

Displacement in Place: The Delegitimization of Indigenous Sovereignty Through
Media Framing and Erasure in Environmental Conflict

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Introduction

The last decade has seen a string of highly contested pipelines and other extractivist infrastructure proposed with growing backlash from citizen groups, often being led by impacted Indigenous groups. As Indigenous environmental movements throughout the country are becoming more publicized, media analysis of these issues is becoming increasingly important. Due to the history of the genocide of Indigenous peoples in North America, and the continued colonial ecological violence taking place within contemporary settler-colonial society, the study of the discursive frames used by the media when covering Indigenous protest is essential to deconstructing the systems in place that are further normalizing these relationships.

The media discourse around Indigenous environmental movements of North America often frames Indigenous groups on parallel terms as environmental groups, disregarding their legal standing as sovereign nations. To better understand the ways in which Indigenous protests against fossil fuel infrastructure are being covered in the media, this paper will review existing literature on media coverage of environmental conflict, media framing of social movements, Indigenous erasure and invisibility in the media, Indigenous environmental justice concerns, and resistance to pipelines and extractivism in North America. It will also investigate media sites such as historical documents to further its investigation into contemporary and historical discourse around Indigenous peoples and their claims to traditional land. This paper aims to further the body of research on media discourse on Indigenous actors, examining a variety of different media-sources for implicit bias against these peoples. In doing so, I expose the continued invisibility of, and discrimination against, Indigenous peoples in the media and in society at large, especially in the context of environmental conflict.

In the light of the work by Zoltán Grossman in his “Unlikely Alliances”, the project also highlights the parallel concerns raised by distinct interest groups in the hopes of illuminating potential alliances between environmental groups, rural landowners, and Indigenous peoples. In his book, Grossman traces the progression that Indigenous and settler relationships often follow in relationship to the use of natural resources, beginning with Indigenous assertions of sovereignty and reactionary aggression from settler stakeholders, to cooperation in the face of corporate extractive threats. He states that these relationships are formed in the face of

“corporate or state threat to Native nations and non-native communities”, and details a trend of “identifying Native self-determination as a way to protect the land and water for everyone” (Grossman 2017, 8-13).

Literature Review

Since the emergence of the Environmental Justice movement in the 1980s and 90s, discourse over the disproportionate environmental “bads” faced by people of color and other marginalized communities has risen into mainstream public awareness with the rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm (Taylor 2002; Taylor 2000; Mohai & Saha 2007; Bullard 1990). The movement gained momentum with the 1987 publication of the United Church of Christ’s report “Toxic Waste and Race,” which linked the higher likelihood of living in proximity to toxic waste to race, showing that people of color are most at risk (Taylor 2002; Szasz 1995). The movement followed in the footsteps of existing social justice movements from the 1960s such as the American Indian Movement, which had been fighting for the recognition of Indigenous treaty rights in regards to access to ancestral hunting and fishing lands (Taylor 2000). The increased awareness of environmental injustices in relation to class and race led to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991, during which the 17 principles of Environmental Justice were ratified (Taylor 2002). The movement has gone on to have profound effects on legislation nationally and globally, including the 1994 Environmental Justice Executive Order signed by President Clinton, which mandated government organizations such as the EPA to “incorporate environmental justice considerations into their operations” (Taylor 2002, 38; Mohai & Saha 2007, 344; Rechtschaffen & Gauna 2002). While the Environmental Justice paradigm is applicable to the struggles of many Indigenous groups such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the National Congress for American Indians (NCAI) fighting for the recognition and protection of their traditional lands, discourse within the movement hasn’t focused on these peoples.

As stated above, the Environmental Justice paradigm has grown to encompass many environmental movements, notably many of those relating to Indigenous peoples. Native North Americans face a plethora of environmental injustices, ranging from the dispossession of land

and displacement of people, to the loss of bio-cultural sovereignty – the inability to practice their cultures due to environmental degradation (Baldy 2013; Hooks & Smith 2016). In “*Treadmill of Destruction*,” Hooks and Smith document the ways in which the rise of post WWII U.S. militarism has had an inordinate impact on Indigenous peoples. Due to exposure to undetonated ordinance and their close proximity to chemical weapons testing, amongst a number of other atrocities, Indigenous groups suffered callous violence characteristic of the modern era (Hooks & Smith 2016). Baldy’s “*Why We Gather*” chronicles the violence committed upon Native peoples¹ in California by the government imposed restrictions to their access to culturally appropriate foods, and in turn their ability to practice the deeply important ceremonies and life-ways intertwined with those foods, was taken from them (Baldy 2013; Norgaard 2014).

Due to the often subtle and insidious nature of the problems facing Indigenous groups, and marginalized peoples in general, these issues often receive very little attention in the public eye (Nixon 2011; de Leeuw 2016; Bacon 2018). Nixon describes these phenomena as slow violence, “violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, and attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (Nixon 2011, 2; Whitbeck et al. 2002). The tendency of western media to focus on the spectacular, accentuated by the rapidly declining length of U.S. attention spans, lets these issues go unreported and unknown in mainstream culture, while Indigenous peoples continue to suffer from the systemic injustices of settler-colonial society.

The disinterest of the media in the slow violence committed against Indigenous peoples, through long-term ecological degradation, is compounded within these settler-colonial practices of the erasure and invisibility of Indigenous perspectives (Bacon 2017; Leavitt et al. 2015). Erasure is a societal phenomenon used to justify the existence of settler-colonial states, through obscuring the displacement of native peoples and their perspectives, and the replacement and misrepresentation of these people with caricatures, mascots and tropes (Robertson 2015; Tuck & Yang 2012; Leavitt et al. 2015; Fryberg 2008 et al.; Bacon 2017). These processes of erasure and invisibility often lead to skewed framings within media, and disproportionately little coverage of Indigenous actors in environmental conflicts.

¹“Native peoples” is used here as it is the language that Baldy uses in their “*Why We Gather*”

In the past decade, there has been a resurgence of Indigenous-led environmental movements, in particular fighting fossil fuel infrastructure such as pipelines running through tribal land. While increased media coverage of the injustices facing these groups is much needed, reporters' bias can be damaging to the Indigenous groups on which they report.

Media Coverage of Environmental Conflict

Media coverage can be a determining factor in the success of environmentalists' agendas (Lester & Hutchins 2015; Bendix & Liebler 1999). Journalists and editors in the mass-media are often referred to as "gatekeepers," as they have the ability to propel an event into becoming "newsworthy," and therefore more widely publicized and available (Lester & Hutchins 2015; Bendix & Liebler 1999; Taylor et al. 2000; Smith et al. 2001). Environmental movements often rely on protest action to gain news coverage, and in turn connect with community members, giving media gatekeepers huge influence over the success, or failure, of these campaigns (Lester & Hutchins 2015; Bendix & Liebler 1999). Because environmental groups are often severely lacking in funds compared to opposing productionist groups such as government and industry, they are forced to use what Lester and Hutchins describe as "switching points" to reframe conflicts and put opponents on the defensive (Lester & Hutchins 2015). These switching points often are evidence of violence or other misconduct by government or industry, such as video and audio recorded by protesters of police brutality and either given to mass-media, or distributed on the internet.

The increasing corporatization of media outlets has led to a growth in bias against reporting on "movements that directly challenge the economic system on which corporate mass media depend..." and even the undermining of such movements (Smith et al. 2001; Kojola 2017). While the growth of independent publications available online have decentralized news sources, the mass-media still controls much of the news-generating process, and therefore still holds significant influence over the coverage and framing of environmental conflict (Lester & Hutchins 2012; Raso & Neubauer 2016).

Media Framing and Social Movements

Because of the reliance of social movements on media to spread their agenda, publications wield undue influence over the spread and effectiveness of such movements in the way that they frame them (Smith et al. 2001; Baylor 1996; Bendix & Liebler 1999; Lester & Hutchins 2012). Media framing of social movements often legitimize one side of a debate, while delegitimizing another by selective use of sources and facts, frequently taking the side of the status quo (Taylor et al. 2000; Lester & Hutchins 2012; Smith et al. 2001). The effects of this delegitimization of social movements are compounded by the fact that reporters are significantly more likely to use government and industry sources rather than expert ones, often creating biased reporting on the side against these movements (Baylor 1996; Taylor et al. 2000; Lester & Hutchins 2012; Smith et al. 2001).

By reporting on social movements merely as episodic protests, rather than ongoing “thematic” conflicts, media coverage can transform meaningful movements into spectacles, reducing their social impact and limiting the amount of coverage that is given to the movement behind the event (Smith et al. 2001; Bendix & Liebler 1999). Di Cicco notes other means that media uses to delegitimize protests in the framing process, such as “using quotation marks for non-speech items to express journalistic skepticism,” as well as articles commenting on unusual appearances of demonstrators and referring to them as “extremists” (Di Cicco 2010). De Cicco states that cultural forces over the past 50 years have created a basis for news coverage to frame protests as “*bothersome; impotent; and unpatriotic*” (De Cicco 2010, 137). Kojola discusses the ways in which the ruling class “creates popular consent for the dominant system” through their hegemony, legitimizing the status quo, and in turn villainizing social movements for challenging it (Kojola 2017, 896; De Cicco 2010).

Another factor to consider when discussing media framing and social movements is the way that local economics can influence news coverage, with smaller papers being more susceptible to economic pressure by advertisers. This pressure can then greatly influence the content of these publications, as well as the frames that they use (Taylor et al. 2000). This is of particular importance when discussing social movements, as they are often presented as critical of capitalist frameworks, and therefore unpopular with industry sponsors (Smith et al. 2001; Lester & Hutchins 2015).

Indigenous Erasure and Settler Narratives

In settler-colonial states, the erasure of Indigenous identities and perspectives is used as a means of legitimation for the continued settler occupation of stolen land (Tuck & Yang 2012; Wolfe 2006). This process of erasure exists within all spheres of settler culture, ranging from a lack of coverage in media, to the replacement of the Indigenous names of environmental features (Wolfe 2006, Bacon 2018). Erasure is inextricably tied with two-dimensional media framings of “the noble savage” and other romanticized images of indigeneity, and the failure to mention the contemporary values and protests of these peoples (Robertson 2015; Fryberg et al. 2008; Leavitt et al. 2015; Knopf 2010). Settler narratives are also used to glorify the colonization of land and portray it “as an inevitable historical development [to legitimize]... colonial politics, [uphold] cultural and political hegemonies, and [strive] to impose the neocolonial perspective on the colonized ‘others’” (Knopf 2010, 90). This process of erasure functions to “prevent the larger settler-society from knowing too much or thinking too deeply about the continued existence and resistance of Native peoples” (Bacon 2018).

Paternalistic discourse often emerges within settler narratives justifying colonialism by framing western civilization as a gift given to Indigenous peoples. These narratives often present the “... perception of Indigenous peoples as ‘primitives’ who would be quickly eradicated by European settlers if they were not protected by authorities” (Dyck, 1989; Solnit, 2014).

Indigenous Environmental Justice Concerns

The history of colonialism throughout North America (and the world), and the displacement of Indigenous peoples and the dispossession and degradation of their lands lies at the foundation of Indigenous environmental concerns (Taylor 2000). Because of this trend of displacement and degradation, many Indigenous cultures have lost the ability to practice traditional ceremonies and cultural rites, which in turn threatens to erode traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) (Simpson 2004; Whyte 2016). In Norgaard’s “Social, Cultural, and Economic Impacts of Denied Access to Traditional Management,” she argues that TEK is an essential part of the social and cultural well-being of Indigenous communities (Norgaard 2014). The

disallowance of Indigenous peoples to manage traditional land with TEK is an act of slow violence on what are oftentimes already vulnerable communities.

Another important element of Indigenous environmental justice concerns is lack of representation in decision-making processes in regard to the management of traditional lands, often infringing on the bio-cultural sovereignty of Indigenous groups (Belfer et al. 2017; Baldy 2013). Even when Indigenous peoples are involved in decision-making, it is only a seat at the table of preexisting colonial frameworks (Belfer et al. 2017). In addition, much of the inequity facing Native American Indigenous peoples today stems from the failure of the United States and Canadian federal governments to honor the treaties that many Indigenous nations were coerced to sign during the 19th and 20th centuries, which often promised sovereignty and autonomy (Belfer et al. 2017; Simpson 2013; Baldy 2013; Taylor 2000).

Indigenous Resistance Against Extractivism

Indigenous groups have been at the forefront of many environmental movements, protesting extractivist policies and projects proposed throughout the world (Belfer et al. 2017; Veltmeyer & Bowles 2013; Wilkes et al. 2010; Powell 2006). This is, in part, a response to the heightened threats that these peoples' cultures face from these extractivist policies, and their subsequent environmental degradation, not to mention Indigenous vulnerabilities to the increasingly dramatic effects of climate change (Belfer et al. 2017; Veltmeyer & Bowles 2013; Wilkes et al. 2010). The disproportionate threat that Indigenous communities face from environmental hazards is well-documented, and ranges from exposure to hazardous chemical wastes on native lands, to Indigenous peoples being up to 2.5 times more likely to experience drinking water insecurity due to environmental degradation and pollution (Hooks & Smith 2016; Lam et. al 2017)

Because of the often inextricable relationships that Indigenous communities have with the land, extractivist operations are inherently destructive to these cultures, and have catalyzed global resistance from these groups (Nixon 2011; Belfer et al. 2017; Veltmeyer & Bowles 2013; Wilkes et al. 2010). Powell documents other means of resistance to extractivism in Indigenous

communities, particularly in the embrace of renewables such as wind and solar as an alternative means of energy production (Powell 2006).

Grassroots Resistance to Pipelines in North America

In recent years, with the emergence of the Alberta tar sands and fracking as major sources of fossil fuels, pipeline projects have increased dramatically across the continent. These projects often draw the ire of many, and have catalyzed the formation of many grassroots resistance groups as in the case of the Northern Gateway pipeline in Canada, and the Keystone pipeline in the U.S. (Wilkes & Meyers 2010; Kojala 2015; Bagelman & Wiebe 2017; Bowles & Macphail 2017). Because of the breadth of environmental and social impacts that these pipeline projects could have, they often bring together communities from across the spectrum, creating politically and ethnically diverse grassroots resistance (Veltmeyer & Bowles 2014).

Allen et al. discusses the strategies employed by the effective grassroots resistance to the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT), describing a number of different approaches including the formation of an Indigenous led coalition, the involvement of local NGO's, the review of potential health impacts by local doctors, and the framing of the problem as not only an environmental issue, but a human rights issue (Allen et al. 2017). The reframing of the impact of these pipelines is an increasingly important means of gaining support from wider communities and creating more diverse coalitions, as we can see in the campaign against the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL pipeline, in which the problems were framed as a threat to the environment, Indigenous culture, and the clean water security of millions of Americans (Grossman & LaDuke 2017). These are just a handful of effective methods for garnering support increasingly employed by grassroots resistance movements to the ever-rising number of proposed pipeline projects in North America.

Case

The Jordan Cove Energy Project consists of a 232-mile-long liquid natural gas (LNG) pipeline and an LNG export facility in Coos Bay. The pipeline would run through Southern Oregon to connect the Coos Bay export facility with the Ruby Pipeline in Malin, providing the

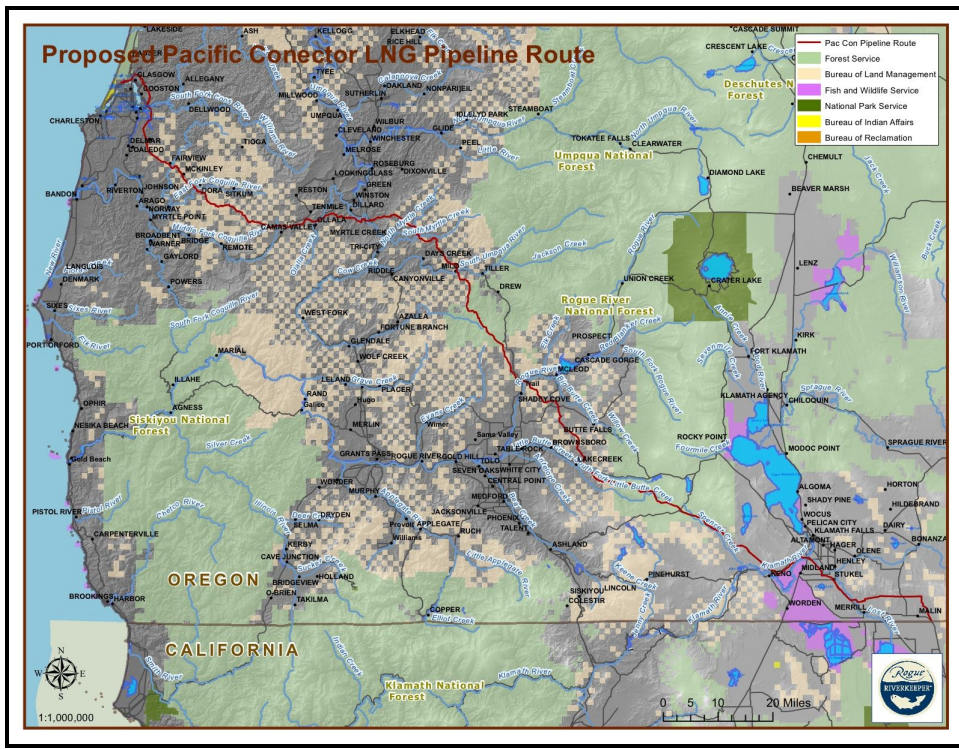
means for the export of American fracked gas to overseas markets in Asia, crossing the traditional lands of a number of different Indigenous groups in the process. There have been mixed responses to this project from these groups, ranging from strong support to the condemnation of the proposal.

The Klamath Confederated Tribes (consisting of the Modoc, the Klamath and the Yahooskin peoples) traditionally located in Southern Oregon and Northern California, have taken varying stances towards the project since its conception. While initially there was some support among the groups for the construction of the pipeline, more recently these groups have taken a firm stand in opposition to the project, stating concerns about the destruction of culturally important burial sights, forests, and spiritual places as well as threats to the health of rivers and the salmon that depend upon them. They posit that the degradation to these waterways would impinge on their traditional hunting and fishing grounds, and would have significant cultural impacts on the traditional lifeways of the tribes. In a statement to Dennis Griffin, State Historic Preservation Officer, the Klamath Tribes Tribal Council stated:

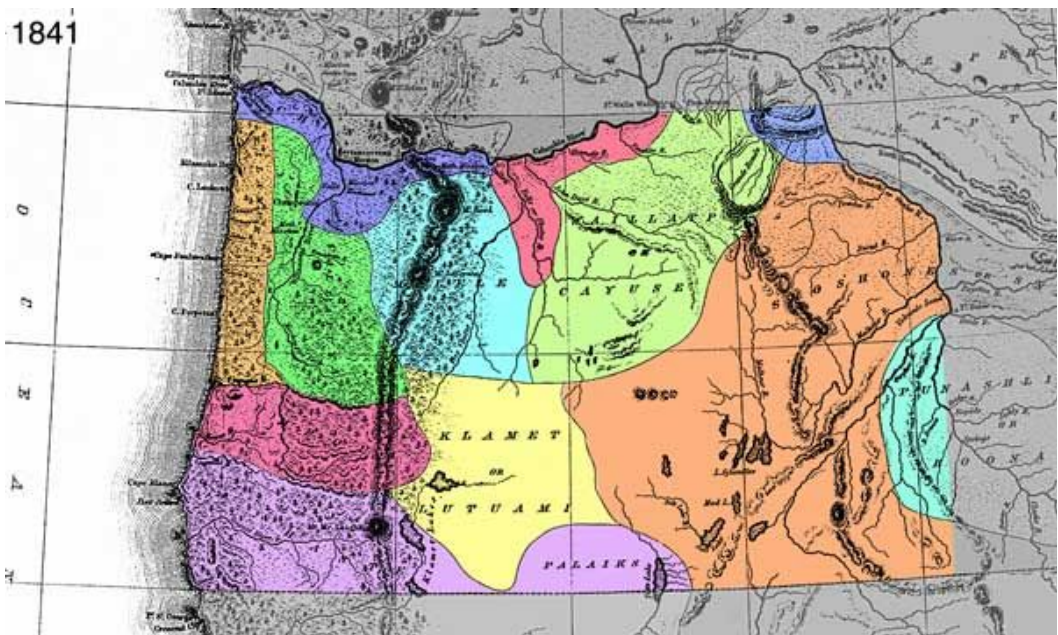
“[The] construction of the LNG pipeline from Malin would take place on lands that are within the traditional territory of the Klamath Tribes, and where there are located many significant cultural resources of historical importance to the Tribes. The route of the LNG pipeline that we have examined shows it going through areas where villages once existed and it may unearth human remains since graves with human remains have been found in these areas. The route also would go under the Klamath River and the Rogue River, which since time immemorial have been and continue to be important sources of fish for tribal members. The Tribes are concerned with the risks to fish species if the LNG pipeline were to leak or otherwise release contaminants into these Rivers, and how that would adversely affect these important sources of fish and the health of Tribal members” (The Klamath Confederated Tribes 2016).

In a more recent comment about the project, the Klamath Confederated Tribes specifically address environmental justice concerns, stating: “[w]e believe that the information presented to FERC by Oregon tribes clearly shows that construction of the Pipeline and Terminal

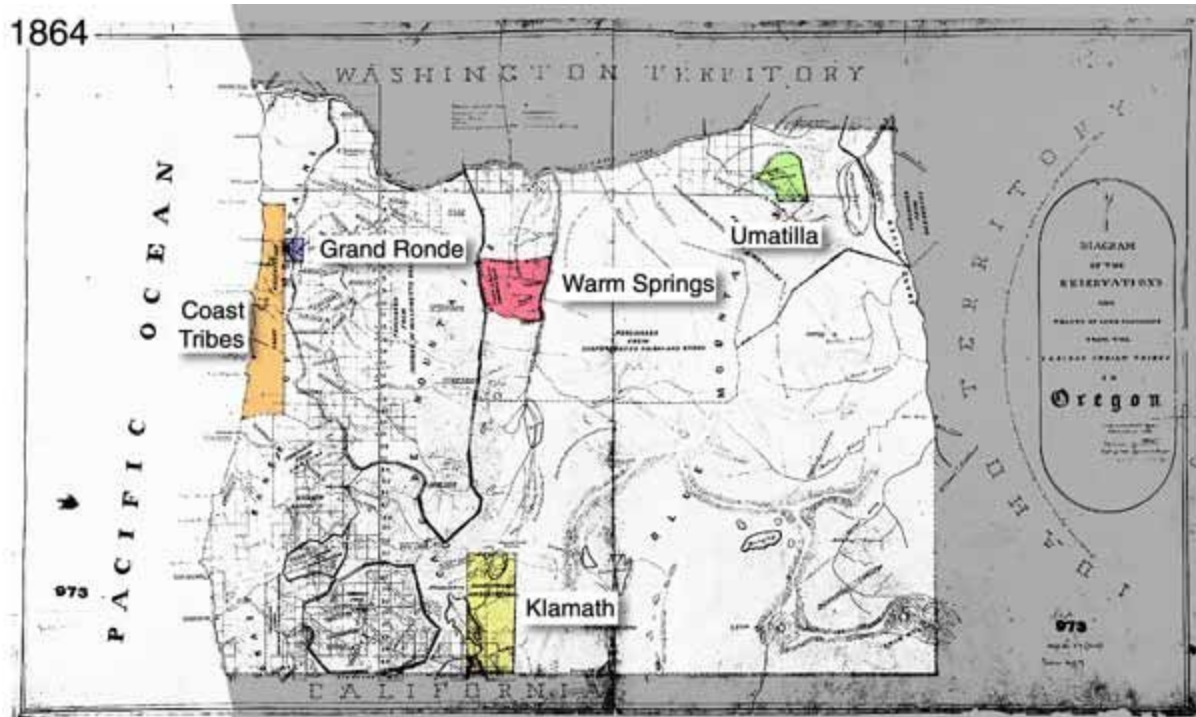
would have a disproportionately high and adverse impact on the Tribes by affecting many of their cultural resources, traditional sites, and sacred places” (The Klamath Confederated Tribes, 2017). These claims made by the Klamath Confederated Tribes are incredibly significant, as they clearly state the threats that they see from the project to Tribal welfare. The invisibility of these claims in the media demonstrates the erasure that settler-colonial institutions perpetuate, and in turn the slow violence that is being committed through the delegitimization of Indigenous bio-cultural sovereignty that is being committed against these peoples.



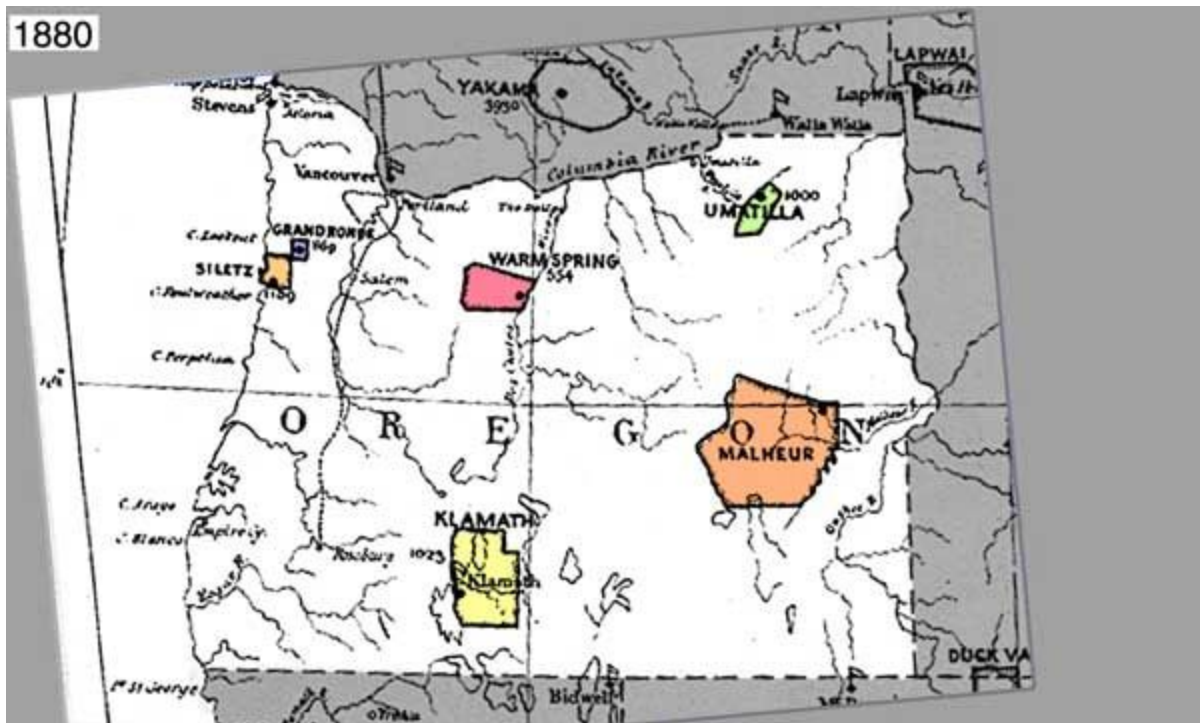
Route of Proposed Pacific Connector Pipeline (“Proposed Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Export Project”)



Map of traditional tribal lands in Oregon (Reservation Magnifier)



Map of tribal lands by 1864 (Reservation Magnifier)



Map of tribal lands after 1880 (Reservation Magnifier)

Methods

This paper further explores the ways in which media coverage of Indigenous environmental movements delegitimizes the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples through a two-pronged analysis. Using the Jordan Cove Energy Project (JCEP) and the Pacific Connector Pipeline (PCP) as sites within a larger case study, I highlight the pervasive media framings surrounding the increasingly publicized Indigenous movements against increased fossil fuel infrastructure, and in particular, pipelines. Through qualitative media analysis, in which all media references to Indigenous resistance specific to the JCEP and PCP are coded and analyzed for potential bias, I contribute information about the ways in which media coverage maintains hegemonic thinking, while committing a form of slow violence upon Indigenous groups by discrediting their claims to legal precedent and sovereignty in regards to environmental conflicts on their traditional lands.

This project focuses on the proposed JCEP and PCP because extractivist infrastructure projects such as these, and the resistance movements that they generate, have gained international attention in the past decade. Many Americans were shocked by the mainstream media's unwillingness to cover the Indigenous-led resistance "No DAPL" movement at Standing Rock and the brutality being exercised on the protestors there by the police. Yet, when considering the larger context of settler-colonial narratives in the U.S. and western culture as a whole, the coverage (or lack thereof) of the issue was to be expected (Bacon 2018). The increased rate of environmental conflicts such as these are making in-depth analyses of the media's use of framing to invalidate Indigenous actors, while further legitimizing resource extraction, an increasingly important topic of study (Bacon 2018; Kojola 2017). I focused on the Confederated Klamath Tribes' as they have independently released documents detailing their specific objections to the project. The pipeline also runs through much of their traditional land, and they stand to be one of the more impacted stakeholders from the project.

For my research I used LexisNexis to search the terms "jordan cove" and "pacific connector", and then selected every piece of media over 5,000 characters that directly mentioned opposition to the JCEP and PCP for analysis. To provide a more rounded view of media representations around the project, I used a variety of sources, including editorials, articles, news

briefs and columns. I used LexisNexis as a source for these articles to increase the ease of access not only for myself, but for the continued research on the framing of this particular issue.

In my initial reading of the articles, I identified a set of broad categories for codes that make up the dominant frames of discourse. These consisted of economic growth, property rights and environmental concerns. I also coded for the actors that were being covered by the media, environmental groups, private landowners, independent concerned citizens, and politicians. I then reread the articles, recording the frequency of each category of framing by article looking for trends, and the context in which they were presented.

In my coding process, I looked for examples of common framings noted in other media analyses of conflict around pipelines, such as the “jobs versus environment” framing as referenced by Kojola in their “(Re)constructing the Pipeline: Workers, Environmentalists and Ideology in Media Coverage of the Keystone XL Pipeline”. I also looked at the framing of the project’s proposed use of eminent domain as “unamerican” and “unconstitutional”, as they are particularly pertinent to my study of settler narratives and the erasure of the history of colonialism in the United States. I also intended to analyze the context in which Indigenous resistance groups were referenced, as well as the level of import their voices were given in media coverage, yet as discussed below, I was unable to find mention of these groups or their interests in the media analyzed.

To further enrich my investigation of the delegitimization of the Confederated Klamath Tribes’ sovereignty and claims to traditional land, I did an analysis of historical documents, such as letters and other primary sources, regarding the tribes over the 19th and 20th centuries. More specifically, I focused this analysis on documents referencing the dissolution of the group’s reservation lands and the termination of their federal tribal status. In this analysis, I aimed to trace the truncation of these peoples’ sovereignty and claims to traditional land to contextualize how this group’s current invisibility is not a recent phenomenon, but rather a product of centuries of systemic discrimination and erasure. While reading these documents, I looked for paternalistic discourse and the framing of the removal of reservation lands and the termination of Klamath federal tribal status as an act in the greater good of the tribes, as these settler narratives have contributed to the current state of discourse, or lack thereof, around these peoples.

I intend to offer the results of this project to local Indigenous groups taking part in the resistance to the Pacific Connector Pipeline, in the hopes of providing more information and resources about the negative impacts of media framing on their cause, as well as my observations about the potential alliances that exist between Indigenous peoples, rural landowners and environmental interest groups.

Findings

As stated above, in my analysis of the final 98 articles that met my criteria, I found no references to Indigenous actors, in support of, or against, the Jordan Cove Energy Project. Instead, I found hundreds of references to the opposition of the pipeline by settler-colonial stakeholders, such as private landowners whose properties were being threatened by the potential use of eminent domain, and environmental groups protesting the potential ecological threats of the pipeline and export center. The articles were overwhelmingly framed along the aforementioned binary of “jobs versus environment,” with representatives of the parent company Veresen (and more recently Pembina) quoted discussing the measures being taken to address safety and environmental concerns, and the positive impacts that the project will have on the depressed economies in Southern Oregon. There were also a number of articles in Canadian publications talking about the economic viability of the Jordan Cove Energy Project specifically because of the lack of Indigenous groups to protest the project.

An example of Kojola’s “jobs versus environment” framing is clear in an article in national publication the Hill: “Supporters of exporting U.S. natural gas argue it would both help the U.S. economy... But environmental groups have warned it could lead to an increase in hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” a controversial mining methodology they say increases global warming and pollution” (Cama, 2014). In this excerpt, the economic benefits of the project are presented first, representing the job growth, while the environmental opposition to projects of this nature is presented second, creating a clear binary between the two interests of economic gain and environmental protection.

Another example of this framing can be found in a local Southern Oregon publication The Daily Tribune with quotes such as: “It’s a project that has drawn praise from some local

residents who have seen the economy sputter for years. It's also drawn criticism because of the project's environmental impacts,” and “the gas would come to the bay through a 232-mile pipeline that would traverse Klamath, Jackson, Douglas and Coos counties and would require hiring up to 1,844 workers to build,” (Mann, 2014).

The arguments made by private landowners against the pipeline were often framed under the premise of the pipeline as “unconstitutional,” “unamerican” and “not in the benefit of the public”, citing threats to aesthetic and economic property value, as well as safety concerns in the advent of a leak or explosion. These concerns for the property rights of impacted landowners were also echoed by local Oregonian politicians such as U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley and U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio, with DeFazio quoted in a number of articles saying “Landowners should not be forced to give up their property so private companies and foreign manufacturers can ship low-cost natural gas overseas and spike energy prices here at home” (Fattig 2012).

In an article published by Medford’s The Mail Tribune, this un-american framing of the use of eminent domain is used explicitly: “‘It won't do anything good for us as a nation,’ she said. ‘Foreign companies want to take resources and send them to foreign lands -- and take our land. It's un-American and unconstitutional to do this’” (Aldous, 2014). By publishing this impacted rural landowner’s quote, the publication is effectively espousing settler-colonial narratives that exist by denying United States’ history of colonization. Ironically, the quote in question could just as easily be attributed to any of the victims of North American colonization, illustrating the ways in which transnational corporations are dispossessing these land-based communities in a parallel to the European colonization of the Americas. This framing is also interesting as it parallels many of the concerns expressed by the Klamath and Yurok peoples, highlighting a potential alliance that will be discussed further in my analysis.

Environmental concerns were often represented in the media through quotes from the directors of local Southern Oregon environmental groups such as Rogue Riverkeeper and various other organizations. These concerns were often focused on the risks posed to rivers, and endangered species by the pipeline, as well as the increased risk of forest fires sparked by leaks or explosions of the pipeline. Interestingly, concerns about the relationship to building new fossil fuel infrastructure and climate change were not represented in these quotations.

Historical Document Analysis

The lack of any representation of Indigenous concerns in the debate over the JCEP and PCP illustrates the insidious presence of erasure within the framing of Indigenous actors in environmental conflict. The erasure of the Klamath Confederated Tribes' vocal opposition to this project in the media is only possible because of the long history of the delegitimization of their sovereignty and the truncation of their claims to traditional land. This history of dispossession can be traced within historical settler-discourse about the tribe over the 19th and 20th centuries, specifically in reference to the termination of their federally recognized tribal status, and the liquidation of the reservation lands granted to them in the Treaty of 1864.

In a 1929 letter from Joseph Latimer to Hon. Charles J. Rodes, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, it is explicitly stated that in regards to the Klamath tribes “[i]t is too late for the Indian and our Country never will permit him to form a sovereignty of his own...” (Latimer, 1929). This passage exemplifies the attitude of many towards the idea of Indigenous sovereignty in the early 20th century, and the paternalistic attitude often adopted in reference to these peoples. This paternalistic language is present throughout the letter, and Latimer even says that the “end of forcing the Indians to be dependent on themselves... would be an unnecessarily bitter experience for the Klamath Indians and, of course, should not be permitted” (Latimer, 1929).

The federal termination of supervision of Klamath lands (voted on in August of 1954) further eroded the already precarious autonomy that the tribe had over their land and wellbeing, by abolishing their unique government-to-government relationship with the United States and removing land from the federal trust set up for their reservation. This termination was part of a larger effort by the United States government to further assimilate Indigenous North Americans into mainstream society by providing them with American citizenship and removing their “special legal status” (Fixico, 2012; Hood, 1974). Termination is an extremely controversial issue, as many hold that these bills often coerced and misled tribal members in order to gain their cooperation (Clinebell and Thompson 1978). Termination is also controversial as many argue that it had the effect of effectively ending Indigenous sovereignty by withdrawing from the tribes

all of their protected land holdings. Wilkinson and Biggs state in their *The Evolution of Termination Policy*, “[r]egardless of the fact that terminated tribes probably retain their status as sovereign governments, the practical reality is that, with one exception, no terminated tribe has continued to make laws or to maintain tribal courts to enforce any laws after termination. Thus the terminated tribes were effectively stripped of their broad powers to act as governments” (Wilkinson & Biggs, 1977) The Klamath won the Restoration of Federal Recognition for their tribes in 1986, but did not regain the land holdings essential for practicing their sovereignty over their traditional territories (“*History*”).

The Klamath had no direct influence on the United States government’s decision to terminate their special legal status and the federal supervision of their lands. This termination then led to a vast majority of their invaluable timber resources being liquidated to pay the individual cash settlements of members that opted to leave the tribe during termination, essentially dissolving the Klamath reservation and eroding their legal claim to much of the lands promised them in the treaty of 1864 (Hood, 1974).

While termination was often heralded as a means by which to give the Klamath peoples independence and provide them with the full status of American citizens, the dissolution of tribal lands was not supported by a large portion of the Tribe. According to a public comment made by Klamath tribal member Laurence Lee Wittee in 1954:

We were, I believe ... pressured into a hasty acceptance of this particular bill [S. 2745] ... I don't think we have too much fault to find with the management of the Indian Bureau, as it exists. We are protected and we are privileged citizens; I do not think we have to seek after greater citizenship than we already enjoy. We are citizens of the United States or citizens of the State of Oregon; above and beyond that we enjoy the privilege of hunting and fishing . . . our property is tax exempt as far as the proceeds from the timber is concerned . I do not think we are under bondage . . . We have a home; we have income from our per capita sources . . . this is our permanent home; any form of liquidation or termination should come from the Klamath people themselves (U.S. Congress, 1954: 56-57).

A 1954 article in *American Forests* about the termination of the Klamath Tribes questions whether “the [Klamath] Indians... are collectively, sufficiently, advanced in ‘conservative thought’ to realize the identity of their personal welfare and practicable, forest conservation” (American Forests, 1954). These concerns about the Klamath people’s capacity to responsibly manage their own lands without government supervision were echoed by a number of different publications during this time period, further demonstrating the existing paternalistic discourse around Indigenous people’s ability to maintain sovereignty. Another example of similar rhetoric comes from an opinion piece advocating against termination, written by Bill Dean for the Register Guard in Eugene, Oregon. In his article Dean said of the Klamath in relation to their termination: “[s]ome of the Klamath are ready [to accept a position of personal responsibility in non-indian society.] But certainly the majority, because of their limited experience in the outside world, are no more prepared than a highschool freshman...” (Dean, 1957). This excerpt clearly shows that even those who sought to prevent termination still used the very same paternalistic, settler colonial narratives that contributed to the delegitimization of Klamath sovereignty. The current invisibility of the Klamath tribe in regards to the JCEP’s impact on their traditional lands is inextricably tied with the policy decisions of the federal government during the termination era, and the historical discourse of paternalism in regards to their bio-cultural sovereignty.

Media Analysis

The overwhelming coverage of (settler) private landowners and environmental groups’ opposition to the pipeline compounds the erasure of Indigenous perspectives, as the concerns that are covered are often parallel to those of the Klamath peoples. These include: the “unconstitutional” or “un-American” seizure of land, the ecological risks of the pipeline, safety concerns, and the lack of public benefit from the project. In particular, the coverage of concerns over the issue of eminent domain and the seizure of land as “un-American” is extremely problematic in the context of settler-colonialism in the United States, as the country was founded on land seized from Indigenous peoples.

The extensive coverage of these concerns in the media analyzed for this project clearly demonstrate the media's willingness to promote settler narratives, at the cost of the invisibility of Indigenous demographics. We again see these narratives reinforced in the media coverage of Oregon politicians Peter DeFazio and Jeff Merkley's critiques of the project's use of eminent domain, while neither mention Indigenous, nor environmental, concerns. The silence of Oregon politicians in regards to the concerns of Indigenous peoples, and environmental groups, raises the question as to which demographics these politicians feel accountable to, and in turn whose interests they feel responsible to represent. This apparent perception amongst politicians of a lack of accountability to the Klamath people is problematic, and one that can again be traced back to the erosion of their sovereignty over their traditional lands. This issue is particularly pressing due to the agenda-setting power that politicians wield, and their ability to bypass the media gate-keepers detailed by Lester & Hutchins in 2015.

Media gate-keepers, as referenced by Lester & Hutchins, have little interest in representing the critical Indigenous perspectives presented by the Klamath tribes, as the very existence of indigeneity is in direct conflict with settler-colonial narratives. This conflict of interest between the media gatekeepers and Indigenous demographics is clearly a contributing factor in the continued invisibility of Indigenous peoples within settler-colonial publications, even when other stakeholder groups that share parallel concerns are receiving coverage. In denying coverage of Indigenous perspectives, these gatekeepers in turn are denying these peoples access to the sympathetic communities that are essential in social and environmental movement building and agenda-setting.

As discussed above, access to media coverage is an incredibly important factor in the success of social movements and environmental protest. The invisibility of Indigenous perspectives, in this instance letters of dissent and protests by the Klamath Tribes, paired with the systemic environmental racism faced by Indigenous North American peoples, is perpetuating the insidious slow-violence that has ravaged Indigenous communities since western colonization.

Nixon's lense of slow-violence can also be applied when discussing the rhetorical displacement of the Klamath peoples, or the delegitimization of their claims to the vernacular landscapes in which they inhabit. Pierotti and Wildcat describe Native American world views as

spatially oriented, saying “all aspects of the physical space can be considered part of the community, including animals, plants, and landforms,” which makes this displacement especially problematic (2000).

Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups are often affected disproportionately by environmental bads due to systemic and overt racism. In the case of the JCEP, this trend seems to hold, as many of the people along the route of the pipeline belong to vulnerable demographics predominantly due to low-socioeconomic status and race (in this case indigeneity). While there is media representation of low-income settler populations within the articles analyzed, the complete lack of representation of Indigenous perspective shows not only the erasure of these perspectives, but also indicates a participatory justice issue. Indigenous participation in the decision-making process around the project was minimal, as documented in a letter from the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians to the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs voicing the struggles to force FERC and USACE to take the proper measures to work with the tribes required by law under the National Historic Preservation Act:

...we have struggled to compel FERC and USACE to consult openly and willingly with our Tribes, and to compel FERC and USACE to adequately address the many concerns we have raised about the archeological resources, human burials, and sacred places that will be utterly destroyed if the Jordan Cove LNG project is approved as currently designed” (The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, 2016).

Conclusion

When using the JCEP and PCP as a case study of settler media coverage of Indigenous actors in environmental conflict, it is clear that through erasure and the prominent framing of settler narratives, these media sources delegitimize native sovereignty over their traditional land and perpetuate the invisibility of these peoples. By making no mention of Indigenous voices in the conflict while providing significant coverage to settler concerns about the project, the media sources that I have analyzed clearly show a tendency to favor settler narratives in environmental

conflict. This is incredibly problematic considering the prevalence of environmental racism and other justice issues surrounding Indigenous North Americans in today's society, and the gate-keeper role that media plays in the creation of social movements and environmental protest. By not recognizing Indigenous perspectives, media outlets are effectively preventing these peoples from mobilizing communities and effectively preventing these irresponsible projects and their often devastating effects on impacted communities.

Because of the often inseparable nature of Indigenous cultures, religions, and the landscapes that they evolved in, disregarding these groups' objections to developments that could potentially damage those sacred landscapes is a means by which violence is being committed upon these people. While European colonists committed well-documented spectacular violence upon these peoples between the 15th and 20th centuries in the form of genocide and aggressive removal, a form of insidious slow violence has continued to this day in the methodical erosion of Indigenous claims to landscapes, or rhetorical displacement. This is what Nixon refers to as "displacement in place", or the imposition of "official landscapes" over native peoples vernacular ones (2011).

This paper also demonstrates, through the analysis of historical documents, that the complete erasure of the Klamath Tribes' concerns in regards to the JCEP and PCP in contemporary media is not a sudden occurrence, but rather the result of centuries of the truncation of these peoples' claims to their land, and the delegitimization of their sovereignty through the federal termination of tribal status, the liquidation of treaty reservation land, and the use of paternalistic discourse and settler narratives to justify these actions. My historical analysis made clear that federal termination, and the discourse around it, had a devastating effect on modern settler perceptions and coverage of Klamath sovereignty.

Finally, this paper examines the room for potential alliances between the Confederated Klamath Tribes, rural landowners, and environmental groups in regards to the JCEP and the PCP. The parallels existing between the claims and concerns of these different groups, such as concerns about threats to fishing, climate change, safety and general water quality, provide the foundation for future collaboration in the ongoing conflicts around this controversial project.

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