

PROUD VOICES: AN ANALYSIS OF FIRST NATION
OPPOSITION TO THE NORTHERN GATEWAY
PIPELINE PROJECT

By

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Abstract: This thesis examines dynamics between indigenous populations and modern industrial development by examining sociocultural impacts that development of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project (ENGP) poses to First Nations. The ENGP proposes construction of two parallel pipelines from Alberta, Canada to the coast of British Columbia, Canada, through traditional territories of many First Nations. Most First Nations along the pipeline route maintain core aspects of their traditional subsistence culture. Reliance on renewable natural resources makes subsistence cultures informed and resilient when confronting natural disasters. However, the ENGP introduces ecological hazards which are socioculturally foreign to the First Nations, namely threats of an environmental disaster from an oil spill. As part of the Canadian government's evaluation of the ENGP, a Joint Review Panel (JRP) was tasked with evaluating potential impacts posed by the project. Part of this evaluation process involved hearings at which First Nations offered their perspectives on the project, primarily how the ENGP would affect their way of life. Using transcriptions of these testimonies as data, common discursive themes used by First Nations were determined and used to understand the sociocultural impacts of the ENGP as they are perceived by the First Nations. Three First Nations bands are examined: the Gitga'at of Hartley Bay, British Columbia, Canada, and the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en of Burns Lake, British Columbia, Canada. Theme usage is compared and contrasted between groups. Differences in narrative theme usage are observed between groups, which are attributed to bioregional differences and varying experiences in sociocultural history. While both groups unanimously opposed the ENGP and had similar proportions of theme use, the Gitga'at were more explicit in their discussions of threats to resources, and the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en were more emphatic on issues of sovereignty.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Introduction

What criteria exist for evaluating the worth of a culture? If such an evaluation can be accomplished, do the criteria change when valuing an indigenous culture? An indigenous group is a minority with rights of prior occupancy to the land on which they reside; in other words, they were “there first”. Historically, indigenous people in North America have been systematically marginalized in the wake of modern development and resource extraction. Their existence as sovereign nations, grounded in their prior occupancy, within the modern state has served to alienate indigenous groups from periods of western expansion to the present (Maybury-Lewis 2002). A current example of an indigenous culture’s worth being evaluated against industrial development framed as progress can be found in British Columbia, Canada, where indigenous First Nations are fighting for their rights to self-governance, which includes the maintenance and management of their traditional territory.

Most First Nations retain and practice traditional subsistence based cultures; that is, they utilize the resources available to them in a sustainable way for their sustenance. Reliance on natural rhythms for sustenance makes subsistence cultures informed and resilient when confronted with natural disasters. The ENGP introduces hazards which are socio-culturally foreign to the First Nations, namely the very real threat of an oil spill. It is because of the threat of a technological disaster that this thesis will utilize a theoretical framework typical to disaster research (Gill & Ritchie 2011).

Two primary research questions will be addressed in this thesis: 1) what are the impacts of projects like the ENGP as perceived by First Nations, and 2) do their perceptions vary according to different bioregions? These questions will be examined by systematically analyzing ways in which members of three First Nations, the Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en, articulate their opinions about the ENGP. This chapter will provide context for this thesis. First, a working definition for ecological disasters will be explicated. Next, bioregionalism, the underlying philosophy of this thesis, will be briefly explored. First Nations being examined in this thesis will then be described. Finally, relevant information regarding the ENGP proposal will be provided.

Disasters Conceptualized

The earliest instances of the sociological study of disasters were characterized by varying conceptualizations as to what disasters entail and how best to study them. At a basic level disasters can be considered as a disruption of social interactions and the social context in which they take place (Fritz 1961). Kroll-Smith and Couch (1991) reconceptualized disasters using an ecological-symbolic approach which will be used to inform this thesis' conceptualization of an ecological disaster. The ecological-symbolic approach adds to the classical definition by proposing that people are integrated with their built and biophysical environments to varying

degrees, and that disasters are disruptions of interactions between people and their environments. Disruption of environmental factors can have greater impacts on human activities if a population is more highly integrated with environmental factors, and as will be discussed further in other sections (as well as chapters II and III), many First Nations exhibit strong cultural ties to environmental factors.

Disasters can be categorized into two general categories: natural and technological. Natural disasters occur due to natural processes and are beyond human control; conversely a disaster may be considered technological if it could not have occurred without human action. Technological disasters within the framework of the ecological-symbolic perspective are considered to have a lesser effect on built elements of an environment (i.e., human built structures) when compared to natural disasters (e.g., an earthquake or a tornado). However, they profoundly disrupt relationships between human activities and biological elements of an environment (Kroll-Smith & Couch 1993; Gill & Ritchie 2011).

Cultures with strong ties to environmental factors that practice subsistence based economic activities, like many First Nations, have vast stores of cultural capital and knowledge of their surroundings, making them extremely resilient in preparing for and mitigating effects of natural disasters as they occur within their ecosystem. Technological disasters (e.g., oil spills) introduce hazards that are socio-culturally foreign to such cultures, and mitigation techniques used for natural disasters are substantially less effective in dealing with such technological hazards. Further, communities primarily practicing subsistence economic activities often lack adequate financial and political capital for dealing with technological hazards beyond the scope of their traditional knowledge (further discussion on subsistence economic activities found in Chapter II). Instances of contamination confound effects of technological hazards due to the enigmatic nature of threats involved and processes of claims making and counter-claims making. Effectively, felt impacts are exacerbated by lingering social tensions and ambiguity regarding

resolution of ecological hazards (Freudenburg 1993; Kroll-Smith & Couch 1993; Erikson 1994; Gill & Ritchie 2011).

Bioregionalism

Bioregionalism is broadly thought of as a philosophical perspective favoring a place-based decentralized life style. In practice, bioregionalism calls for an intimate connection between humans and their natural surroundings, and for the activities of humans within their environment to reflect the natural ecological order. In other words, humans should actively practice principles of conservation, sustainability, and balance as they tend to happen naturally. Some bioregionalists call for decentralization of authority structures, leaving distinct regions to care for their own specific needs; these regions are called bioregions (Sale 1974; McGinnis 2005).

A working definition for a bioregion for the purposes of the thesis is “**...part of the earth’s surface whose rough boundaries are determined by natural rather than human dictates, distinguishable from other areas by attribute of flora, fauna, water, climate soils, and landforms, and the human settlements and cultures those attributes have given rise to**” (Sale 1974:227). This definition best articulates what many scholars agree to be a bioregion. It is important then for a group’s cultural norms, social structure, and technological developments to be sensitive to the necessities of the distinct bioregion in which they live so they may avoid overpopulation, resource exhaustion, or otherwise leave the region uninhabitable for prolonged periods of time (Berg 1991).

First Nations of Canada, particularly those in British Columbia, exhibit qualities of bioregionalism. First Nations exhibit strong ties to their natural surroundings (i.e., their respective bioregions) and have developed their cultural identity to incorporate sustainable use of resources and respect for their natural surroundings. Ecological hazards associated with the pipeline’s development are particularly perilous for their continued way of life because an oil

spill would disrupt their relationships and processes dependent on natural rhythms and resources gained from their bioregion.

The definition of bioregion explicated above was used to categorize bioregions to address this thesis' second research objective. The Gitga'at dwell on the coast of British Columbia, Canada, with their traditional village of Hartley Bay located at the mouth of the Douglas Channel. Their traditional territory and elements of their culture are derived heavily from resources found in coastal waters or along the shoreline; fish, shellfish, sea weed, and other maritime resources. The territories of the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en First Nations are also located in British Columbia, roughly 100 miles inland from the Pacific coast near Burns Lake. Like the Gitga'at, they also obtain much of their sustenance from the surrounding environment, primarily foraging, hunting, and trapping in forested regions and fishing in nearby lakes and rivers. Based on the above definition of a bioregion and considerations for traditional territories of each First Nation, two basic bioregions may be conceptualized from which to make a comparison: coastal (Gitga'at) and inland (Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en).

The Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations

As described, one of the tenets of bioregionalism is management of resources. In this way the Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations can all be considered to practice the philosophy of bioregionalism in the form of a subsistence based culture. Subsistence based economic systems utilize natural resources in a sustainable way, with social solidarity, resource security, and resource allocation being more highly emphasized than building personal wealth (Ritchie & Gill 2010; Gill & Ritchie 2011). As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter II, houses within each clan, a subgroup within each band (e.g., the Raven clan of the Gitga'at band), while working individually, contribute to resource security for the entire clan, as resources are often shared amongst houses in a clan in times of scarcity. Chiefs control the management of

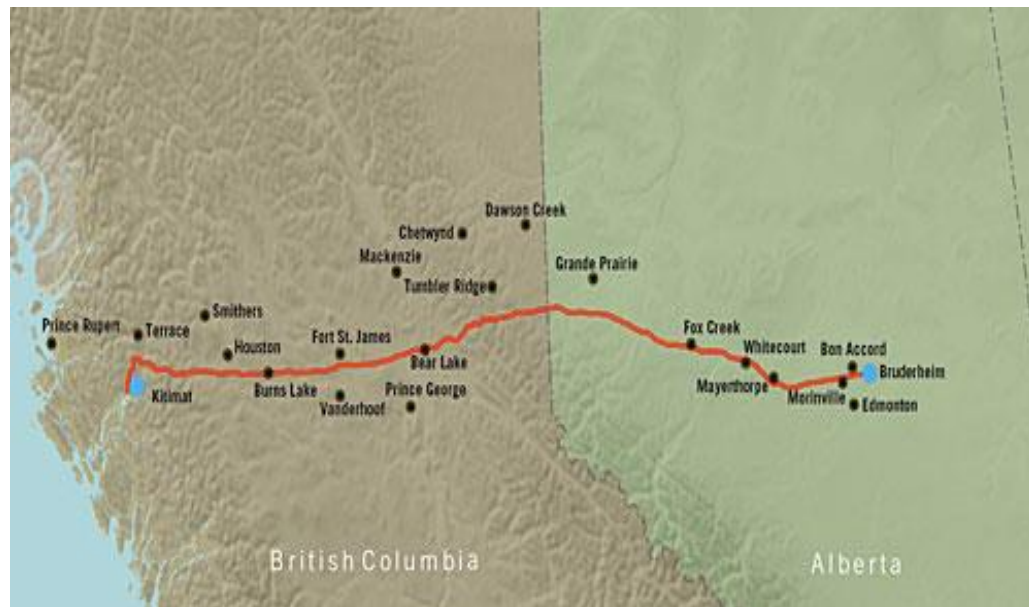
resources for each house as they relate to the clan as a whole, ensuring that food stores are plentiful between harvesting seasons for all houses, as well as maintaining sharing networks with other clans using surplus resources when available (Halpin & Seguin 1990).

The relationship these First Nations have with their bioregions extends beyond utilitarian resource harvesting; much of their culture is derived from their activities within each bioregion to the degree that the First Nations view themselves as protectors of the land. The deep connection to their bioregion experienced by the First Nations being examined means that a threat to their resources doubles as a threat to their way of life. It is because of these connections that the theoretical framework (see Chapter III) commonly utilized in disaster research apply to the research questions posed in this thesis. Simply, threats to resources in a bioregion simultaneously threaten the First Nations' sustenance and culture. It can then be expected that their opposition will reflect both aspects of threat, offering a clear description of the perceived impacts of the ENGP.

The Enbridge Northern Gateway Project and the Joint Review Panel

The Enbridge Northern Gateway Project proposes the construction of two parallel pipelines between Bruderheim, Alberta and Kitimat, British Columbia on the Pacific coast. The eastbound pipeline would carry condensate/diluent (a chemical used to refine tar sand) to the Alberta oil sands deposits, and the westbound pipeline would carry crude oil (525,000 barrels a day) to the Kitimat marine terminal for global export via supertankers. The equipment required to construct the pipeline has rarely, if ever, been used in many of the inland territories involved in the project, which, along with the risk of a pipeline rupture, poses the risk of significant strain on the ecology in the areas it would pass through. Further, the use of supertankers to transport condensate and crude oil to and from the coastal terminal exposes the First Nations with coastal territories to hazards associated with marine oil spills (northerngateway.ca).

Figure 1 A map of the proposed route of the ENGP's pipelines



The ENGP estimates an average of 220 tankers per year for 40 years, all of which will pass through the Douglas Channel, a known hazardous waterway, to reach the port at Kitimat. The combination of tanker traffic volume and the hazardous nature of the waterway make the hazards of a marine oil spill particularly pertinent for the Gitga'at First Nation, whose traditional village of Hartley Bay is located at the entrance of the Douglas Channel along the proposed route for tanker traffic. On the other hand, Burns Lake is located approximately 100 miles east of Kitimat in close proximity to the proposed pipeline route. The Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en First Nations live adjacent to each other in territory surrounding Burns Lake and would be affected by the development of the pipeline in addition to being exposed to the hazards of a pipeline rupture (Gill & Ritchie 2011; northerngateway.ca).

As part of the Canadian government's evaluation of the ENGP, an independent group, the Joint Review Panel (JRP), was tasked with evaluating potential environmental impacts, both positive and negative, posed by the project. Part of this evaluation process involved the use of hearings at which affected First Nations could offer their perspectives on the project, primarily how the ENGP would affect their way of life from a sociocultural standpoint. These hearings

were held in several First Nations communities, and members of the communities--often hereditary chiefs and elected officials, in addition to others--offered their testimonies in response to the project. These testimonies will serve as the primary source of data for this thesis (data described further in Chapter IV) (Gill & Ritchie 2011; northerngateway.ca).

Social Impact Assessment

A social impact assessment was carried out in 2011 to gauge Gitga'at attitudes towards the ENGP and gauge potential impacts of routine operations and oil spills of different sizes. Several interesting findings from this social impact assessment directly inform this thesis, particularly the first research question regarding perceived impacts of the ENGP by the First Nations. The Gitga'at almost unanimously agreed that the ENGP and associated tanker traffic could not coexist; that is, the Gitga'at feel that should the pipeline be built, their traditional ways of gathering resources will be placed under considerable strain. Further, roughly a quarter of Hartley Bay's population said they would leave if the ENGP were approved; which would have devastating effects on their traditional knowledge base, which is passed orally to new generations (Gill & Ritchie 2011).

The Gitga'at also felt that a major oil spill (or condensate spill) would be inevitable should the ENGP be approved, and that they had little confidence in Enbridge's or the Canadian government's ability to mitigate damages or clean up such a spill. Effectively, the Gitga'at have associated the ENGP with an oil spill, and they are already experiencing psychological stress from the threat of the ENGP and its implications. In fact, they are experiencing higher levels of stress than those experienced by renewable resource communities following the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill (Gill & Ritchie 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided context for this thesis by conceptualizing ecological disasters in context of bioregionalism and briefly linked First Nation culture to bioregionalism. Some pertinent information regarding the ENGP and previous investigation of perceptions by Gitga'at people have also been described. What follows in Chapter II is a detailed description of Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en social structure, organization, economic activities, and territories. Next, Chapter III will incorporate more detailed discussion regarding the theoretical framework used for this thesis, including elaboration on bioregionalism as well as how the conservation of resources model and tenets of social capital theory are incorporated in this analysis. Chapter IV will feature description of how data were procured for this analysis as well as the general analytic strategy. Chapter V will draw heavily on excerpts from analyzed testimonies with discussion focusing on coding strategies and underlying thought processes regarding the inclusion of each discursive theme. Finally, Chapter VI provides discussion for the thesis as a whole, including thoughts for further investigation into the ENGP and potential contributions of this thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE GITGA'AT, LAKE BABINE, AND WET'SUWET'EN FIRST NATIONS

Introduction

The First Nations of Canada, as indigenous people, have occupied and thrived on territorial waters and land on which they have resided since “time immemorial.” Over time, First Nations developed intricate systems of government and economic activities that focused on sustainability and harmony with their surroundings. This chapter discusses and compares the three First Nation bands examined in this thesis: the Gitga’at of the Tsimshian cultural and language group, and the Lake Babine and Wet’suwet’en of the Athabaskan language group. First, social and political structures of each group are described, including each group’s clan organization, language, kinship, and political systems. Next, the economic activities, both subsistence and cash-based, of the three groups are described. Finally, the traditional territory of each band is described, with attention given to notable legal interactions with the Canadian government in regards to territorial rights.

Social Structure, Organization, and Languages

The Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations share similar social structures, specifically in terms of kinship, status, and political organization, but differ in language spoken. Each First Nation is divided into distinct clans consisting of exogamous matrilineages and named after a totem, often sacred animal spirits. The Gitga'at (approximately 800 members, between 150 and 250 of which reside in Hartley Bay [Gill & Ritchie 2011]) are divided into the Killer Whale, Wolf, Eagle, and Raven clans. The Lake Babine (approximately 2,310 registered members [lakebabine.com]) are also divided into four clans: Bear, Frog, Caribou, and Beaver. The Wet'suwet'en (approximately 2,447 members [Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation]) are divided into five distinct clans: Big Frog, Small Frog, Wolf/Bear, Fireweed, and Beaver. For traditional ceremonial activities the Fireweed and Beaver clans work in union, leaving the Wet'suwet'en with the more common four clan division when engaging in traditional feasts and ceremonies (Halpin & Seguin 1990; Fiske & Patrick 2000; wetsuweten.com).

The Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en people share similar kinship systems, with all three being matrilineal Iroquois systems (lineage traced through the mother's side, with separate terms for affinal kin). Matrilineages in these groups form corporate groups, or houses in which members of a matrilineage and their affines share property and work together. Houses form the basic social and economic units within each clan. Houses vary in size, and experience fluctuation across time due to marriage between members of different houses. Adoption into a house and division into multiple houses are some acceptable ways to regulate house size (Halpin & Seguin 1990; Fiske & Patrick 2000).

Houses own fishing, hunting, and gathering rights for an area on the clan's territory, with heads of each house (often a high ranking male elder) managing these activities. Clans among

the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en First Nations have a highly developed system of property rights and status utilizing crests. Crests are said to have originated from ancestors interacting with supernatural beings, and are derived from animal spirits often incorporated in totems. Crests are associated with a name, which may be held by a clan, house, or an individual, and grant the bearer of the name a certain level of symbolic status. Crests are transferred from person to person during political activities and/or confrontations as a means of compensation. They include the exclusive rights to some object (e.g., fishing rights at a certain lake), which require those who do not own the crest to receive explicit permission from the crest's owner before undertaking activities falling within the rights granted by owning the crest. Amongst the Lake Babine, certain crests, particularly those with pragmatic and desirable land-use rights, also serve as a symbol of status. Gitga'at clans and houses generally own crests, not individuals. Their crest system, while intricate, seems to serve greater roles in clan delineation and symbolic status (Halpin & Seguin 1990; Fiske & Patrick 2000).

Although each practices matrilineal lineage systems, the three First Nations in question all value relationships with their paternal side and their father's house/matrilineage. In Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en clans a person's father's house is obligated to assist a person after marriage if needed. Father's houses and clans, called sponsoring clans, also aid in a person's social elevation within their affinal's clan (as clans are exogamous) (Fiske & Patrick 2000). The Gitga'at also value maintained relationships with the father's matrilineage for practical purposes. Trade for wood carving (e.g., poles and canoes) is carried out between clans with affinal ties. Further, amongst Tsimshian groups, naming within a matrilineage often acknowledges the father's clan by incorporating the father's clan's crest into a name (Halpin & Seguin 1990).

Political authority in each clan is vested in the eldest male in the strongest matrilineage associated with the clan, identified as a hereditary chief. The chief's name, and the chiefly duties attached to it, is passed from a chief to either their son or a sister's son; chief names are passed on

within a matrilineage. A chief's authority is not vested in an autocratic style of dictatorship; the primary obligations of a clan's chief involve ensuring the well-being of the clan's people and proper management of the clan's territory and resources within the territory, as well as interpretation of traditional laws (Halpin & Seguin 1990; Fiske & Patrick 2000).

Chiefs fulfill many of their political duties at ceremonial events known as potlatches (Gitga'at and Wet'suwet'en) and balhats (Lake Babine). Potlatches/balhats are ceremonial feasts at which clans meet and exchange gifts. A host clan invites several other clans, who are seated in a great hall based on their hierarchical position within the band. The gifts exchanged are symbolic of the strength of solidarity within and between clans, with more value placed on giving than receiving. Typically gifts are given to the host clan's chief donated by the chief's matrilineal and affinal kin, as well as clan members and other potlatch participants. The chief then distributes these gifts to other clans and potlatch/balhat participants based on their social standing in relation to the host clan. In addition to strengthening social solidarity, potlatches/balhats serve as a time to settle issues that require a chief's judgment, such as hereditary issues and conflict resolution (Halpin & Seguin 1990; Fiske & Patrick 2000).

As part of the Tsimshian cultural group, the Gitga'at has had historical exposure to Nishga and Gitskan languages. Gitskan is the traditional language of Southern Tsimshian, and Nishga was primarily spoken by Coastal Tsimshian. The Gitga'at, being Southern Tsimshian, traditionally spoke Gitskan, however since the 1970s the Gitga'at have adopted the more prestigious and widely spoken Coastal Nishga language. The Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en share a dialect within the broad Athabaskan language family known as Babine-Witsuwit'en (Halpin & Seguin 1990; wetsuweten.com; lakebabine.com).

Economic Activities

The economic activities of the First Nations are best understood when considered as modern subsistence. Traditional economic activities are subsistence based, meaning that goods are harvested and produced for consumption, not to be converted into financial capital (Jorgensen 1990). Many First Nations were introduced to cash-based economic systems after initiating fur trading with Europeans. In this section both economic systems will be discussed with attention given to modern implications of First Nation participation in cash-based economic activities.

Subsistence based economic systems utilize natural resources in a sustainable way, with social solidarity, resource security, and resource allocation being more highly emphasized than building personal wealth (Ritchie & Gill 2010; Gill & Ritchie 2011). In modern subsistence economies, modern technology (e.g., motorized transportation) is used to accommodate more efficient resource acquisition. While subsistence activities are more highly emphasized, financial capital based economic activities are also pursued to acquire capital for maintenance and overhead associated with modern technology (e.g., purchasing fuel). Houses within each clan, while working individually, contribute to resource security for the entire clan, as resources are often shared amongst houses in a clan in times of scarcity. Because there are no markets in subsistence economies, chiefs control the management of resources for each house as they relate to the clan as a whole, ensuring that food stores are plentiful between harvesting seasons for all houses, as well as maintaining trading networks with other clans using surplus resources when available (Halpin & Seguin 1990; Jorgenson 1990).

Despite territorial differences, the annual harvesting cycles of the Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en are quite similar, with variations accommodating said differences in territory and available resources. The Gitga'at's cycle, which begins at the end of winter, is generally focused on fishing and harvesting. In the spring men fish for halibut, while women process

halibut. In addition to heavy halibut fishing, sea gull eggs, oysters, abalone, seaweed, and various plants are harvested during the spring months (Halpin & Seguin 1990).

During the summer months members of houses move to harvesting camps controlled by their matrilineal house. Time at harvesting camps is spent fishing for salmon and harvesting berries. The Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en all maintain traditional harvesting camps in this way. The Gitga'at primarily fish in rivers and coastal channels, fjords, and bays, while the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en fish in rivers as well as hunt for game, which are more plentiful in their inland territories. Much of the salmon caught in the summer months is preserved during autumn; these salmon preserves sustain the clans until the next harvesting season. The Gitga'at continue harvesting shellfish through the winter to supplement salmon stores, and the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en hunt game to accomplish the same goal (Halpin & Seguin 1990; Fiske & Patrick 2000).

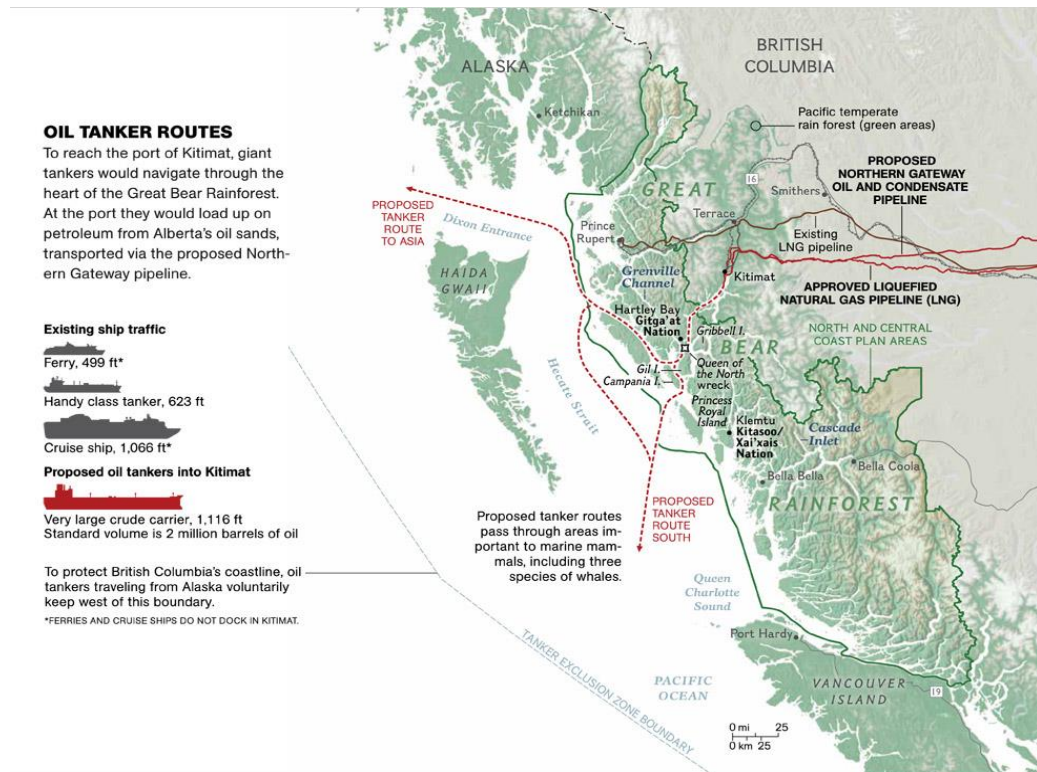
The Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en First Nations, with their territory much farther east than the Gitga'at, were more involved in cash-based economic activities as they were more exposed to the western expansion of Europeans. In the mid-20th century Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en clans, and to a lesser extent the Gitga'at, experienced some economic prosperity from their participation in commercialized fishing, logging, and work in copper mines on or around their traditional territory. This prosperity did not last, however, as the copper mines eventually shut down, fisheries became less sustainable, and logging was curtailed for environmental protection. This combined with increased regulations and competition in other industries left many First Nations people, particularly members of Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en clans, without work and at a diminished capacity to practice their traditional subsistence lifestyle, because traditional knowledge was degraded in lieu of cash-based activities (Fiske & Patrick 2000).

The Gitga'at clans were not as severely affected by participation in commercial fishing as were the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en. The Gitga'at's traditional village of Hartley Bay is relatively isolated, so their contact with Europeans and participation in commercial fishing was minimal compared to other First Nations. It was because of this isolation that the Gitga'at were better able to maintain their traditional subsistence lifestyles, and were able to sustain themselves using their traditional harvesting cycles when their ability to compete with commercial fisheries diminished (Halpin & Seguin 1990).

Territories and Land Use

The territory of the Southern Tsimshian group spans across the western coast of British Columbia. The coastal region is accented by mountain landscapes that are heavily forested with high levels of precipitation. The Gitga'at's traditional village of Hartley Bay is located at the mouth of the Douglas Channel and is characterized by fjords, channels, and islands. The

Figure 2 A map of Gitga'at territory with proposed tanker routes



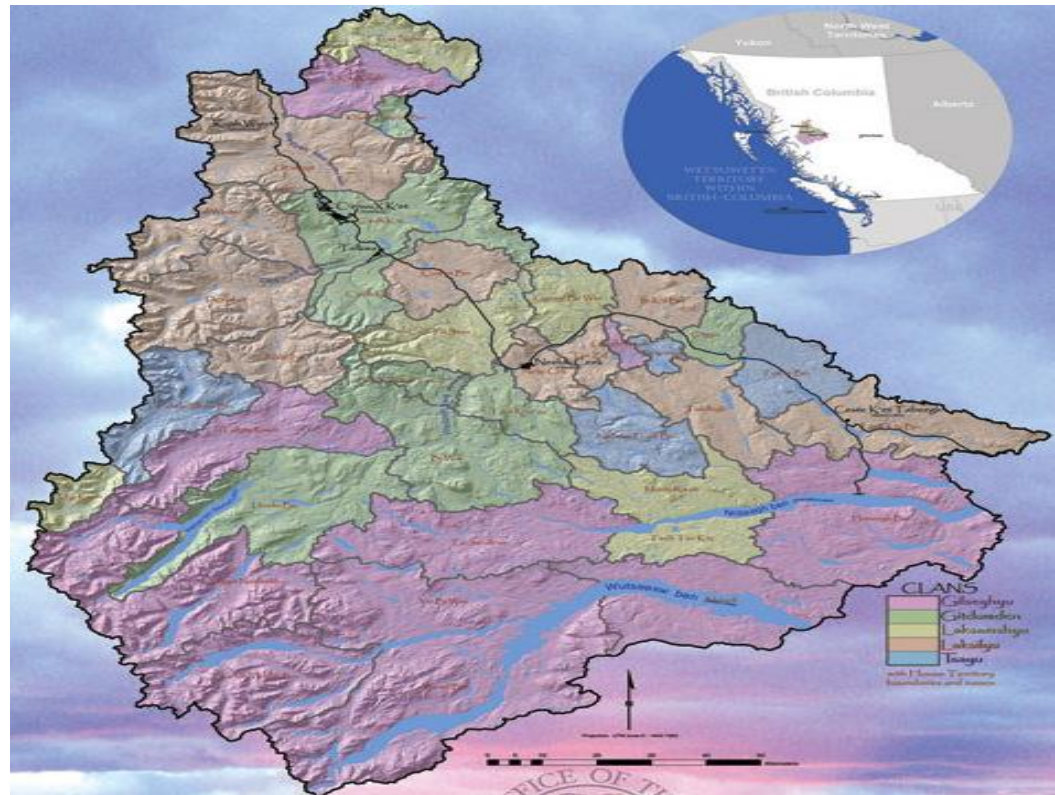
ecosystem in this area supports a rich diversity of animal and plant life. With the exception of commercial fishing companies, the Gitga'at have had relatively few conflicts pertaining to their territory and land use (Gill & Ritchie 2011; Halpin & Seguin 1990). The territories of the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en are adjacent and lie in central British Columbia, east of the Gitga'at's territory. Their territories are also accented by the mountain ranges which sprawl through British Columbia, and are thickly forested, but generally experience less precipitation.

Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en territories have been the subject of contestation in terms of boundaries and use for many years, with the Canadian government allotting ever-smaller reservations, and the First Nations fighting for their aboriginal rights of land use. Starting in 1904 the Canadian government, after inspections by fishery officers, began to systematically reduce First Nations' land use rights by making traditional fishing techniques illegal. The fishery officers, and the government as whole, overlooked the efficiency of these traditional techniques, and forced the adoption of modern tools (e.g., fishing nets) though they were less effective for the First Nations. Regulation of traditional harvesting techniques also contributed to Lake Babine clans' reliance on commercial industries, which will be discussed further in another section (lakebabine.com).

The Wet'suwet'en also have a history of political conflict with the Canadian government, with one notable instance being the case of *Delgamuukw v The Queen*; the outcome of which had significant implications for the Wet'suwet'en and First Nations as a whole. The Wet'suwet'en, like the Lake Babine, have struggled with their rights of land use and prior occupancy, and took these issues to the Canadian government's legal system. The Wet'suwet'en (and the Gitksan, another band) claimed that their rights to 58,000 square kilometers of land, then being used by the Canadian government, had not been ceded, and that the Canadian government was disregarding the sovereignty of the First Nations. The initial decision of the courts was that due to the "primitive" nature of the First Nations at the time of Canada's European settlement,

they had no property laws or systems of government which could conflict with the actions of the Canadian government (Culhane 1998).

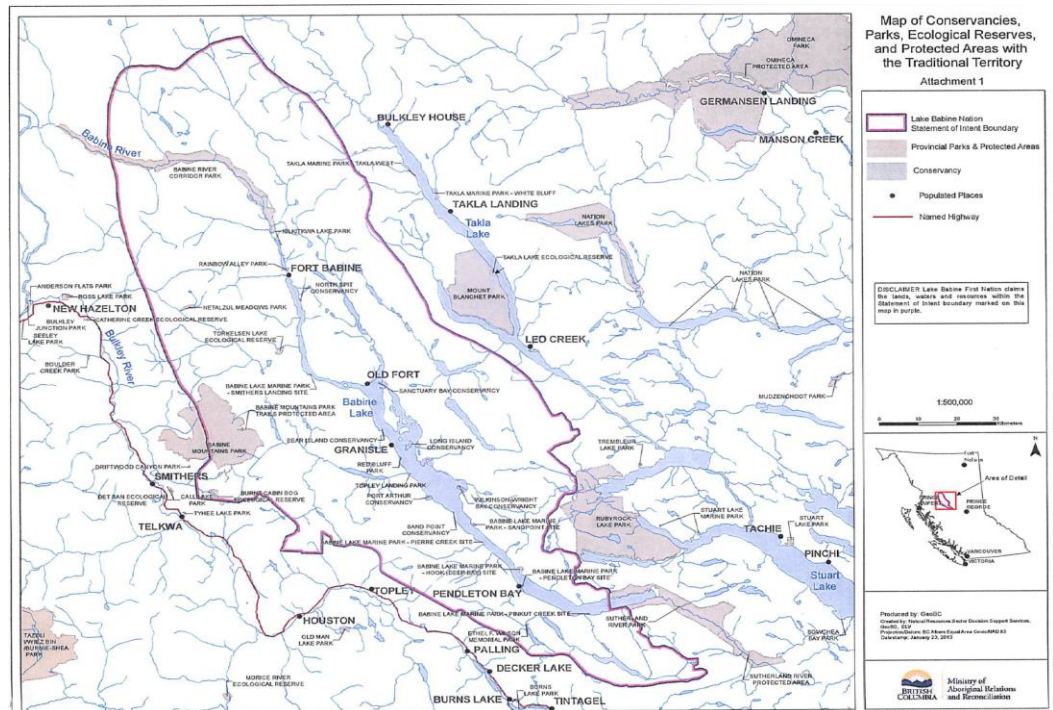
Figure 3 A map of Wet'suwet'en territory near Burns Lake, British Columbia (retrieved from wetsuweten.com)



One significant aspect of *Delgamuukw v The Queen* was that the Canadian government acknowledged that they had imposed their own sovereignty and jurisdiction on First Nation territory by simply ignoring the existence of aboriginals, their traditional culture, and their systems of government. Culhane (1998) summarizes the position of the Canadian government in response to this case by stating "...the stark contrast in 'development' between the two 'races,' the Crown argues, made the superimposition of British sovereignty over Aboriginal sovereignty a 'natural' outcome of the 'progress' of history..."(p. 17). More significant, perhaps, were the results of the appeal of the original ruling. In 1997 the Canadian Supreme Court reversed the 1991 trial's rulings and suggested a retrial to settle the territorial dispute, stating that the original

trial failed to adequately acknowledge the significance of aboriginal oral history as evidence. In essence, the Supreme Court ruling established the precedent that aboriginal oral histories are just as important as written evidence (Culhane 1998); a relevant precedent considering the acknowledgement of oral testimonies as evidence by the JRP.

Figure 4 A map of Lake Babine territory north of Burns Lake, British Columbia (retrieved from lakebabine.com)



Conclusion

The Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations, while distinct groups, share many characteristics in terms of social and political organization, as well as subsistence based economic activities. Differences arise when examining languages, historical interactions with the Canadian government, and experiences with cash-based economic activities. While the Gitga'at have managed to maintain relative isolation and have preserved their traditional culture and values, the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en have had more explicit confrontation with the Canadian government and legal system in maintaining their rights of sovereignty and land use.

Further, Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en clan members have experienced significant fallout from participation in commercial economies, which coupled with reduced reservation lands, served to weaken their traditional subsistence systems when compared to the Gitga'at. Ultimately, these groups are similar enough in terms of social structure and subsistence based economic activities to provide some common ground upon which to base a comparison (in other words, an "apples to apples" comparison), while differences in bioregions (i.e., coastal and inland) and sociocultural history provide points of differentiation wherein differences in risk perception and discursive framing might be expected.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The ENGP confronts the First Nations with the significant threat of an ecological disaster. Based on their subsistence ties to their respective bioregions, it is fitting to examine their perceptions of the threat of a disaster in terms of how it would impact the resources available to them. The conservation of resources model and social capital theory are particularly well suited for addressing these issues because they are rooted in resources and social connections (i.e. cultural connections amongst First Nations, another resource), and are established perspectives within disaster research. The major theoretical perspectives for this thesis will be outlined in this chapter with specific attention given to how concepts relate to the ENGP. First, bioregionalism will be described in greater depth in conjunction with the POET and anticipatory utilization models; next the conservation of resources model and tenets of social capital theory will be outlined.

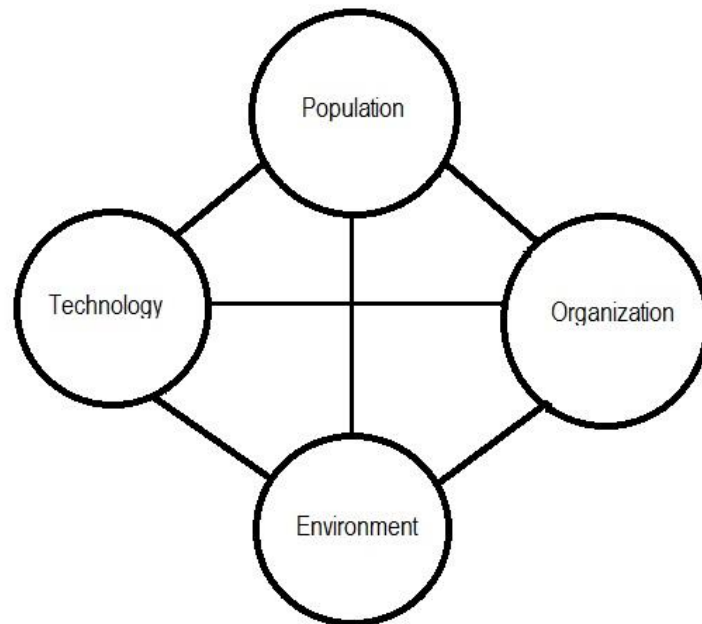
Bioregionalism

Bioregionalism is a perspective that frames human/environmental relationships in terms of sustainability, conservation, and integration in the context of a bioregion (Berg 1991). Recall from chapter one that a bioregion is a specific area with boundaries created by natural formations, with natural attributes and human cultures distinguishing one bioregion from another (Sale 1974). One critique, and a possibility for the perspective's relative obscurity in sociological research, is that conceptualizations within the umbrella of bioregionalism are diverse, which can cause operationalizing concepts for a study to be somewhat challenging (Sale 1985; Alexander 1996; McGinnis 2005). Nevertheless, many general concepts of bioregionalism are agreed upon and ideal for describing many First Nations. For this thesis bioregionalism will be conceptualized and operationalized in conjunction with the POET model of human ecology (Duncan 1959) as well as the anticipatory utilization model (Dyer et al 1992). This discussion will focus on the components of the POET model in the context of bioregionalism with attention given to how an ecological disaster would impact a bioregional ecological complex, and how First Nations' territories may be classified into different bioregions, with activities within each bioregion reflecting tenets of the anticipatory utilization model.

The POET model derives its name from its conceptualization of the ecological complex as four distinct components: population (i.e., demographic characteristics of human population), organization (i.e., social structure and activities), environment (i.e., built and natural surroundings), and technology (i.e., tools and knowledge). Effectively, the POET model serves as a parsimonious representation of interrelatedness between societies (and their various institutions) and their environmental surroundings. Further, these components are described in sum as the "ecological complex" due to the constant interactions between each component holistically, with changes in one or more affecting the state of all other components (Duncan 1959). A common trend in bioregional writing is emphasis on natural rhythms as playing a

central role in human activities and organization. Or to put the same thought in terms of the POET model, a society incorporates aspects of its surrounding environment when shaping and/or managing its technology, organization, and population.

Figure 5 A model of an ecological complex



Many scholars of bioregionalism concur that a place-based approach to organization is particularly prudent, as environmental factors can change dramatically from place to place (Dodge 1981; Berg 1991). Building on that thought, the anticipatory utilization model addresses interplay between organizational and environmental components in renewable resource communities like First Nations, with organizational processes tailored to environmental factors specific to the community's bioregion. Ritchie and Gill (2010) described anticipatory utilization cycles as a four phase process which describe interactions between cultural components of a society's organization and its environmental surroundings, or bioregion. The process consists of anticipation and preparation for a harvesting cycle (e.g., what resources will be harvested and from where), harvesting resources, utilization of harvested resources, and reflection of the entire process, which informs the next preparation phase. When considered in context of

bioregionalism, these cycles of anticipatory utilization are tailored directly to a society's bioregion.

To take the discussion further, the components of the POET model may all be considered as processes with constant interplay between each component. Consider a hypothetical society which strongly expresses concepts of bioregionalism; an ideal ecological complex would exhibit near-equilibrium between each component, with technology, organization, population, and environmental factors influencing and balancing each other (contrast this with a modern metropolis, where technology, organization, and population take primacy over environmental factors). An ecological disaster is more problematic for a bioregional ecological complex because it effectively isolates the environmental component from the other three. Considering that this hypothetical society's technology, organization, and population are based on interactions with their environment, diminishing environmental factors would greatly affect functions within other POET components. Considering the persistent nature of some technological ecological disasters, prolonged periods of diminished environmental conditions could significantly strain the utility of a society's organization and technology (which are based anticipatory utilization processes), and thus its population.

The Gitga'at, Lake Babine, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations practice subsistence lifestyles which exhibit characteristics of bioregionalism as an ecological complex in which all components are approaching equilibrium. Interactions between organizational and environmental components are carried out as anticipatory utilization cycles which draw on traditional knowledge specific to each group's bioregion; a characteristic of many renewable resource communities. With relationships to their bioregions articulated, the following sections will describe different resource categories and social networks utilized by First Nations.

Conservation of Resources

Hobfoll (1989) identifies psychological stress within the conservation of resources (COR) model as a reaction to the environment in which there is a threat of loss of resources, an actual loss of resources, or a lack of an expected gain following an investment of resources. The COR model is well suited for the study of disasters, and thus this thesis, because of its emphasis on resources as the root of stress. The COR model was originally developed to address a gap in the psychological literature regarding stress conceptualization, and to serve as a middle ground between environmental and cognitive perspectives regarding stress. The COR model builds upon some basic concepts of social learning theory; primarily that actors in any given situation will seek to receive reinforcement for their actions, and avoid actions that will result in punishment or a lack of reinforcement (Bandura 1977).

The COR model suggests that resources, both tangible and intangible, are the primary means with which to understand stress within actors at all levels of analysis (i.e. individual, community, etc.). In this section the classifications of both material and non-material resources will be discussed, as well as how this model is useful for understanding psychological stress throughout the disaster lifecycle.

In the COR model resources can be generally categorized as either material or non-material, and more specifically classified into four distinct categories: objects, conditions, personal characteristics, and energies. Object resources are identified as the primary material resources. Object resources are valuable because of some characteristic of their physical nature. Examples of object resources could be a home, a vehicle, supplies, and equipment. Although their initial value is determined primarily by the physical use or meaning they offer, Hobfoll (1989) notes that object resources are often closely associated with an individual's status, thus it

may be useful to consider object resources as having a relationship to personal characteristics (another resource) that may contribute to feelings of status or worth.

The final three classifications all fall within the non-material category: condition resources, personal characteristics, and energy resources. Conditions can be described as resources in that they are considered to be valuable and are sought after (Hobfoll 1989). Two relatable examples of conditions possessed by actors as resources are marriage and employment; not intrinsically valuable themselves, but socially constructed as valuable. Further, these conditions when considered as resources may influence the coping ability, or resilience to stress, of an actor.

A recent study supports the notion that conditions may impact individual resilience, indicating that spouses that experienced stress early in their marriage had higher levels of self-efficacy, more effective problem solving, and exhibited reduced reactions to stressful events than spouses that did not experience early stress (Neff & Broady 2011). This seems to indicate that marriage has the potential for personal growth in terms of stress resilience, which may effectively translate to not only a reduced stress reaction, but also a more rapid recovery from a stressful event like a disaster. This is pertinent to the current discussion because the members of the First Nations in question highly identify with their respective groups. The status of the group, as well as their role within the group, would then have a great impact on the individuals within each clan. Additionally, events in the cultural history of each group (i.e. the *Queen of the North* and the residential schools) contribute to the self-efficacy of members of each clan in the same way the above outlined study describes such events contributing to a strengthened marriage relationship and individuals within the marriage more resilient.

Personal characteristics are another non-material resource in the COR model. Most simply, personal characteristics in the context of resources can be considered as an actor's

individual outlook on events, personality traits, and coping skills (Hobfoll 1989). Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane, and Geller (1990) noted that an actor's system of social support can highly influence their coping skills. Notably, social support seems to be most important in the time immediately after a stressful event, with diminishing returns in terms of stress reduction as time goes on due to the potential drain on an actor's other resources. Although considered with personal characteristics here, Hobfoll (1989) noted that social support generally complements each resource category in terms of the extent to which the support facilitates the preservation or accumulation of resources. In this way this resource category is highly related to bonding social capital, which will be discussed further in the following section.

The final resource category is that of energies. Primary examples of energies are time, money, and knowledge. Essentially, the value of energies as a resource lies in that they aid in acquiring or preserving other resources, not that they are exceptionally valuable on their own. For example money can be used to purchase supplies and equipment (object resources), and time and knowledge can be used to put the acquired equipment to use (Hobfoll 1989).

In context of this thesis, the COR model is well-suited for analyzing testimonies of First Nation people because it effectively conceptualizes threat as a stressor (useful here because the ENGP has not yet been approved and construction has not yet begun) as well as accounting for any past or future loss of resources. Also directly relevant to the ENGP and First Nations bands, Hobfoll and Lilly (1993) identified that communities with weak resource pools will react defensively to challenges towards resources, and that resource loss at the community or individual level takes primacy in importance to resource gain. In other words, instances of simultaneous loss and gain will be considered overall as a loss, regardless of what is gained. Further, resources found in the bioregions of each First Nation band are a crucial analytic tool when considered in conjunction with the anticipatory utilization model and the POET model presented here. Threats to the objects resources from which elements of culture are derived

within the bioregion also threaten the application of centuries of accumulated knowledge on harvesting, hunting, trapping, and resource management.

The ENGP introduces ecological hazards to First Nations across a wide span of territory, and with bioregions conceptualized, resource types categorized, and psychological implications of resource threat and loss explicated, it is feasible to determine differences in threat potentially affecting different bioregions. Inland bioregions would be exposed to threats of pipeline ruptures, which would likely heavily contaminate a relatively isolated area. Mitigation strategies for pipeline ruptures are also more effective, as sections of pipeline can be isolated to minimize quantity of oil spilled. Conversely, coastal bioregions would face the threat of a major spill on the scale of the *Exxon Valdez*. Compared to inland pipeline ruptures, maritime spills are more difficult to contain and clean, as oil disperses across huge areas by oceanic currents. In this way, coastal bioregions face much more substantial ecological hazards in terms of scale.

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory (SCT) addresses effects of social capital on individuals and groups which can be used to gauge an individual, group, or community's social psychological "health" in terms of level of interrelatedness (Paxton 1999). Social capital can broadly be defined as connections amongst individuals and/or social networks and the resulting norms of reciprocity and trust that occur within them (Putnam 2000). As the definition implies, and as Paxton (1999) notes, social capital is cultivated through interactions amongst actors in a social structure. In this section the formation of social capital, the outcomes of social capital development and loss, and implications of social capital for disaster research will be discussed.

As previously noted, social capital is formed primarily through interactions amongst actors, which implies a degree of association and communication amongst actors for these interactions to occur. These interactions generate social capital if there is a high level of trust,

expectation of reciprocity, and general positive feelings associated with the interactions. Trust, for the purposes of SCT, can be classified into two categories: specific trust and abstract trust. Specific trust is generally produced by repeated interactions amongst associated actors and is exclusive to the interacting actors. Abstract trust is more general and addresses informal interactions, rather than specific interactions, as well as an actor's trust towards institutions at higher levels of analysis (Paxton 1999).

Reciprocity can also be classified as two categories: specific and generalized. Specific reciprocity involves an interaction with predetermined compensation for the actor performing the action. Generalized reciprocity, on the other hand, is based upon a previously cultivated high level of trust between actors without predetermined compensation, rather with a mutual feeling of responsibility for repayment (Ritchie & Gill 2007). A high level of positive feelings associated with an interaction, which can otherwise be seen as a reward or reinforcement, should increase the frequency of similar future interactions. This reflects underlying processes in the development of social capital, which also coincides with learning theory as it was previously discussed within the COR model (Bandura 1977).

The benefits of social capital, as it is developed, are multi-faceted. Some salient benefits of social capital are increased solidarity, cohesion, as well as a general strengthening of an actor's social network and thus ability to acquire social support. This is extremely pertinent to disaster situations because it is generally found that actors with more social capital are better able to fight illness and deal with trauma (i.e. stress) than those with little or no social capital. Solidarity within a group is often higher with the cultivation of bonding social capital; which is social capital within a specific group, and is exclusive to that group. It should be noted that bonding social capital has the potential to alienate those without membership to the in-group, which could have some implications for relief work in some disaster scenarios, but this would not reduce the

benefits wrought by the members of the group (i.e. the affected community) (Ritchie & Gill 2007; Ferlander 2007).

Bridging capital is built between groups. Research indicates some similarities between bonding and bridging social capital in terms of health benefits; essentially those that are well connected within a group (bonding) and/or within a large support network (bridging) tend to be more personally resilient to stress and illness. Bridging capital has broad implications at higher levels of analysis as well. Communities with high levels of bridging capital are more likely to have influence with other communities whereby they can “cash in” their social capital for resources or other forms of aid, effectively broadening the social network at the community level (Ferlander 2007).

Social capital is certainly an important resource for the First Nations of Canada. As with other subsistence cultures, community members must often rely on cooperation within social networks during anticipatory utilization cycles, which sometimes includes sharing resources in times of scarcity (Ritchie & Gill 2007). This is a clear example of bonding social capital within a community. Further, social capital may be converted to natural capital by way of resource sharing within social networks and trading networks between different clans with access to resources exclusive to specific bioregions (e.g., inland clans have less access to coastal resources). Trading networks like these are clear demonstrations of bridging social capital. Additionally, the existence of these networks, and the interactions within each network, has been incorporated into elements of the traditional culture of each clan as an integral component of their ecological complex.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework presented here is not necessarily intended to form a single “model”, but each theory when considered together does address pertinent subject matter for the

situation at hand and effectively addresses the research questions of this thesis. Bioregionalism is useful for conceptualizing processes used by First Nations in terms of acting within and managing their respective ecological complexes. The COR model has been utilized in disaster research for its parsimonious conceptualization of stress using resources. SCT offers adequate conceptualization of the social networks within and between First Nation tribes and clans. Each theory also offers some degree of explanation regarding potential implications for disruption brought on by the ENGP's development and potential oil spill regarding the ecological complex, resources, and social networks.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Case and Data Selection

The sociological study of disaster has grown and expanded in terms of theoretical and methodological strength and scope since its emergence in the mid-20th century (Quarantelli 1987; Tierney 1998). As the field has grown, the introduction of new theories or the application of theories into new contexts, including various methodological applications, has further strengthened disaster research. Due to the unpredictable nature of disasters most studies of communities affected by a disaster take place in the field after an event has occurred; less common are instances where communities are studied before and after an event. The situation brought on by the ENGP offers an opportunity for a community's perceptions towards the risk and implications of a specific disaster scenario to be investigated before a disaster has occurred. In this case, the First Nations of Canada were given the opportunity to articulate their opposition to the ENGP by way of JRP hearings, including their perceptions of the threat of a specific disaster scenario related to industrial development and a possible oil spill.

Data for the study come exclusively from transcriptions of oral testimonies of the Gitga'at First Nation of Hartley Bay, British Columbia, Canada, and the First Nations in the area surrounding Burns Lake, British Columbia, Canada presented for the ENGP JRP. All

testimonies were transcribed and made public via the internet as part of the JRP's project evaluation process for the Canadian government. Each community selected their own speakers for each set of testimonies, with speakers typically being hereditary chiefs, speakers for chiefs, and elected leaders in addition to several working clan members (e.g., fishermen, harvesters, etc.). Testimonies were given as speeches in a town hall style setting.

Testimonies were downloaded in pdf format in their publicly available state for analysis in May 2012 (testimonies were given from January to April 2012). Each transcription has a unique identification number; testimonies are divided into the regions in which they were delivered. In total there were 185 testimonies given at 16 different locations (10 coastal sites, and six inland sites). There were 24 testimonies given by the Gitga'at First Nation, and 18 given by the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en First Nations (with Burns Lake being the site at which the testimonies were given; $N = 42$ total testimonies) which were used in this analysis. Testimonies were selected using purposive sampling based on bioregion. Gitga'at testimonies were chosen to represent coastal bioregions due to Hartley Bay's close proximity to the terminal at Kitimat, British Columbia, which will expose Gitga'at to supertanker traffic at an extremely high frequency. The Burns Lake testimonies were selected to represent inland bioregions due to their location approximately 100 miles east of Kitimat in close proximity to the proposed pipeline route. Burns Lake testimonies were also selected because they were a homogenous inland group most similar to Hartley Bay testimonies in terms of sample size.

Analytic Strategy

Data was analyzed using an immersive qualitative content analysis technique heavily based on Strauss' (1987) open, axial, and selective coding strategies for qualitative data. Texts were analyzed line-by-line, with testimonies as a whole being coded for their discursive content. Narrative themes were derived in three primary ways: theoretical framework, information

gathered from interviews, and emergent patterns. Broad themes were determined by the overarching theoretical framework, with Bioregionalism, the COR model (threat and actual loss), and SCT forming the foundation of general themes (i.e., open and axial coding). Subthemes were initially formed based on information gathered from interviews as part of a social impact assessment (Gill & Ritchie 2011). Finally, emergent themes were formulated and coded when subject matter of a similar nature was consistently utilized in multiple testimonies. Subthemes and emergent themes (hereby referred to simply as subthemes) were analytically linked to the broad theoretical themes (i.e., selective coding), and were included to determine specific nuances of arguments involving broad themes used by those who offered testimony (Bonnell 1980).

Testimonies were coded based on discursive content, with the presence of a narrative theme anywhere in the testimony warranting the testimony as a whole being coded for a theme. Coding was performed in this way to eliminate potential weighting issues, with longer testimonies potentially utilizing more discussion on a certain narrative theme or set of themes (i.e., more quantitative expressions of a single theme), but not necessarily with more distinct themes (i.e., expressions of multiple themes) present than in shorter testimonies. In this way “immersive qualitative content analysis” can be compared to the way interviews are typically coded based on discursive content and context, rather than frequency of word usage. The prevalence of each theme was calculated by proportion across all analyzed testimonies for descriptive purposes. That is, each testimony was coded as either “present” or “not present” for a given theme, with percentage of use within each theme calculated for each group and overall.

One of the primary objectives of this thesis was to compare the articulation of opposition between communities of different bioregions. To this end testimonies from each community were coded and analyzed as two distinct groups (coastal and inland bioregions), with thematic consistency (i.e., relatedness to broad themes) for subthemes being determined within each group; that is, groups were analyzed separately as well as comparatively. After each community was

separately coded, broad themes and subthemes were compared between the two groups based on discursive content, context of usage, and prevalence, with specific attention being given to how the usage or emphasis of subthemes is similar or different between the two groups.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will feature further discussion on themes and subthemes, with attention given to prominence and usage of each theme. Data presented here as quotations were chosen to represent each theme based on their representativeness of content and general usage by First Nations across all testimonies as interpreted by the researcher. Quantitative data shown as percentages is meant to represent proportion of use for each theme within each group and overall, and will be presented for descriptive purposes (a summary table of theme usage is found at the end of this chapter). The discussion in this chapter will draw heavily from quotations from the testimonies themselves while relating them to the theoretical framework and research questions.

Traditional Culture

One hundred percent of those who offered testimony to the JRP emphasized the ENGP would affect their culture in a negative way. It became apparent that traditional culture, while difficult to link to a specific aspect of the theoretical framework (as it relates to many aspects), should be coded as an emergent theme. Passages were coded as traditional culture and not another theme based on the theoretical framework if they addressed issues of cultural longevity, land use, language, and naming. All of those who offered testimony expressed concern that their culture would be greatly endangered by the ENGP's approval and construction. As one Hartley Bay official articulated:

Our culture is passed down through the generations with traditions that are taught from Elder to youth in a system that has built up our society for thousands of years. If these pillars that hold up our community are removed, we face the complete destruction of our society [Hartley Bay official].

This passage is representative of many passages regarding the history of traditional culture, and the sensitive nature by which traditional culture is passed through oral tradition and experience. A speaker for the Lake Babine echoed a similar sentiment regarding the importance of stability within the culture:

Our people have been here since time immemorial. Our ancestors lived here and lived off the land, the fish and all of the animals for sustenance, and now we follow their footsteps and our children and their children's children, they will follow our ways [Lake Babine speaker].

Passages like these were echoed time and time again throughout testimonies from both groups. The ENGP is perceived to threaten the stability of traditional activities and practices through which their culture is transmitted.

Several Gitga'at featured discussion specific to two elements of culture which were coded as subthemes: Camp Kiel (a harvesting camp) and spirit bears. Passages that featured discussion of these two aspects of culture were often framed in terms of continuity of traditional ways of life and responsibility to protect wildlife and the environment. One Raven clan member had this to say about Camp Kiel:

Every year, I would pout and beg and cry to go to Kiel, our springtime food harvesting area. Everyone here can tell you what a magical place Kiel is; people change there, they're transformed. Life is about gathering food, about working together, and about being one with the land [Gitga'at Raven clan].

This passage further demonstrates the connection between First Nations' culture and resources. Camp Kiel then is more than a place visited to gather resources for a season, it is also a process during which traditional culture and knowledge is transmitted from one generation to the next. Places and activities like these are key for societies reliant on oral tradition, as the knowledge that is gained at a camp like Kiel cannot be learned in any other way.

Spirit bears are an uncommon breed of black bears that appear white in color. They are considered to be sacred by the Gitga'at; seeing one in the wild is generally thought of as a spiritual experience and a sign of good fortune. The Gitga'at also feel that it is their duty to protect spirit bears, and many expressed concern that the ENGP also explicitly threatens the spirit bears in their natural environment:

The spirit bear's main food source is the fish that enter our river systems. If an oil spill happens, and because the fish are in our oceans before they head to their spawning grounds, they will be already contaminated which then will pass on to the spirit bears [Gitga'at speaker].

What is important to note is that these traditions are long-standing and integral to First Nations' culture. Discussions of harvesting camps and spirit bears by First Nations have a deeper latent meaning than simple resource allocation or tourist attractions; they are a key element to First Nation identity.

Individual and place names were also extremely important to those who gave testimony. Many testimonies began with speakers introducing themselves by name, which was immediately followed by their "real" name, their traditional name. Further, many testimonies referenced the importance of place names, or a naming system for places which indicate something about that place (e.g., when to harvest near a certain island) beyond a simple label. Further evidence of the importance of traditional names and place names can be found in the social impact assessment originally described in Chapter I; of Gitga'at interviewed for the assessment between 85% and

90% reported that knowing ceremonial names and traditional place names was very important to Gitga'at identity.

Bioregionalism

Bioregionalism, in addition to being a major philosophical influence throughout this thesis, was also coded as a discursive theme. Passages that included discussion on sustainability, observing natural ecological rhythms, reliance on environmental factors, and the state of their ecological complex were coded in the bioregionalism theme. Issues like these were prominently used in many testimonies (75% from Hartley Bay, 94% from Burns Lake, 83% total). As one Gitga'at harvester explained:

I am a Gitga'at harvester. I use what the land and the sea provide for me. You've heard many mentions of all of the harvesting that we do as a nation. If I could elaborate on but one of those to give you an idea of how we respect what's around us, and if you could please just remember these words as I go through my presentation that my grandmother has always taught me. Simply, you take what you need and you use what you take [Gitga'at harvester].

Another Hartley Bay resident had this to say about the respect felt for animals beyond resources for sustenance:

Our moose aren't in feedlots like cows and chickens and pigs. They're free, they're healthy, they're wild, just like our salmon. They're healthy, they've had to grow in the ocean [Hartley Bay resident].

This speaker went on to say:

When you see them come back to their home river there's nothing like it. When our people see the salmon and the salmon jump and you'll hear those people will get up and say 'Ayoo, Ayoo', greeting the salmon, knowing that the salmon is coming to its home river to produce and die [Hartley Bay resident].

Another Hartley Bay elder had this to say about the integration and delicate balance of the ecological complex, and their reliance on that balance in terms of interdependence between components of the POET model and anticipatory utilization cycles:

I asked Enbridge at that time, I said, “When you do that, when you take our food away from us, what are you going to feed us? Are you going to find a way to cook that oil for us to eat? Because we can’t rely on the forest. It’s connected with the ocean. You take away the ocean and you’re taking away the forest. If you know the system that animals do, fish also bring protein to the forest. If we take away our food on the sea, you’re taking away the forest, too. What have we got left to eat [Hartley Bay elder]?”

Similarly, this short quote from an elected Lake Babine chief demonstrates integration with environmental factors felt by many First Nations (i.e., balanced ecological complex):

The defense of our territory comes from the belief that we are part of the land and resources, and the land and resources are a central part of us [Lake Babine chief].

A Wet’suwet’en chief echoed a similar sentiment:

...we were taught right on how to look after our lands, how to respect our laws, how to look after our youth and make sure that the promises we made to our grandchildren were never broken. We do not own the land. We’re only borrowing it from our grandchildren. It is of the utmost importance that we return the land to our grandchildren in better condition than when we walked on it. This proposed project endangers our promises to our grandchildren that we would look after our land, our culture, our people for them. We cannot break this promise to our grandchildren [Wet’suwet’en chief].

These passages articulate attitudes towards the balanced state and interrelated nature of each group’s ecological complex. Technology in the form of traditional knowledge is used for anticipatory utilization cycles of harvesting (i.e., relationships between organization and environment) throughout the year. What should also be clear is that the First Nations being

examined exhibit a certain level of reverence towards the environment and resources gained from the environment, which is also exhibited by the importance of place names and their implications for cultural identity. Resource acquisition is carried out in a respectful way for sustenance on a subsistence basis, not for profit in an economic sense. Further, threats to their environmental factors are seen as a threat to the essence of being a member of the First Nations, as demonstrated by the above quotes.

Threat of Loss of Resources

The COR model was coded as three themes, with each of Hobfoll's conditions for stress serving as a theme. The threat of loss and actual loss of resources were prominently used as discursive themes, with investment without gain being used marginally. While both groups of testimonies featured heavy use of the threat theme (83% from Hartley Bay, 94% from Burns Lake, 88% total), it was the Gitga'at of Hartley Bay who most clearly articulated what the threat of a spill would entail. As one elected Hartley Bay official said:

This project will have definite effects on me and my family, and spill or no spill is going to impact my ability to teach my culture and traditions to the next generations of Gitga'at and my family. Many of our teachings are passed on through learning how to harvest and process our traditional foods. What happens to these teachings if the resources are no longer there [Hartley Bay official]?

This passage offers further insight into the interrelatedness of the cultures of First Nations with their environment. This speaker describes their concern that the loss of resources would not only burden the First Nations with issues of sustenance, but would endanger perpetuation of their cultural identity. This sentiment was expressed in this manner amongst both the Hartley Bay and Burns Lake testimonies.

The Gitga'at also expressed concern regarding long-term impacts of a major oil spill. One Raven clan member said this about the potential longevity of such effects:

If this project goes through, and *when* there is an oil spill, the fish that I love to catch will be swimming and taking all those toxins into their system and, if they survive, creating many mutations that may last generations to these fish. When will it be safe for me to continue harvesting my traditional way [italics added] [Gitga'at Raven clan]?

Another Gitga'at speaker discussed the pervasive nature of potential ecological hazards:

If this Enbridge project goes through it will affect us on a daily and nightly basis. We will worry about food. I can see people going out to harvest and possibly over-harvesting with the worry that this might be the last time they get the chance to get that food [Gitga'at speaker].

This sentiment was shared by another Hartley Bay resident in more colorful terms, while also addressing the interrelatedness of culture and resources and drawing on historical encounters with Europeans:

I said, 'That's why Enbridge might as well name their boat *Smallpox* because if an oil spill hits — or when an oil spill hits — it will wipe out our community, our livelihood, our culture. It will wipe out everything like smallpox did when the Europeans came to our other communities' [Gitga'at Raven clan].

The Burns Lake testimonies, in addition to the issues outlined above, were concerned that the development of the pipeline alone was a significant threat to ecological balance, even without an oil spill. Two Burns Lake testimonies articulated as such:

But the oil pipeline going through our territory – traditional territory will do a lot of damage during construction and when it is finished if the pipeline breaks [Wet'suwet'en speaker].

And in regards to working conditions during development:

...it's cheaper to just spray the area with insecticide to keep the insects down, to keep the herbs – what we call weeds. Weeds is a kind of foreign word to Natives because all plants have their purpose, too, like as medicine, as food...insects and

micro-organisms are a part of our environment, as we know, and they serve an important function [Wet'suwet'en speaker].

An interesting dimension to these quotes is that they discount the safeguards that have been reassured to the First Nations about avoidance and clean-up of any potential spills. The operation of the pipeline alone is damaging to the environment and a threat to the traditional identity of the First Nations from their perspective. Large construction equipment required in building the pipeline and supertankers required to transport various products are all foreign to the terrain and ecological processes.

In addition to threats to objects resources, one Wet'suwet'en chief had this to say about energies resources in the form of place names being endangered:

The threat to our territories and to our waters. We'd have to change the name of our rivers, the name of our mountains, the name of our creeks, the name of our stories, the name of our names [Wet'suwet'en chief].

This is another example displaying the interrelatedness of First Nations' culture to environmental factors. As this passage implies, the ENGP would force many First Nations to completely reconceptualize the way they discuss, and thus think about and identify with (because place names serve as more than simple labels) their geographical surroundings.

A Gitga'at hereditary chief echoed a similar sentiment regarding threats to resources doubling as a threat to cultural identity and traditional knowledge:

I guess, really, the point I want to make here is that our culture is totally dependent on our food, you know, our gifts of the sea. And we have a booklet forthcoming where we have identified over 50 species that our community depends on. And you know, photos will be taken, a little write-up on each one. Actually, we have one or two students doing the research on it. But if we take that away, our culture goes with it. What will we have left? Nothing [Gitga'at hereditary chief].

Actual Loss of Resources

The actual loss of resources was a theme more prominently used in testimonies by the Gitga'at. Sixty-three percent of Gitga'at testimonies included the “actual loss” theme (compared to only 44% by Burns Lake testimonies); all of which were articulated by drawing on previous instances of shipwrecks in their traditional territory which have entered the collective memory of the Gitga'at: the *Queen of the North* and the *Brigadier General M.G. Zalinski*.

The *Queen of the North* was a commercial ferry carrying passengers and automobiles that ran aground on Gil Island near Hartley Bay in 2006; the Gitga'at were instrumental in rescuing 99 of the 101 passengers. The *Brigadier General M.G. Zalinski*, a military vessel carrying bombs and bunker oil, sank in 1946 near Pitt Island in the Greenville Channel. These wrecks are of continued significance for the Gitga'at because they have leaked fuel into territorial waters and are a continuous hazard for future leaks, as they have not been fully contained or cleaned. Past leaks have had extended impacts on anticipatory utilization cycles in areas affected, as sea life is deemed unfit to eat following exposure to these fuels and other chemicals, forcing the Gitga'at to harvest from other areas more extensively. Discussion of these shipwrecks was coded as a subtheme and linked to the broad theme of actual loss. Impacts of these wrecks are still felt by the Gitga'at, as one elected official said:

Still today at least we can only guess how much [oil from the *Queen of the North*] is coming out every day. Since this accident, I have not gone out to harvest any shellfish. Maybe it's because I heard Health Canada say, 'The levels of hydrocarbons found in the shellfish, to harm you you would have to consume it every day'. I hope someday I will be able to harvest like I did in November, before the Queen sank [Elected Gitga'at official].

A Gitga'at chief had this to say about lasting impacts from the *Queen of the North* wreck:

And we've experienced the devastation of an oil spill, like mentioned previously, when the *Queen of the North* went down there were many years — and some people are still afraid to harvest clams in our major clam bed. And it's never been answered.

I've asked many people, asked many scientists, 'Are the hydrocarbons that the clams have ingested, all the shellfish in this area have ingested, are they detrimental to the people if they eat them, is it cumulative, when will it be clean?' And I guess if — I'll feel much better if we know some answers, but we're still waiting for them [Gitga'at chief].

A Gitga'at Raven clan member spoke to the scale of the *Queen of the North* when compared to the potential of a major spill:

When the *Queen of the North* sank in 2006 by Gill Island, I had to stop harvesting for three years in that area, giving time for the shellfish to recover from that disaster. The *Queen of the North* could be considered a very small vessel compared to the ones that will be travelling through our territory. We will not be able to harvest shellfish for years, if ever again, if one of those supertankers should have an accident, because now, six years later, after the *Queen of the North* sank, her toxins are still filling our water [Gitga'at Raven clan].

These shipwrecks have prevented the Gitga'at from acquiring resources from certain areas of their territory. The Gitga'at, in addition to describing the resource loss brought on by the *Queen* and the *Zalinski*, described these events in terms of a small-scale example of the potential of a supertanker running aground, as the previous passage indicated.

The Burns Lake testimonies also included the broad actual loss theme, but with fewer specific examples. One resource manager and member of the Laksilyu Wet'suwet'en clan described impacts resulting from attempts at industrialization on traditional territory:

Many of our members spoke about Goosly and Equity Mines. That's one of the most studied mines and catastrophes in Canada because of contamination from

acid rock drainage and metal leaching. They have lived this. They have spoke of impacts from the flooding of Ootsa Lake.

The impacts and undue hardships on our life are not likely; they are real and they are significant. These impacts affect our lives today, not only environmental impacts, but cultural and social impacts to our governance system [Wet'suwet'en resource manager].

This passage echoes the sentiments expressed by many Gitga'at in terms of long term impacts from ecological disasters. The above passage is the most detailed description of the mines offered in all Burns Lake testimonies. It is possible that events related to the mine have not entered into the cultural memory of the Wet'suwet'en to the same extent that the *Queen of the North* has with the Gitga'at. There is simply not enough in the narrative data to address its lack of inclusion beyond speculation.

Social Capital Theory

Passages which described trade networks and community activities were coded as a broad social capital theme. The social capital theme was present in 54% of Gitga'at testimonies, and 61% of Burns Lake testimonies. One Gitga'at speaker described the importance of bridging capital as trading networks with neighboring clans:

Our families, whether they live here in Gitga'at territory or other communities throughout British Columbia, they heavily depend on the traditional foods that are gathered in all harvesting seasons as they still come back home to harvest. And also other Nations depend on the same food as they ask to harvest in our traditional territory or trade for different types of food, as this is one of the traditions that we still carry on with other communities. We still trade foods from our traditional area for foods in our neighbouring communities that we cannot get [Gitga'at speaker].

A Gitga'at chief shared a similar perspective:

I put this on the record so that you would know that when a spill comes, then not only will you be damaging the resources of the Gitga'at, but you will be hurting those other communities of a much larger nation, not to mention the neighbouring Nations that we have alliances with, the Haida, the Heiltsuk, the Haisla, Kitimats, and we have built those alliances throughout the years of a number of generations of our people that have lived in Hartley Bay. That Nation is a very powerful Nation and it represents a huge area [Gitga'at chief].

Another Gitga'at spoke to the importance of bonding capital as well as bridging capital:

Our territory is just as vast as all of our neighbours, and that in itself should show you the heart of Gitga'at people because since time immemorial we have been looking after that territory, making sure that it is sustained and it's always there to be able to provide for the people of this community and our neighbouring communities [Gitga'at speaker].

A Wet'suwet'en chief highlighted the importance of social capital and solidarity for transmitting culture:

We have knowledge that needs to be shared to ensure the health and well-being of our communities and the others that rely on us and our resources. There is a balance that needs to be achieved. There are thresholds our 'Yintah', our land, has that if breached, the land will not be able to support our culture, nor the health and well-being of our communities [Wet'suwet'en chief].

If events were to occur that dramatically alter resource availability for one clan there would be greater implications for existing trading networks beyond the scope of any single band or clan. As these passages articulate, the clans from different bioregions are tied together by these trading networks, and acquisition of certain resources is dependent on trading activities.

The Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en testimonies included discussion of potlatches/balhats, which were coded as a subtheme and linked to the broad theme of social capital. While proportionally the subtheme was not as prominent as some (28% of Burns Lake

testimonies), the history of contestation with the Canadian government regarding potlatches inspired heated discussion from those who did include the theme in their testimonies. A Wet'suwet'en chief described the continuing importance of potlatches for bridging and bonding capital:

They [the Canadian government] don't know how to manage their land, their people. And that's what we know how to do because of our protocols on the potlatch system. We look after each and every one of our members. They are not going to go suffering, go hungry. They're always going to be fed. They're always going to have good medicines. They're always going to have the best care because of the fact that we know how to look after them.

Our potlatch systems are strong. They tried to take that away from us too. They try to take our regalias [sic] and burn them and banned potlatches altogether. But our Wet'suwet'en Lake Babine Nation, Gitksan survived, managed to keep our potlatch system the way they run through the way we look after our people [Wet'suwet'en chief].

Potlatches serve to enhance bridging and bonding social capital while also offering chiefs opportunities to govern and ensure the resource security of various houses within the clans. The conflict the Wet'suwet'en chief referenced regarding potlatches occurred due to the Canadian government's perception of potlatches as an archaic tradition, and that their implications for tribal politics were subversive to Canadian authority. Potlatches were banned by the Canadian government in the late 1800s, but the law was sparsely upheld and ultimately reversed. Despite Gitga'at participation in potlatches, only the Burns Lake testimonies explicitly included potlatches in their discussion, likely due to more numerous run-ins with the Canadian government outlined above.

Sovereignty

Issues of sovereignty were discussed by both groups and were coded as an emergent theme. Fifty-five percent of Burns Lake testimonies discussed sovereignty (compared to 16% of Gitga'at testimonies), and while the proportion is low compared to some other major themes, the discussion of sovereignty was very rich when it was utilized in testimonies. Within the theoretical framework, sovereignty in this context may be conceptualized as the application of energies resources in the form of traditional knowledge. As one Wet'suwet'en elder described:

The Wet'suwet'en people want to know why Enbridge is being given the right to make decisions on our lands, which goes against our hereditary decision. This we see as an infringement on our system of governance. The decision has been made by our Chiefs, our people, our communities that there will be no oil pipeline on Wet'suwet'en territory. This has been made [Wet'suwet'en elder].

In a similar spirit, a Gitga'at speaker had this to say:

Use and occupancy, I've heard we have to prove that. Can you imagine asking a Gitga'at to prove use and occupancy of their land? We live there. It's proven ownership by us, acknowledged by our neighbouring tribes. Reserve lands do not begin to cover the total. Today, agreements and protocols with lodges, charter boats, even our whale watchers are set by Traditional Chiefs and the Band Council [Gitga'at speaker].

A Lake Babine chief also displayed frustration regarding First Nations' sovereignty being seemingly ignored:

And to talk a little about the federal and the provincial government, they have to respect our title and rights. Creatures and things of our environment are also involved in our title and rights, how we maintain them. Government has to live up to the honour of the Crown and deal in good faith. Prime Minister Harper says that it will be a Canadian process that decides whether this project goes through.

He should concentrate on respecting our title and rights before any project is slated for our territories [Lake Babine chief].

It is likely that the Burns Lake groups were more adamant in their discussion of issues of sovereignty due their history of political conflict with the Canadian government. The Wet'suwet'en have struggled with their rights of land use and prior occupancy, and took these issues to the Canadian government's legal system with the case of *Delgamuukw v The Queen* (recall the discussion from Chapter II). The Lake Babine have also had a history of issues regarding sovereignty and territorial rights with the Canadian government. These events have entered the cultural memory of each band, and it is possible that the ENGP represents the next affront to the sovereignty of the First Nations from their perspective, sparking the heated discussion found in many testimonies regarding the issue.

Distrust in Authority

Another prominent emergent theme expressed by First Nations members was distrust in authority; authority was coded in this context as references to the Canadian government and industrial officials (Enbridge or otherwise). Within the theoretical framework, distrust in authority may be conceptualized as a lack of bridging social capital and trust derived activities cultivating social capital between First Nations and the Canadian government. For the purposes of discussion, however, distrust in authority was coded as an emergent theme separately from social capital themes because passages were consistent enough in their discussion to warrant a distinct theme. Sixty percent of Burns Lake testimonies included the distrust in authority theme, likely due to their history of conflict with the government. A Lake Babine chief described their distrust in the government:

Our lands remain unceded. We have been — there has been no release or surrender of our lands. Currently, we're in Stage 4 of the B.C. Treaty process. We do have a treaty with the Federal Government called the 'Barricade Treaty of

1906' where, you know, we were stripped of our traditional fishing rights. As unfair as this treaty was to the Lake Babine Nation, Canada still reneged on their commitments. Our faith in treaties and agreements and the trusting in the government has sorely been tested. We are very careful entering into any new agreements with anybody [Lake Babine chief].

Another Lake Babine chief expressed skepticism regarding recreancy, or the failed fulfillment of duties trusted to be carried out by an actor (Freudenburg 1993), following a potential spill:

History has proven spills will happen and Enbridge cannot and will not guarantee to remediate all the potential impacts from that spill. Enbridge is not able to fully remediate any of the four spills that I have mentioned, nor is it clear that Enbridge is either prepared to, that the governments — that the governments will force it and accept full liability for all remedies, social, cultural, and economic costs in an event of a spill [Lake Babine chief].

Several Gitga'at also expressed distrust in authorities (30%). While the Burns Lake testimonies directed much of their distrust at the government and their less-than-amiable treaty history, the Gitga'at were skeptical of assurances of the safety of the supertankers being used. An Eagle clan fisherman said this about technology being proposed for use:

I have no faith in government in what they have promised to do. I have no faith in their statement that double-hull tankers are safe and, finally, that all modern technology in this world for safe passage of these ships. This is not safe with mankind at the helm [Gitga'at Eagle clan fisherman].

Another Gitga'at speaker expressed similar concerns:

We have lots of fear about this project, and it doesn't help when we hear about response systems for oil spills that are only able to recover, at best, 10 to 15 percent of what is spilled. We have seen the results of this directly with the sinking of the Queen of the North. It's suspected that they had over 200,000 litres of fuel on the boat, yet only a few litres were recovered; I think it was only 18, 18 litres.

How can we believe that oil can be cleaned up when we have seen in person how ineffective oil spill response is. How ineffective all of the responsible government organizations are as well. They were so quick to put us at fault when we have our own spills here, yet BC Ferries has not been charged for all of the — for leaking fuel into our territory for the past six years [Gitga’at speaker].

These passages summarize the two categories of distrust generally expressed by the First Nations. Though the proportion of testimonies from Hartley Bay which utilized this theme was low (29%), those that did express distrust did so in a very pointed way similar to this passage. The Burns Lake testimonies also reflected similar skepticism, but in a more overtly frustrated way:

We do not listen to the DIA [Department of Indian and Northern Affairs] or to other government. All they speak is lies [Lake Babine speaker].

Conclusion

This chapter has provided insight into thought processes underlying the coding process for this analysis. Table 1 (found on the next page) summarizes proportions of themes as they were used by each group. Generally, both groups used broad and sub themes in similar proportion. Notable differences to this trend are found in the prominence of sovereignty and distrust in authority themes in Lake Babine and Wet’suwet’en testimonies compared to Gitga’at testimonies. The table is provided to offer a descriptive summary of theme usage; however, this analysis’ primary focus is on qualitative similarities and differences amongst testimonies used by each group. The following chapter will draw on passages from testimonies presented here to examine the primary research questions of this thesis involving impacts of projects like the ENGP as perceived by First Nations and what differences, if any, exist between narratives from groups from different bioregions.

Table 1 Theme usage by each group (numbers displayed are percentages)

Theme	Gitga'at (<i>n</i> = 24)	Lake Babine/Wet'suwet'en (<i>n</i> = 18)
Traditional Culture	100	100
Bioregionalism	75	94
Threat of Loss of Resources	83	94
Actual Loss of Resources	63	44
Social Capital Theory	54	61
Sovereignty	17	56
Distrust in Authority	29	61

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The goal of this thesis was to shed light on and examine potential impacts that the ENGP would have on First Nations. For many, discussions regarding oil pipelines and supertankers conjure images of the *Exxon Valdez* and the more recent *BP Deepwater Horizon* oil spills, particularly when exploring potential dangers of such developments. The sociological study of these events have been revealing for long term ecological impacts and associated social impacts. It is no surprise that the discussion regarding the ENGP has turned to such issues; what would happen should something go wrong?

This thesis, drawing on previous research and thought from the sociological study of disaster, was designed to help examine that very question. What is interesting about the ENGP when framed in a disaster discussion is that nothing has actually happened yet in terms of development, operation, or disaster events. What has happened thus far is an intense discussion on the merits and dangers of the project, with the First Nations of Canada being some of the most vocal participants in the discussion. In that discussion lays the uniqueness of this thesis; the First Nations' discussion offers an opportunity to study perceived impacts of a disaster based solely on

the salient threat of an event through the words of those being impacted. This chapter will address the research questions posed in chapter one; first, what are the impacts of the ENGP as perceived by the ENGP, and do perceived impacts differ based on differing bioregions? Some considerations for this iteration of the study and future studies will also be discussed.

Perceived Impacts by First Nations

A major goal of this thesis was to determine perceived impacts of the ENGP using narratives from First Nations members as the primary guiding force. In the simplest of terms the First Nations perceive the ENGP to be a major threat to their ecological resources and acquisition of said resources. Testimonies from both groups examined were highly inclusive of themes regarding threats to resources, their position within their ecological complex, the importance of trade networks and bonding social capital, and valuation of traditional culture over Enbridge's enticement of economic prosperity. What should be clear at this point is that for the First Nations the implications for resource strain are much broader and far reaching than ensuring their refrigerators are well stocked (to put it in more familiar terms). Instead, resource strain also serves to threaten the practice and transmission of traditional culture at individual and community levels, the highly integrated nature of each band's position in their ecological complex, and the coordinated efforts of First Nations' social networks.

The ENGP will certainly introduce new ecological hazards with implications for First Nations throughout much of western Canada. Hazards affecting objects resources also have potential for monumental social impacts. Removal of any allotment of traditional territory would effectively remove not only the resources available in that bioregion, but also the traditional knowledge that relies on transmission through anticipatory utilization activities. Place names, for

example, serve as a descriptor as well as a label, indicating ideal harvesting times or warning of hazardous conditions (among other things). Traditional place names would lose their latent meaning if they are not used in the context of oral tradition (i.e., young harvesters asking elders when to harvest and where), which once lost cannot be recovered.

The First Nations also view the interaction of the ENGP and traditional culture as binary; according to many First Nations' citizens the two cannot coexist. This notion is very apparent when comparing many testimonies to Enbridge's counter-narrative, specifically that the ENGP will bring new avenues of economic prosperity (i.e., wage labor) and modernity to the First Nations. Instead, the First Nations analyzed for this thesis view the ENGP as a harbinger of the complete destruction of their cultural identity and way of life. In other words, the First Nations have little use for "economic prosperity" at the cost of their rich stores of social, cultural, and natural capital, and as research suggests there is little in terms of compensation that could make up for the loss of a resource so highly regarded as traditional culture (Gill & Ritchie 2011).

Differences between Groups from Different Bioregions

The proposed path of the ENGP crosses a huge breadth of traditional territory for many bands of First Nations, which inspired the investigation of potential differences in perceived impacts across different bioregions. It became apparent that narratives were framed in strikingly similar ways amongst groups from different bioregions, and that what qualitative differences were apparent were likely due to differences in the nature of hazards affecting both groups' bioregions and cultural memories between groups being analyzed.

It was anticipated that different hazards from different aspects of the ENGP (i.e., supertankers on the coast and pipeline development and operation inland) would entice different discursive themes amongst those who gave testimonies. Proportionally there were few differences in theme usage amongst testimonies from both groups; however there were clear

qualitative differences in terms of intensity and emphasis of certain themes. The Gitga'at were more emphatic in incorporating how the ENGP would threaten their resources and cultural activities derived from those resources. The linkage between resources and culture has already been established; what separated the Gitga'at discussions regarding threat from the Burns Lake discussions was the encompassing nature of a major oil spill and their perceived inability to survive (culturally and literally) in their traditional territory should an *Exxon Valdez* level event occur. The Gitga'at also drew heavily on recent shipwreck related events (i.e., the *Queen of the North*) that were relatively small in scale compared to potentialities brought on by the ENGP, especially in the frame of an example of what could happen with larger vessels involved. It seems that the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en bands simply did not have similar previous experiences from which to draw on in terms of lost resource loss and threat.

Conversely, testimonies given at Burns Lake were much more emphatic on issues concerning sovereignty and relations with authority figures (e.g., the Canadian government, Enbridge). Both the Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en have had several experiences involving territory and land use rights, relocation, and legal clashes concerning sovereignty and value of traditional law. It seems that the ENGP serves as the latest example of governmental infraction on the sovereign rights of First Nations in the minds of Lake Babine and Wet'suwet'en citizens.

Limitations and Considerations for Future Studies

This thesis suffers from two notable limitations stemming from the nature of the data used; weak generalizability and limited scope of analysis. The sample size for this thesis was relatively small ($N = 42$), thus caution should be used before making generalizations to First Nations beyond those analyzed. Further, there is potential for bias in those selected to give testimony compared to those who were not given the opportunity, however given the level of thematic saturation amongst testimonies from each group extrapolations can confidently be made

within First Nations analyzed. Analysis was also limited by the use of secondary data opposed to primary data, where more direct probing for themes based on theoretical framework would have been possible.

Future studies (or if this study were repeated in different circumstances) would benefit from including additional sources of data. For example, supplementing narrative analysis of testimonies with a survey, qualitative interviews, or systematic analysis of mainstream media discourse would both expand on the topics available for exploration (i.e., asking questions directly) and bolster sampling beyond the scope of available testimonies. It would be interesting to further explore emergent themes and differences between groups beyond the scope of discursive themes within testimonies, and to incorporate individuals and clans that did not give testimonies.

Conclusion

This analysis serves as another investigation into the social impacts of disasters (though a disaster has not occurred) using theoretical perspectives, particularly bioregionalism, that by all estimations have not yet been used in a way similar to this iteration or in the context of indigenous populations. It is possible that this thesis could serve as the first in a series of studies exploring sociocultural impacts of disasters from a bioregional perspective. Further, this thesis contributes to the understanding of technological ecological disasters by examining impacts solely on the basis of threat without an actual disaster event.

In conclusion, consider a possible chain of events should the ENGP be approved. Industrial equipment would be ushered in to quickly clear a path and construct the pipeline. Equipment of this nature, which has had little or no presence on most of the First Nations' traditional territory, would begin systematically deconstructing whole sections of untouched biological environment. Insecticides, localized deforestation, and waste from development would

likely disrupt natural rhythms, and thus anticipatory utilization processes, in areas surrounding the pipeline's development. Inland clans from several bands would experience strain within their ecological complex as forests and waterways (i.e., lakes and rivers) would become unavailable for harvesting, with some areas still accessible yielding less resources due disruption in other areas (as ecological complexes are interrelated). Restricted access to traditional territory and traditional resources would likely lead many inland First Nations to turn back to cash based economic activities, despite their less-than-successful experiences with that lifestyle.

Operation and transportation activities would commence shortly after completion of the pipeline. The Gitga'at of Hartley Bay would be greeted by the daily passage of supertankers through their traditional waters. Vessels on the scale of supertankers have rarely, if ever, had presence in the Douglas Channel; presence of ships that size would erode shorelines and likely disrupt natural wildlife patterns. From the perspective of the Gitga'at it would only be a matter of time before a worst case scenario became reality: an oil spill comparable in scale to the *Exxon Valdez*. If such an event were to occur it could signal the end of Hartley Bay as a traditional village central to Gitga'at culture. Traditional knowledge and activities would quickly thereafter cease to exist as more and more Gitga'at disperse to seek other ways of acquiring sustenance (likely through participation in commercial industries; the antithesis of their traditional way of life), limiting opportunities for traditional knowledge to be passed from one generation to another.

The above scenario was constructed solely from sentiments expressed by First Nations. By their estimation a future involving the ENGP would be catastrophic for their traditional culture and lifestyle as they exist today. One question posed at the beginning of this thesis considered whether a culture, and the people tied to it, can be valued as more worthy than another. This thesis was never intended to answer such lofty ethical considerations, however evidence presented here injects a certain element of humanity absent from decisions regarding the

ENGP when considered solely from a perspective of potential economic gain. Surely there exists in each culture some inherent worth that exceeds potentialities of financial capital prosperity.

When considering the stakes brought on by the ENGP, that is, potential extinction of indigenous cultures for new avenues of economic prosperity, another question comes to bear: is it worth it?

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