', involves a range of agencies and departments that consult one another, share information, and collaborate with the private sector. These institutional and cultural changes to security in Canada and the US provided the conditions which allowed the securitization of critical infrastructure to take place.

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<sup>40</sup> See Michael German and Jay Stanley, "What's Wrong with Fusion Centers?" American Civil Liberties Association, December 2017, [https://www.aclu.org/files/pdfs/privacy/fusioncenter\\_20071212.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/files/pdfs/privacy/fusioncenter_20071212.pdf), 6-7; and Allan Jiao and Harry Rhea, "Integration of Police in the United States: Changes and Development after 9/11," *Policing and Society* 17, no. 4 (2007): 397-398.

<sup>41</sup> Torin Monahan and Neal Palmer, "The Emerging Politics of DHS Fusion Centers," *Security Dialogue* 40, no. 6 (2009): 619, 628-630.

<sup>42</sup> Patrick Lennox, "From Golden Straitjacket to Kevlar Vest: Canada's Transformation to a Security State," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 4 (2007): 1018, 1022.

<sup>43</sup> Murphy, "Securitizing Canadian Policing," 454-455.

<sup>44</sup> Murphy, 459.

## 5. Discourse on the Securitization of Critical Infrastructure

Critical infrastructure and the continued access to extraction that it facilitates are protected by the Canadian and American governments. Public documents establish the threat to critical infrastructure without naming specific actors as threats. Private documents reveal connections between extractivism and national interests and claim that environmental and Indigenous activists are threats to these practices. I will now analyze public and private documents from Canada and the US that illustrate the securitization of critical infrastructure.

### 5.1 American Securitization of Critical Infrastructure

The Patriot Act defines critical infrastructure as

(S)ystems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety or any combination of those matters.<sup>45</sup>

While specific facilities are not named, this definition establishes the connection between infrastructure and national security threats. President George W. Bush stated that terrorists sought to attack critical infrastructure “to threaten national security, cause mass casualties, weaken (the) economy and damage public morale and confidence”.<sup>46</sup> This statement pairs the loss of lives with the weakening of the economy as well as linking the proper functioning of critical infrastructure to the identity of American citizens. Critical infrastructure is established as a valued object and its potential destruction is taken seriously due to these suggested effects.

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<sup>45</sup> Critical Infrastructures Protection Act of 2001, §1016, 3(e).

<sup>46</sup> US Government Printing Office, “Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Monday December 22, 2003,” 39, no. 51 (2003): <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-2003-12-22/pdf/WCPD-2003-12-22.pdf>, 1816.

The President's National Strategy for Homeland Security issued in July 2002 expands on the Patriot Act's definition of critical infrastructure to cover more sectors. The Strategy includes the agricultural, public health, emergency services, telecommunications, transportation, chemical, finance, and energy sectors as critical infrastructures and links them to freedom, security, and the economy.<sup>47</sup> Critical infrastructure policies emphasize the need for collaboration with private corporations and integrate them into security processes through practices like information sharing.<sup>48</sup> This partnership is not unreasonable as 85% of critical infrastructure is owned by the private sector, however, by asserting that critical infrastructure is threatened by terrorist attacks, expansive security measures become authorized which can be used to accomplish corporations' aims.<sup>49</sup>

Recent state legislation illustrates government and corporate interests in safeguarding ongoing extraction. In December 2017, the American Legislative Exchange Council released a policy model called the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, inspired by a law enacted that same year in Oklahoma. The model uses the Patriot Act's definition of critical infrastructure to criminalize trespassing on critical infrastructure facilities including oil and gas pipelines.<sup>50</sup> By making the offense related to trespassing rather than destruction, a wide range of activities, including peaceful ones, can be captured by such laws. The fine amount and jail term are left blank on the model legislation for states to fill in with their own specifications. The punishments have ranged from \$250 to \$100,000 fines and thirty days in jail to ten years imprisonment

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<sup>47</sup> US Office of Homeland Security, "The National Strategy for Homeland Security," July 16, 2002, <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/nat-strat-hls-2002.pdf>, 30.

<sup>48</sup> Office of Science and Technology Policy and US Department of Homeland Security, "The National Plan for Research and Development In Support of Critical Infrastructure Protection," 2004, [https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/ST\\_2004\\_NCIP\\_RD\\_PlanFINALApr05.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/ST_2004_NCIP_RD_PlanFINALApr05.pdf), 21-22.

<sup>49</sup> Office of Science and Technology Policy and US Department of Homeland Security, 64.

<sup>50</sup> American Legislative Exchange Council, "Critical Infrastructure Protection Act," December 7, 2017, <https://www.alec.org/model-policy/critical-infrastructure-protection-act/>.

depending on the state and the nature of the offence.<sup>51</sup> The model legislation has inspired laws in numerous states and bills are already in the legislative pipeline in others.

The model legislation or the laws based on it do not name specific groups. The model is worded broadly in order to encapsulate any actions that could damage or obstruct the function of critical infrastructure and thus impact the profits of the corporations that own it. While these states already have laws for trespassing and vandalism, the new laws emphasize the seriousness of disruptions to the extraction of resources. Though this is state, not federal, legislation and it does not address security measures specifically, these laws are another representation of how critical infrastructures are seen as valued objects under threat by opponents whom must be deterred through extreme measures, in this case hefty fines and jail time.

The crafting and promotion of the model legislation reveals even more about the interconnectedness of government and corporate interests. The American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers lobbying group representing America's largest oil and gas companies helped to draft the policy model and promote it to states in response to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests.<sup>52</sup> Governments and corporations protect extraction through criminal legislation but can simultaneously or alternatively use security measures to remove and deter opposition. The role of extractive industries in drafting the legislation shows that these corporations were concerned

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<sup>51</sup> See West Virginia, Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, §61-10-34, March 7, 2020, <https://legiscan.com/WV/text/HB4615/2020>; Minnesota Senate, Worker Safety and Energy Security Bill, 609.594, 609.6055, February 20, 2020, <https://legiscan.com/MN/text/SF2011/2019>; and Illinois, House Bill 1633, April 11, 2019, <https://legiscan.com/IL/bill/HB1633/2019>.

<sup>52</sup> See Lee Fang, "Oil Lobbyist Touts Success in Effort to Criminalize Pipeline Protests, Leaked Recording Shows," *The Intercept*, August 19, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/08/19/oil-lobby-pipeline-protests/>; and Jamie Corey, "Bills Targeting Anti-Pipeline Activists in seven states in 2020, so far," *Documented*, February 7, 2020, <https://documented.net/2020/02/bills-targeting-anti-pipeline-activists-in-seven-states-in-2020-so-far/>.

about environmental and Indigenous activists and wanted to expand their abilities to handle potential disruptions to their profits in the future.

Leaked documents further indicate the specific targets of critical infrastructure protection. In an unclassified document from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) titled “Threats to Keystone XL Pipeline Projects within Houston Domain”, protesters were labelled as “environmental extremists” while the pipeline was described as “vital to the security and economy of the United States”.<sup>53</sup> This document suggests that critical infrastructure is protected because of its economic benefits and activists are purposefully targeted because they can impede profits. A field report from the Department of Homeland Security, in collaboration with several state fusion centers, uses a similar term, “environmental rights extremists” to refer to pipeline protesters.<sup>54</sup> The field report makes an additional connection to depict protesters as threats to national security by claiming that Indigenous activists from Canada who travelled to join the Standing Rock protests included “violent extremists” who came with weapons and riot gear.<sup>55</sup>

Economic interests and national security interests are conflated in matters of critical infrastructure, giving its protection the sense of importance and urgency that is needed for securitization. Cross-border support for activists is interpreted as foreign interference to national interests. This idea of foreign interference is only applied to the actions of activists and not to proponents of extraction projects. Pipelines often have international dimensions since many cross through the Canada-US border and are owned by companies from various countries, yet these

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<sup>53</sup> Paul Lewis and Adam Federman, “Revealed: FBI violated its own rules while spying on Keystone XL opponents,” *The Guardian*, May 12, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/may/12/revealed-fbi-spied-keystone-xl-opponents>.

<sup>54</sup> US Department of Homeland Security, “(U//FOUO) TTPs Used in Recent US Pipeline Attacks by Suspected Environmental Rights Extremists,” May 2, 2017, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4325264-May-2017-Field-Analysis-Report.html>, 1.

<sup>55</sup> US Department of Homeland Security, 5.

corporations are not accused of foreign interference because extraction is seen as a national interest.

## 5.2 Canadian Securitization of Critical Infrastructure

Canada's conception of critical infrastructure is detailed in the 2009 National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure by Public Safety Canada.

Critical infrastructure refers to processes, systems, facilities, technologies, networks, assets and services essential to the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians and the effective functioning of government...Disruptions of critical infrastructure could result in catastrophic loss of life, adverse economic effects, and significant harm to public confidence.<sup>56</sup>

This definition juxtaposes “catastrophic loss of life” and “adverse economic effects”, indicating that they are of similar importance.<sup>57</sup> As with the American definition, the Canadian conception of critical infrastructure emphasizes its importance to the function and identity of the country.

Connections between security and national interests in extraction are further revealed through Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy which defines critical infrastructure as “energy, transportation and oil and gas assets” rather than a broader conception that includes other sectors.<sup>58</sup> Critical infrastructure protection is placed directly within the realm of security. The Anti-terrorism Act of 2015 includes “interference with critical infrastructure” as an activity that undermines the security of Canada.<sup>59</sup> The Act authorizes security measures including information sharing among government departments and the broad discretion of security services to reduce threats to the security of Canada. Corporations are integrated into critical infrastructure

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<sup>56</sup> Public Safety Canada, “National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure,” 2009, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/srtg-crtcl-nfrstrctr/srtg-crtcl-nfrstrctr-eng.pdf>, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Public Safety Canada, “National Strategy,” 2.

<sup>58</sup> Government of Canada, “Building Resilience Against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy,” 2013, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rsln-c-gnst-trrrsm/rsln-c-gnst-trrrsm-eng.pdf>, 26.

<sup>59</sup> Anti-terrorism Act, S.C. 2015, c. 20, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/laws/astat/sc-2015-c-20/latest/sc-2015-c-20.html>.

protection as the Canadian government makes clear that it is achieved through partnerships with corporations and that the goals of the private sector are aligned with those of the country.<sup>60</sup>

Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy represents an unusual public document as it openly alludes to environmental and Indigenous activists as threats. The Strategy notes that domestic extremism often relates to "environmentalism and anti-capitalism" and can resort to violence. These forms of domestic extremism are compared to the Oklahoma City Bombing and the 2011 Norway attacks, which likens social issue protests that have largely remained nonviolent with two far-right terrorist attacks that killed nearly one thousand people.<sup>61</sup> Even though this document does not specifically claim that environmental and Indigenous activists are violent, the association between deadly terrorist attacks and the activities of these groups serves to connect them with one another. These government documents clearly identify critical infrastructure as a valued object that is threatened by terrorism and extremism, including from domestic actors.

Private documents indicate the motives for the securitization of critical infrastructure and clarify whom security agencies declare as threats. Declassified reports from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) show that security agencies are concerned with a "radicalized environmentalist faction" and about specific environmental organizations such as Greenpeace and the Council of Canadians.<sup>62</sup> The RCMP and other government agencies also consistently investigate and monitor Indigenous rights activists including those opposed to resource

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<sup>60</sup> Government of Canada, "Building Resilience Against Terrorism," 20, 36-37.

<sup>61</sup> Government of Canada, 9.

<sup>62</sup> See Jim Bronskill, "RCMP Concerned About 'Radicalized Environmentalist' Groups Such As Greenpeace: Report," *HuffPost*, July 29, 2012, [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/07/29/radical-environmentalism-rcmp-canada-greenpeace\\_n\\_1715336.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/07/29/radical-environmentalism-rcmp-canada-greenpeace_n_1715336.html); and Shawn McCarthy, "CSIS, RCMP monitored activist groups before Northern Gateway hearings," *The Globe and Mail*, November 21, 2013, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/csis-rcmp-monitored-activists-for-risk-before-enbridge-hearings/article15555935/>.

extraction.<sup>63</sup> A leaked RCMP Critical Infrastructure Intelligence Assessment constructs a growing “anti-petroleum movement” in Canada.<sup>64</sup> The assessment is concerned with the supposed threat of a variety of groups including groups of Indigenous activists who they deem as “Aboriginal extremists” and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The assessment emphasizes the potential for, or presence of, violence among these groups.<sup>65</sup>

The wording of the RCMP assessment connects Canadian identity and well-being to the petroleum industry and evokes suspicions of foreign interference by highlighting the foreign (mainly American) donations to environmental NGOs.<sup>66</sup> The assessment treats environmental concerns and the connections between resource extraction and climate change as mere claims while supporting extractive industries.<sup>67</sup> The assessment even quotes the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers’ assertion that “Canada is uniquely positioned to supply an abundance of safe, secure energy”.<sup>68</sup> Though the assessment was not intended for public view, it shows how extraction is framed as a crucial practice to Canada. Claiming that extraction is important to national interests enables security agencies to treat opposition to extraction as a security concern. The assessment expands on the securitization of critical infrastructure in public discourse that identifies it as a valued object under threat. As a private document, it shows the intentions of security agencies in targeting environmental and Indigenous activists to protect extractivism.

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<sup>63</sup> RCMP, “Project SITKA Serious Criminality Associated to Large Public Order Events with National Implications,” March 16, 2015, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3679742-Project-Sitka-Report.html>.

<sup>64</sup> RCMP, “Criminal Threats to the Canadian Petroleum Industry,” Critical Infrastructure Intelligence Assessment,” January 24, 2014, <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2015/feb/can-2014-01-24-rcmp-anti-petroleum-activists-report.pdf>, 2.

<sup>65</sup> RCMP, 3.

<sup>66</sup> RCMP, 4, 9.

<sup>67</sup> RCMP, 3, 5-7.

<sup>68</sup> RCMP, 4.



### 5.3 State Intentions and Strategies

Discourse from Canada and the US shows the securitization of critical infrastructure. Though policies in both countries recognize that critical infrastructure can be threatened by accidents and natural events, they clearly assert that critical infrastructure is threatened by intentional sabotage. To protect critical infrastructure, agencies and departments have been created or re-organized, budgets have been allocated, security measures have been approved, and permissibility has been granted for these efforts to be kept secret.<sup>69</sup> Security measures and the secrecy in which they operate were authorized because of a perceived threat of terrorism in the post-9/11 environment but they continue to operate in Canada and the US beyond a state of emergency or imminent threat. These security powers are used to advance economic interests and target environmental and Indigenous activists by suggesting that they engage in, or have the potential to engage in, serious acts of criminality, extremism, or terrorism.

The securitization of critical infrastructure in the US is more secretive in some senses and more explicit in others. Security powers are broad and hidden in America. Public security documents establish that critical infrastructure is threatened by terrorism but keep the conception of terrorism broad. State critical infrastructure laws also do not name specific groups but their creation by oil and gas executives in response to the Standing Rock protests make it clear that critical infrastructure is protected because of profits which environmental and Indigenous activists can challenge. In Canada, critical infrastructure protection is undertaken in a securitized way, though the use of more public critical infrastructure criminal charges could be used in the

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<sup>69</sup> Philip Boyle and Shannon Speed, "From protection to coordinated preparedness: A genealogy of critical infrastructure in Canada," *Security Dialogue* 49, no. 3 (2018): 226; Critical Infrastructures Protection Act of 2001. Public Law 107-56, Title X, §1016, October 26, 2001, <https://www.sec.gov/about/offices/ocie/aml/patriotact2001.pdf>.

future.<sup>70</sup> Public documents provide evidence of a securitizing move establishing the importance of critical infrastructure and its threatened nature. In practice, and as shown through private documents, security measures to protect critical infrastructure are directed at environmental and Indigenous activists specifically because they obstruct extractivism.

While the majority of infrastructure in Canada and the US is privately owned and its function is important for the well-being of citizens, the security state's actions to protect critical infrastructure go beyond the intentions of safeguarding citizens to safeguarding capital. Security and policing forces in Canada and the US have acted alongside corporations to protect continuing extraction. Confrontations between security agencies and environmental and Indigenous activists in Standing Rock and Wet'suwet'en lay bare the security state's real targets.

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<sup>70</sup> Alberta has passed a similar law to the American Legislative Exchange Council's model legislation, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act. This law imposes significant fines and possible jail time for individuals who damage or obstruct critical infrastructure. See Sean Fine, "Alberta tables bill that would jail pipeline protesters for up to six months, impose major fines," *The Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2020, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/alberta/article-alberta-tables-bill-that-would-jail-pipeline-protesters-for-up-to-six/>.

## 6. The Measures to Protect Extractivism

### 6.1 Security Measures in Action at Standing Rock

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests in the Standing Rock Sioux Nation highlight the securitized responses to environmental and Indigenous activists and the close alignment between security agencies and private corporations preserving extractivism in the US. The normally unseen exceptional measures used to protect critical infrastructure were brought into view as environmental and Indigenous activists sought to prevent the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline through multiple states, rivers, and Indigenous nations. Members of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and other Indigenous youth started a campaign to stop the pipeline in April 2016.<sup>71</sup> Camps were subsequently established on the pipeline's intended route by LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, Jasilyn Charger, and other Indigenous activists to protect the waterways threatened by the pipeline and to advocate for Indigenous rights. In the summer and fall of 2016, thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous supporters populated the camps.<sup>72</sup> The US government had tried to dispossess Indigenous nations of the lands and rivers which the Dakota Access Pipeline crosses through for years and the members of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation are no strangers to government repression.<sup>73</sup> The Dakota Access Pipeline, however, brought additional dimensions to this repression as forceful security measures were used to protect extractivism.

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<sup>71</sup> Rachael Revesz, "13-year-old Native American's petition to stop oil pipeline reaches 80,000 signatures," *The Independent*, May 11, 2016, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/13-year-old-native-american-s-petition-to-stop-oil-pipeline-reaches-80000-signatures-a7024426.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Sam Levin, "Dakota Access pipeline: the who, what and why of the Standing Rock protests," *The Guardian*, November 3, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/03/north-dakota-access-oil-pipeline-protests-explainer>.

<sup>73</sup> Nick Estes, "Fighting for Our Lives #NoDAPL in Historical Context," *Wicazo Sa Review* 32, no. 2 (2017): 116-118.

North Dakota governor, Jack Dalrymple, declared a state of emergency on August 19, 2016 in response to the protests, triggering collaboration with various law enforcement agencies, the North Dakota National Guard, Border Patrol, and Homeland Security.<sup>74</sup> Overall, there was a sprawling security and corporate network responding to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. Security actors in Standing Rock included the FBI, the US Justice Department, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, financial corporations, multinational companies, and private security firms.<sup>75</sup>

Energy Transfer Partners, one of the primary owners of the Dakota Access Pipeline, hired the security firm TigerSwan to conduct surveillance and counterterrorism measures against the protesters.<sup>76</sup> Leaked documents detail counterinformation campaigns, social media monitoring, drone surveillance, and group infiltration conducted by the firm. Internal communications show how TigerSwan employees compared the camps to a “battlefield” and the protesters to “terrorists”.<sup>77</sup> To ensure the construction of the pipeline, security actors were willing to use extreme measures including violence against the protesters. Hundreds were injured during confrontations with police and security forces who used tear gas, rubber bullets, batons, water cannons in freezing temperatures, and dog attacks.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon, “Introduction: The Black Snake, #NoDAPL and the Rise of a People’s Movement,” in *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement*, ed. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 4.

<sup>75</sup> Aileen Brown, Will Parrish, and Alice Speri, “Leaked Documents Reveal Counterterrorism tactics used at Standing Rock to ‘Defeat Pipeline Insurgencies’,” *The Intercept*, May 27, 2017 <https://theintercept.com/2017/05/27/leaked-documents-reveal-security-firms-counterterrorism-tactics-at-standing-rock-to-defeat-pipeline-insurgencies/>; and Michelle Cook, “Striking at the Heart of Capital: International Financial Institutions and Indigenous Peoples’ Human Rights,” in *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement*, ed. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 105.

<sup>76</sup> Brown, et al., “Leaked Documents Reveal Counterterrorism tactics.”

<sup>77</sup> Brown, et al.

<sup>78</sup> See Derek Hawkins, “Activists and police trade blame after Dakota Access protester severely injured,” *Washington Post*, November 22, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/11/22/activists-and-police-trade-blame-after-dakota-access-protester-severely-injured/>; and UNHRC “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples on her mission to the United States of America,” A/HRC/36/46/Add. 1, August 9, 2017, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/59cb9b2f4.html>, 15.

Beyond extralegal surveillance measures, legal processes were utilized by state and private actors to try to deter the protesters. Over the months of the protests, police arrested hundreds of protesters on various criminal charges.<sup>79</sup> Energy Transfer Partners filed a racketeering complaint against several environmental NGOs and individual activists in 2017. The lawsuit alleged, among other charges, that the NGOs and activists committed acts of terrorism under the Patriot Act by destroying energy facilities and profiting from acts of terrorism.<sup>80</sup> Though the racketeering case was dropped in February 2019, it illustrates how government processes are available for legitimizing claims of terrorism against environmental and Indigenous activists that disrupt extractivism.

## 6.2 Confrontations with Canada in Wet'suwet'en Territory

Confrontations between environmental and Indigenous activists and the government over pipeline projects draw attention to the lengths that the government is willing to go to protect extractivism. For years, the Wet'suwet'en people in Northern British Columbia have been fighting a variety of pipeline projects on their land. Colonial intrusion to Wet'suwet'en lands is not a new phenomenon and extractive corporations have played an increasingly central role in this process.<sup>81</sup> In April 2009, the first checkpoint was established by the Unist'ot'en (a house under the Wet'suwet'en nation) and since then permanent structures have been erected by

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<sup>79</sup> Sam Levin, Nicky Woolf, and Damian Carrington, "North Dakota pipeline: 141 arrests as protesters pushed back from site," *The Guardian*, October 28, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/oct/27/north-dakota-access-pipeline-protest-arrests-pepper-spray>.

<sup>80</sup> Aileen Brown, Will Parrish, and Alice Speri, "Dakota Access Pipeline Company Paid Mercenaries to Build Conspiracy Lawsuit Against Environmentalists," *The Intercept*, November 15, 2017, <https://theintercept.com/2017/11/15/dakota-access-pipeline-dapl-tigerswan-energy-transfer-partners-rico-lawsuit/>.

<sup>81</sup> Martin Lukacs and Shiri Pasternak, "Industry, government pushed to abolish Aboriginal title at issue in Wet'suwet'en stand-off, docs reveal," *The Narwhal*, February 7, 2020, <https://thenarwhal.ca/industry-government-pushed-to-abolish-aboriginal-title-at-issue-in-wetsuweten-stand-off-docs-reveal/>.

members of the nation to assert their sovereignty and block pipelines.<sup>82</sup> In 2019, the response to these efforts by the RCMP intensified as they sought to ensure the construction of the latest pipeline project, Coastal Gaslink. It must be clarified that the central matter in opposing these projects is the land rights of the Wet'suwet'en nation, but environmental issues are an important component to the opposition of the pipeline by Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists.

The RCMP monitored activists in Wet'suwet'en for years through the Critical Infrastructure Intelligence Team, the now disbanded Aboriginal Intelligence Group, and other sectors of the force.<sup>83</sup> The RCMP identified people affiliated with the Wet'suwet'en blockades as posing a potential criminal threat during their intelligence gathering investigation, Project SITKA.<sup>84</sup> The RCMP, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the National Energy Board, private security firms, and extractive corporations have engaged in the surveillance of environmental and Indigenous activists opposed to previous pipelines in the area and these practices have continued to the present day.<sup>85</sup>

The RCMP attempted to enforce injunctions to clear the way for the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline in January 2019 and again in February 2020. On both of these occasions, the RCMP asserted an armed presence using tactical gear, drone technology, social media monitoring, forceful arrests, and preparation to use lethal force.<sup>86</sup> The RCMP collaborated with TC Energy,

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<sup>82</sup> Zoe Ducklow, "Nine Things You Need to Know about the Unist'ot'en Blockade," *The Tyee*, January 8, 2019, <https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2019/01/08/LNG-Pipeline-Unistoten-Blockade/>.

<sup>83</sup> Crosby and Monaghan, *Policing Indigenous Movements*, 64.

<sup>84</sup> RCMP, "Project SITKA," 14.

<sup>85</sup> Martin Lukacs and Tim Groves, "Canadian spies met with energy firms, documents reveal," *The Guardian*, October 9, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/oct/09/canadian-spies-met-energy-firms-documents>; and British Columbia Civil Liberties Association and Attorney General of Canada, Federal Court No. T-1492-17, [https://bccla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BCCLA-CTR-Volume-1\\_OCR.pdf](https://bccla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BCCLA-CTR-Volume-1_OCR.pdf).

<sup>86</sup> Jaskiran Dhillon and Will Parrish, "Exclusive: Canada police prepared to shoot Indigenous activists, documents show," *The Guardian*, December 20, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/20/canada-indigenous-land-defenders-police-documents>.

owners of the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline, and the private security firms that they employed to monitor activists.<sup>87</sup> The Coastal Gaslink protests are one case in a larger pattern of similar confrontations, and as this and other projects move forward, it is likely that such responses from the security state will continue.<sup>88</sup>

The Project SITKA report from 2015 recognized that activists attending “Aboriginal public order events” posed no direct threat to critical infrastructure and that the RCMP should “move away from utilizing terrorism/extremism language”.<sup>89</sup> It is clear, however, that even if security agencies have stopped using internal discourse that constructs Indigenous and environmental protesters as terrorists or extremists, they still treat them as though they are security threats. The security state continues to employ counterterrorism techniques and extreme responses to protect ongoing extraction. Though there has been public outcry over the treatment of activists in Standing Rock and Wet’suwet’en, it competes against national interests of extraction.

### 6.3 Accounting for Differences

The Standing Rock and Wet’suwet’en cases share many similarities such as the surveillance tactics used and the nature of the protests, but there are some notable differences. More is known about TigerSwan and the tactics that they used than the private security firms hired by corporations seeking to operate on Wet’suwet’en lands. The US does have a larger system of private contractors who have military experience and use related tactics, creating a

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<sup>87</sup> Dhillon and Parrish.

<sup>88</sup> Jorge Barrera, “Surveillance of activists protesting the Trans Mountain expansion are already being monitored, RCMP reactivated list of flagged activists days before Trans Mountain decision, documents show,” *CBC News*, January 14, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/rcmp-project-sitka-list-1.5422152>.

<sup>89</sup> RCMP, “Project SITKA,” 5, 13, 24.

particularly militarized presence.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, local police forces in the US are militarized in relation to their equipment, organization, operations, and culture.<sup>91</sup> Policing forces in Canada have elements of militarization and in Wet'suwet'en, the RCMP did use military gear and equipment.<sup>92</sup> Evidence is not available, however, that the RCMP drew upon military experience in the same manner that TigerSwan did nor did they have the same extensive access to military equipment as security actors in Standing Rock.<sup>93</sup>

Though Canadian security agencies were collecting information on environmental NGOs, there is only evidence available to suggest that this was open-source information whereas investigations into Indigenous activists have been more expansive. This variation could be attributed to differences in threat perception by security agencies that is informed by these institutions' colonial histories and ongoing anti-Indigenous prejudice. The RCMP used forceful tactics against the predominantly Indigenous activists at the Wet'suwet'en blockades whereas comparable environmental protest events have not faced the same response.<sup>94</sup>

Though the recent confrontations are related to the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline, the situation in Wet'suwet'en is greater than this particular project. There have been numerous pipelines proposed through Wet'suwet'en territory, some of which have been delayed or cancelled in part because of Indigenous opposition. Canadian security agencies have been monitoring opposition

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<sup>90</sup> "Who We Are," TigerSwan, accessed on May 20, 2020, <https://www.tigerswan.com/who-we-are/>; and Jeremy Scahill, "Blackwater's Private Spies," *The Nation*, June 5, 2008, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/blackwaters-private-spies/>.

<sup>91</sup> Peter Kraska, "Militarization and Policing – Its Relevance to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Police," *Policing* 1, no. 4 (2007): 501-513.

<sup>92</sup> Brendan Roziere and Kevin Walby, "The Expansion and Normalization of Police Militarization in Canada," *Critical Criminology* 26, no. 1 (2018): 29-48.

<sup>93</sup> Sandy Tolan, "'Brute force' at Standing Rock was on taxpayers' dime," *Reveal News*, March 3, 2017, <https://www.revealnews.org/article/brute-force-at-standing-rock-was-on-taxpayers-dime/>.

<sup>94</sup> Non-Indigenous allies have also been present at the Wet'suwet'en blockades but they are dominantly occupied by local Wet'suwet'en peoples. Indigenous activists also participate in environmental protests but are often not the majority of participants, depending on the location and nature of the event.



to these projects over the years, not on behalf of one corporation or one project but for the future of extractivism in the country.<sup>95</sup> These security practices have remained consistent from Stephen Harper's Conservative government to the current Liberal government led by Justin Trudeau. This coherence indicates that though government rhetoric regarding extraction and environmental protection has changed, the Canadian government maintains its interests in extraction which guides its security practices.

In Canada, the government asserts sovereignty over Indigenous nations regardless of court cases affirming Aboriginal title rights and rights to self-determination.<sup>96</sup> However, the federal government, particularly under Prime Minister Trudeau, declares its support for Indigenous peoples and commitment to reconciliation.<sup>97</sup> These performative declarations supporting Indigenous rights conflict with the government's interests in extraction thus the Canadian government has motives to quash and deter protests that put the spotlight on their conflicting aims. The US also handles contradictions related to sovereignty and title rights, but the government is not similarly concerned with promoting an image of reconciliation.<sup>98</sup> Though President Barack Obama spoke in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and his administration briefly blocked the Dakota Access Pipeline, there are not the same programmatic

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<sup>95</sup> Philip Boyle and Tia Dafnos, "Infrastructures of Pacification: Vital Points, Critical Infrastructure, and Police Power in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 34, no. 1 (2019): 93.

<sup>96</sup> See Gordon Christie, "A colonial reading of recent jurisprudence: Sparrow, Delgamuukw and Haida Nation," *Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice* 23, no. 1 (2005): 17-53; and Tom Isaac, Tony Knox, and Sarah Bird, "The Crown's Duty to Consult and Accommodate Aboriginal Peoples: The Supreme Court of Canada Decision in Haida," *The Advocate* 63, no. 5 (2005): 671-690.

<sup>97</sup> Justin Trudeau, "Remarks by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on the Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework," February 14, 2018, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2018/02/14/remarks-prime-minister-house-commons-recognition-and-implementation-rights>.

<sup>98</sup> Algeria Ford, "The Myth of Tribal Sovereignty: An Analysis of Native American Tribal Status in the United States," *International Community Law Review* 12 (2010): 406.

efforts to appear as an Indigenous ally.<sup>99</sup> With the continuing influence of extractive corporations and state interests in extractivism, President Donald Trump's administration was able to approve the Dakota Access Pipeline's completion.

The Canadian government needs new pipelines in order to export the products from domestic oil and gas reserves to Asia, the US, or any other markets. The disruption of the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline could have consequences for other pipelines like the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion which the Trudeau government purchased for four billion dollars amidst significant political pressure.<sup>100</sup> Since political and economic success is centered around extraction, the Canadian government has a deep interest in the protection and expansion of pipelines.

At the height of the protests in Standing Rock there was a large variety of people at the camps including Standing Rock locals, Indigenous people from other nations, and non-Indigenous allies. Surveillance measures and confrontations in Standing Rock affected all different types of protesters and reports from the Department of Homeland Security and TigerSwan suggest that security actors were concerned about solidarity among different movements.<sup>101</sup> The US, like Canada, has a history of targeting Indigenous activists through policing and security measures.<sup>102</sup> Though there was a large effort focused on (mainly white) environmental activists, documents from TigerSwan reveal racially motivated targets. TigerSwan

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<sup>99</sup> Catherine Thorbecke, "President Obama Tells Standing Rock Demonstrators: 'You're Making Your Voice Heard'," *ABC News*, September 26, 2016, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/president-obama-tells-standing-rock-demonstrators-youre-making/story?id=42361295>.

<sup>100</sup> Alex Ballingall, Bruce Campion-Smith, and Tonda MacCharles, "Justin Trudeau's \$4.5 billion Trans Mountain pipeline purchase met with a storm of criticism," *The Star*, May 29, 2018, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/05/29/justin-trudeaus-45-billion-trans-mountain-pipeline-purchase-met-with-a-storm-of-criticism.html>.

<sup>101</sup> US Department of Homeland Security, "TTPs Used in Recent US Pipeline Attacks," 4; and Brown et al., "Leaked Documents Reveal Counterterrorism tactics."

<sup>102</sup> For example, Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of repression: The FBI's secret wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1988).

monitored the activities of members of the American Indian Movement, and particular camps like the Red Warrior Camp.<sup>103</sup> Documents also show TigerSwan's concern with Muslim Palestinian activists, former Black Panther members at the camps, and support from the Black Lives Matter movement.<sup>104</sup> The concern for solidarity among these movements is connected to other groups (Black people and Muslims) that have historically been targeted by American security agencies.<sup>105</sup> It is difficult to know why this concern stemmed from a private security firm instead of a government agency but it could relate to racial prejudice in the organization or fear of a larger, coordinated movement obstructing the goals of their employer.

Security actors in Standing Rock appear to have targeted environmental activists to a greater extent than Canadian security agencies did. US security agencies do have a history of identifying environmental activists as “eco-terrorists” which is not comparable to Canada. Government and private security actors possibly targeted environmental activists by surveillance, force, and lawsuits because of actions that they believed the activists conducted. There were countersurveillance activities such as the use of drones, surveying police encampments, and the doxing of police and private security officers that government and TigerSwan officers attributed to environmental activists.<sup>106</sup> There were also instances of property damage and the alleged use of weapons and explosives which security forces blamed on “environmental extremists”.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, it appears that the networks, donations, and recognition that environmental NGOs

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<sup>103</sup> John Porter, “DAPL SITREP 011#,” September 22, 2016, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3755589-Internal-TigerSwan-Situation-Report-2016-09-22.html>, 1-2.

<sup>104</sup> Porter, “DAPL SITREP 011#,” 1-2; and John Porter, “DAPL SITREP 057,” November 9, 2016, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3766418-Internal-TigerSwan-Situation-Report-2016-11-09.html>, 1-2.

<sup>105</sup> See Zahra Mian, “‘Black Identity Extremist’ or Black Dissident?: How United States v. Daniels Illustrates FBI Criminalization of Black Dissent of Law Enforcement, From COINTELPRO to Black Lives Matter,” *Rutgers Race and Law Review* 21, no. 1 (2020): 53-92; and Saher Selod, *Forever Suspect: Racialized Surveillance of Muslim Americans in the War on Terror* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018).

<sup>106</sup> US Department of Homeland Security, “TTPs Used in Recent US Pipeline Attacks,” 5-6.

<sup>107</sup> US Department of Homeland Security, 4, 7.

had available made them a powerful and credible opponent to the pipeline which worried TigerSwan.<sup>108</sup> The influence of corporations and their direct role in providing security services could mean that, though they were racially biased, ultimately, security actors were working to eliminate all obstructions to the project. State agencies which played the dominant security role in Canada arguably have further alignment with colonial motivations and thus were centrally concerned with Indigenous activists.

Challenges to the regular function and expansion of critical infrastructure are treated seriously by the security state but it is important to note the specific response to Indigenous resistance. The history of militarized and securitized responses to Indigenous activism dates back much further in North America's colonial history than the response to environmental activism.<sup>109</sup> Indigenous sovereignty poses a particular challenge to the extractivist goals of the government and corporations which motivates the state's use of security measures against them. Extractive projects like pipelines serve as a function of modern colonization which includes the destruction of Indigenous lands, disruption of cultural practices, and threats to the health and safety of Indigenous peoples.<sup>110</sup> Global patterns indicate that the involvement of Indigenous people in environmental conflicts increases the use of violence against activists but the specific colonial history of a country must be considered to understand present day state violence.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> John Porter, "DAPL SITREP 238," May 9, 2017, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3940292-Internal-TigerSwan-Situation-Report-2017-05-09.html>, 3-5.

<sup>109</sup> See Warren Bernauer, Henry Heller, and Peter Kulchyski, "From Wallmapu to Nunatsiavut The Criminalization of Indigenous Resistance," *Monthly Review* 69, no. 8 (2018): 33-40; and Pauline Wakeham, "Reconciling 'Terror': Managing Indigenous Resistance in the Age of Apology," *American Indian Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2012): 14.

<sup>110</sup> See Pamela Palmater, "The Radical Politics of Indigenous Resistance and Survival," in *Routledge Handbook of Radical Politics*, ed. Ruth Kinna and Uri Gordon (London: Routledge, 2019) 134; and Crosby and Monaghan, *Policing Indigenous Resistance*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> Arnim Scheidel, Daniela Del Bene, Juan Liu, Grettel Navas, Sara Mingorria, Federico Demaria, Sofia Avila, Brototi Roy, Irmak Ertor, Leah Temper, Joan Martinez-Alier, "Environmental conflicts and defenders: A global overview," *Global Environmental Change* 63 (2020): 10.

Security actors and corporations pursuing opponents to extraction projects in the US have additional tools at their disposal with the nature of private security contractors and legal avenues that emerged from the post-9/11 security environment and the pursuit of environmental activists as “eco-terrorists”. In Canada, opposition from Indigenous activists appears to be the primary concern for state agencies pursuing extraction projects. Though environmental activists have been monitored by security agencies and are a part of the opposition against extraction projects, Indigenous activists have been targeted by security measures to a greater extent. Indigenous assertions of sovereignty present a distinct challenge to governments seeking the expansion of extractivism without perceiving to violate rights, thus the Canadian government has attempted to manage these challenges with secretive security measures.

## 7. Global Implications

Public and private documents from Canada and the US as well as confrontations over critical infrastructure projects show that these governments have constructed environmental and Indigenous activists as a security threat to critical infrastructure and the extraction that it facilitates. These findings have global implications for several reasons including the spread of critical infrastructure discourse and post-9/11 security trends, the dominance of extractivism in other countries, and the marginalization of Indigenous peoples.

### 7.1 Europe

Following the 9/11 attacks on one of the world's most powerful countries and subsequent large-scale terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, critical infrastructure security policies spread to Europe. The European Commission described an increasing threat of terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure in 2004 and identified this as a priority in their counterterrorism plans.<sup>112</sup> In 2006, the European Commission required member states to adopt the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection which emphasized the interconnectedness of infrastructure among countries, information sharing with relevant stakeholders, and minimizing risks to the economy.<sup>113</sup> These policy directives indicate that members of the European Union recognize critical infrastructure as a valued object that needs protection from threats. There is opposition to extractivism from environmental activists in Europe as well, and some pipeline

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<sup>112</sup> Claudia Aradau, "Security That Matters: Critical Infrastructure and Objects of Protection," *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 5 (2010): 491.

<sup>113</sup> Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the Commission on a European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection," December 12, 2006, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0786:FIN:EN:PDF>.

protests have been met with a forceful state response.<sup>114</sup> Further research is needed to establish if extractive infrastructure is highlighted in security policies or actions, what security measures have been utilized against activists, and how they have been justified.

As the cases of Canada and the US show, critical infrastructure securitization is shaped by national and international factors. The use of security measures against activists opposing extraction projects is likely impacted by a country's history of policing and security, previous responses to activist movements, the nature of the opposition whether small and localized or large and widely supported, and the infrastructure itself – how much investment was made in the project, which countries are involved, and how it fits into larger concerns of energy security and economic interests.

## 7.2 Australia

Australia is like Canada and the US as a settler colonial country with national interests in extractivism. Australia has emphasized the importance of critical infrastructure and developed policies around it like the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy released in 2010.<sup>115</sup> The Australian approach to critical infrastructure, like the Canadian and American ones, encourages partnerships and information sharing between government agencies and the private owners of critical infrastructure.<sup>116</sup> Corporations have exploited these partnerships to protect their profits before. In 2008-2009 corporate lobbyists from the energy sector backed the Minister for

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<sup>114</sup> Jon Stone, "Italy uses Mussolini-era law to place community on military lockdown over pipeline project," *The Independent*, November 30, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/melendugno-trans-adriatic-pipeline-tap-red-zone-italy-protests-a8085586.html>.

<sup>115</sup> Wendy Steele, Karen Hussey, and Stephen Dovers, "What's Critical about Critical Infrastructure?" *Urban Policy and Research* 35, no. 1 (2017): 84-85.

<sup>116</sup> See Darren Palmer and Chad Whelan, "Counter-terrorism across the Policing Continuum," *Police Practice and Research* 7, no. 5 (2006): 458; and Kathleen O'Donnell, "Responses in Policy and Practice to Radical Environmental Protest Targeting Key Parts of the Civil Infrastructure in Australia and the United Kingdom," (PhD dissertation, Griffith University, 2015) 130.

Resources and Energy to push for more surveillance of environmental activists and stronger penalties against protesters that disrupt critical infrastructure.<sup>117</sup>

Australian government officials working in partnership with corporations have sought to impede opposition to extraction projects with anti-protest laws and limitations on the activities of environmental NGOs.<sup>118</sup> The government has associated environmental activists with extremism and depicted their activities as contrary to national interests.<sup>119</sup> Further research is needed on the specific forms of security measures employed and if Indigenous opposition to extractivism is similarly targeted. This preliminary overview suggests that Australia could also be targeting environmental activists using security measures to protect the operation of critical infrastructure given the importance of extractivism to the government and corporations.

### 7.3 South America

While critical infrastructure discourse is dominant in the Global North, this research has further global implications due to the embeddedness of extractivism and the resistance posed to it by environmental and Indigenous activists in other countries. Extractivism remains central to the economic and political strategies of many South American countries, dating back to colonization and to the neoliberal policies forced upon them in the twentieth century.

Activists protesting extraction projects for the protection of Indigenous rights and the environment have been criminalized in law or in practice by South American countries who aim

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<sup>117</sup> Philip Dorling, "Spies eye green protesters," *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 7, 2012, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/spies-eye-green-protesters-20120106-1poow.html>.

<sup>118</sup> See Miriam Matejova, Stefan Parker, and Peter Dauvergne, "The politics of repressing environmentalists as agents of foreign influence," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 72, no. 2 (2018): 153-154; and Stuart Braun, "Anti-protest laws and litigation take aim at climate activism," *DW*, January 13, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/anti-protest-laws-and-litigation-take-aim-at-climate-activism/a-51701293>.

<sup>119</sup> Bridie Jabour, "Radicalisation kit links green activism and 'alternative music' to extremism," *The Guardian*, September 25, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/sep/25/radicalisation-kit-links-activism-and-alternative-music-scene-to-extremism>.



to dissuade challenges to their policies.<sup>120</sup> Broad anti-terrorism laws are applied against activists as they can easily be manipulated to achieve government aims of eliminating dissent.<sup>121</sup> The Mapuche Indigenous people of Chile and Argentina have been charged with terrorism over efforts to protect their lands, a by-product of both post-9/11 security discourse and historical trends of colonization and oppression.<sup>122</sup> Under the former President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, environmental and Indigenous activists were frequently charged with terrorism and sabotage.<sup>123</sup> In 2008, the Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly provided amnesty to over 350 activists who had been targeted for protesting against extractivism, however, such practices continue.<sup>124</sup>

Global Witness documented 164 murders of environmental defenders in 2018 in various countries as they tried to protect their land, homes, and environment from the state and corporations.<sup>125</sup> Governments and corporations often work together to repress environmental and Indigenous activists. Oil and gas corporations use private security guards or state military officers to threaten and attack activists.<sup>126</sup> Many of the corporations pushing extractivist agendas

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<sup>120</sup> Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, "Criminalization of Human Rights Defenders," December 31, 2015, <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/criminalization2016.pdf>, 30-31.

<sup>121</sup> See Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, "Criminalization of Human Rights Defenders," 72; and United Nations General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders," A/67/292, August 10, 2012, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N12/459/42/PDF/N1245942.pdf?OpenElement>, 6.

<sup>122</sup> See Zia Akhtar, "Mapuche Land Claims: Environmental Protest, Legal Discrimination and Customary Rights," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 20, no. 4 (2013): 551-576; and Patricia Richards, "Of Indians and Terrorists: How the State and Local Elites Construct the Mapuche in Neoliberal Multicultural Chile," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 42, no. 1 (2010): 59-90.

<sup>123</sup> Marc Becker, "Resource extraction, sumac kawsay, and social movement resistance in Ecuador under Rafael Correa," in *The New Global Politics: Global Social Movements in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Harry Vanden, Peter Funke, and Gary Prevost (London: Routledge, 2017) 66.

<sup>124</sup> Amnesty International, "'So That No One Can Demand Anything': Criminalizing the Right to Protest in Ecuador?" 2012, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/50055db82.pdf>, 11; and Ada Recinos, "Ecuador Indigenous Leaders Charged with Terrorism and Sabotage: Correa Administration Seeks to Criminalize Dissent and Peaceful Protest," *Amazon Watch*, July 1, 2010, <https://amazonwatch.org/news/2010/0701-ecuador-indigenous-leaders-charged-with-terrorism-and-sabotage>.

<sup>125</sup> Global Witness, "Enemies of the State?: How governments and business silence land and environmental defenders," July 2019, accessed via <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/enemies-state/>, 8.

<sup>126</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders," A/65/223, August 4, 2010, <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/defenders/docs/A-65-223.pdf>, 5; and

and threatening activists are from Canada and the US, illustrating the international and neocolonial dimensions of extractivism.<sup>127</sup> Extractive corporations target the most marginalized sectors of populations when operating domestically and internationally.

For these resource-rich, export-dependent countries in South America, extractivism is central to national interests, or at least the interests of the government and corporations. Even in countries like Bolivia and Ecuador where leadership claims to support Indigenous peoples and environmental protection, government actions contradict these ideologies and long-standing extractivist policies continue under a different framing of “sustainable development”.<sup>128</sup> Environmental and Indigenous activists have been labelled as terrorists and betrayers of national interests in attempts to neutralize their obstruction to extraction projects. However, state discourse attempting to justify the repression of environmental and Indigenous activists is not always present nor has a security argument calling upon critical infrastructure protection commonly been used.<sup>129</sup>

There could be a few different explanations for the absence of critical infrastructure securitization in South American countries. It could be the case that some of these governments are able to operate in greater secrecy on a regular basis and hence do not need to legitimize exceptional measures through securitization.<sup>130</sup> Critical infrastructure policies might also be less

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Maiah Jaskoski, “Private Financing of the Military: A Local Political Economy Approach,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 48, no. 2 (2013): 178.

<sup>127</sup> Alexandra Pedersen, “Landscapes of Resistance: Community Opposition to Canadian Mining Operations in Guatemala,” *Journal of Latin American Geography* 13, no. 1 (2014): 192-195.

<sup>128</sup> See Svampa, Neo-extractivism in Latin America, 15; and Paul Bowles and Henry Veltmeyer, “Extractivism,” in *The Routledge Handbook to the Political Economy and Governance of the Americas*, ed. Olaf Kaltmeier, Anne Tittor, Daniel Hawkins, and Eleonora Rohland (London: Routledge, 2020) 110.

<sup>129</sup> A bill was recently passed in Chile to authorize the use of Armed Forces to protect critical infrastructure without needing to declare a state of emergency but it is not yet clear whether this will be used against environmental and Indigenous activists specifically, see “Sebastian Pinera pushes a law so that Chilean FFAAs can protest ‘critical infrastructure’ without having to decree a state of emergency,” *CE Noticias Financieras*, November 24, 2019.

<sup>130</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, 24.

prevalent due to the different security environments in South America compared to countries in the Global North.<sup>131</sup> Another possibility is that the perceived economic benefits of extraction projects are enough to justify the repression of activists who impede them as these countries wish to pursue development and economic stability.<sup>132</sup> The nature of the political system, the historical legacy of previous authoritarian regimes, imperialist interference from colonization through to neoliberal programs, and the marginalization of those impacted by extractivism likely all influence South American countries' approaches to security, extraction, and social movements. Further research is needed to assess the plausibility of these explanations for why the securitization of critical infrastructure has not occurred in South American extractivist countries and the possibility of it occurring in the future.

#### 7.4 Environmental Impacts

The securitization of critical infrastructure has global implications beyond specific countries. Extractivism causes environmental damage, loss of biodiversity, and contributes to half of total global greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>133</sup> Targeting environmental and Indigenous activists guards extractivism from physical impediments to expanding infrastructure and from ideological challenges to capitalism. Extractive industries threaten the environmental protection

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<sup>131</sup> Marcia Esparza, Henry Huttenbach, and Daniel Feierstein, *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America: The Cold War Years* (London: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>132</sup> See Dan Collins, "Bolivia approves highway through Amazon biodiversity hotspot," *The Guardian*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/15/bolivia-approves-highway-in-amazon-biodiversity-hotspot-as-big-as-jamaica#maincontent>; and Jennifer Moore and Teresa Velasquez, "Sovereignty negotiated: Anti-mining movements, the state and multinational mining companies under Correa's '21st Century Socialism'," in *Social Conflict, Economic Development and the Extractive Industry: Evidence from South America*, ed. Anthony Bebbington (London: Routledge, 2011), 116-119.

<sup>133</sup> International Resource Panel, "Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want," United Nations Environment Programme, March 12, 2019, [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27518/GRO\\_2019\\_SPM\\_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27518/GRO_2019_SPM_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

practices and lives of those who live near extractive operations.<sup>134</sup> As long as extractivism is maintained, environmental and Indigenous activists who dare to challenge the status quo will be targeted. The benefits of extractivism are in the hands of those with power who can shape discourse and construct security threats which serve their interests.

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<sup>134</sup> Global Witness, “Enemies of the State,” 26.

## 8. Moving Forward – Desecuritization and Alternative Ideologies

There are ways for countries to address the securitized responses to environmental and Indigenous activists and to deprogram their reliance on extractivism. The Copenhagen School which conceptualized securitization also detailed its counterpart, desecuritization, or the elimination of issues from a country's security agenda.<sup>135</sup> With desecuritization, exceptional security measures are no longer permitted, and the matter returns to the realm of normal politics.<sup>136</sup> While critical infrastructure should be protected because of the services that it provides, this is not primarily a security matter as the risks from accidents, malfunctions, and weather events are more likely than intentional sabotage. Security policies to protect critical infrastructures are not solely being used for credible threats that would harm citizens. These policies are used so that governments can expand extractivism and repress activists who speak out against it.

Though environmental and Indigenous activists are sometimes conceptualized as criminals and subjected to regular criminal codes, they can also be investigated using counterterrorism and surveillance tactics and labelled as extremists. This relates back to the nature of the security state and the blurred categorizations of criminals, extremists, and terrorists. Moving forward, security measures should no longer be used on activists opposing pipelines who pose no criminal or security threat. The categorization between terrorists and criminals should not only be re-examined but also the differentiation between criminal activity and social movements. In Canada

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<sup>135</sup> Ole Waever, "The EU as a Security Actor: Reflections from a Pessimistic Constructivist on Post-Sovereign Security Orders," in *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security, and Community*, ed. Morten Kelstrup and Michael Williams (London: Routledge, 2000) 253.

<sup>136</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, 4, 29.

and the US, protests are protected under rights of speech/expression and assembly; to repress those engaging in these activities violates activists' rights.

Furthermore, the priorities of the state must be re-evaluated. The current critical infrastructure discourse prioritizes ongoing extraction and artificial environments over natural environments. Freda Huson, spokesperson for the Unist'ot'en camp, has responded to the classification of pipelines as critical infrastructure by articulating a conception of critical infrastructure as waterways and the life systems that they support.<sup>137</sup> The government justifies the destruction of natural environments as necessary for the economy but these natural systems are equally important national interests that should be protected for the well-being of citizens.

Environmental justice and Indigenous knowledge systems offer alternatives to the current destructive systems. Extractivism promotes exploitation, expansion, and inequality whereas alternatives think systematically, promote equality and justice, and protect what is vulnerable. Though it is important to recognize the diversity within Indigenous knowledge systems and not essentialize Indigenous peoples' relationships with the environment, protecting the self-determination of Indigenous peoples over their land and relations is crucial for the survival of ecosystems.<sup>138</sup> Capitalism, colonialism, and climate change are deeply interconnected. Addressing the causes of climate change and ensuring the survival of Indigenous peoples, practices, and land requires a structural change.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Spice, "Fighting Invasive Infrastructures," 40.

<sup>138</sup> See Deborah McGregor, "Mino-Mnaamodzawin: Achieving Indigenous Environmental Justice in Canada," *Environment and Society* 9, no. 1 (2018): 9, 13; and Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 12, 13.

<sup>139</sup> Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 171-3; and Jaskiran Dhillon, "What Standing Rock Teaches Us About Environmental Justice," in *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement*, ed. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019) 236.

## 9. Conclusion

Canada and the US have used the securitization of critical infrastructure to target obstructions to extractivism by environmental and Indigenous activists. Securitization creates a threat towards a valued object that permits the use of security measures in response. Public documents show that critical infrastructure was depicted as a valued object threatened by terrorism in the post-9/11 environment. Private documents reveal how critical infrastructure securitization is specifically interpreted to protect extractivism against environmental and Indigenous activists. Though the historical, economic, and political circumstances in Canada and the US impact how critical infrastructure was securitized, the actors executing the security measures, and how particular activists are targeted in the two countries, the consequences are largely equivalent.

This research has implications for human rights and the protection of the environment. Powerful government and corporate actors have used the securitization of critical infrastructure to repress environmental and Indigenous activists. Though there are limitations to this research relating to the accessibility of security documents, the available information reveals how activists have been targeted to protect extractivism. This strategy of securitization could be employed in other countries with similar aims. Examining the securitization of critical infrastructure in public and private documents reveals what the nature of the supposed threat is, which security measures are employed, and whom these measures are being used against. By examining and deconstructing the process, clearer evaluations can be made of whether a matter should be securitized and whom this process benefits.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada and the US have further strengthened their protection of critical infrastructure. While various non-essential services were ordered to close

across Canada in mid-March, resource extraction projects were designated as essential services. This classification not only covered existing infrastructures but also the construction sites of new resource extraction projects including the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline. Many of these projects are in remote Indigenous communities with minimal health services leaving residents in fear of the workers spreading the virus and using up limited resources.<sup>140</sup>

Similarly, in the US, President Trump and state politicians have been seizing the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic to push forward measures that threaten the environment and permit heavy-handed actions against those who defend it. Several of the bills based on the American Legislative Exchange Council's model legislation on critical infrastructure were quickly passed through legislatures before they adjourned due to the pandemic. This legislation was in development prior to the pandemic but the circumstances have allowed it to pass with less public attention than it might have garnered otherwise.<sup>141</sup> Trump has also weakened the Environmental Protection Agency's enforcement powers for polluters and approved new resource extraction projects during the crisis.<sup>142</sup>

Though governments are seizing the pandemic as an opportunity to compound the necessity of extractivism and weaken environmental protection, what the securitization of critical infrastructure in Canada and the US shows is that an emergency is not necessary for the state to enact security measures to protect extractivism. The embeddedness of extractivism in Canada and the US has made exceptionalism unnecessary. Critical infrastructure securitization occurred

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<sup>140</sup> Jillian Kestler-D'Amours, "Indigenous fear Canada work camps will be coronavirus incubators," *Aljazeera*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/indigenous-fear-canada-work-camps-coronavirus-incubators-200406115720000.html>.

<sup>141</sup> Alexander Kaufman, "States Quietly Pass Laws Criminalizing Fossil Fuel Protests Amid Coronavirus Chaos," *HuffPost*, March 31, 2020, [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/pipeline-protest-laws-coronavirus\\_n\\_5e7e7570c5b6256a7a2aab41?ri18n=true](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/pipeline-protest-laws-coronavirus_n_5e7e7570c5b6256a7a2aab41?ri18n=true).

<sup>142</sup> Kaufman.



in the emergency environment of 9/11, but it continues to be utilized to protect critical infrastructure like pipelines against challenges from environmental and Indigenous activists.

Confrontations like those in Standing Rock and Wet'suwet'en draw attention to the security measures permitted by the securitization of critical infrastructure. Though the repression of pipeline protesters draws criticism, thus far it has not stopped expanding extractivism or the use of security measures to protect these infrastructures. These security practices have become common place, part of a regular exercise to continue to support the capitalist way of life and extractivist interests of governments and corporations. The exceptional has become normal, and for Indigenous people in particular, an extension of practices dating back hundreds of years.

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