The Post-Politicization of Participation in Neoliberal Conservation:
Cases from Canada and Thailand

Megan Youdelis

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ABSTRACT

The rescaling of conservation globally is engendering an increase in private sector stake-holders in conservation practice. Recent moves to allow private interests to develop and manage services within national parks have sparked significant countermovements in several states, including Canada and Thailand. Political ecologists have widely elucidated the socio-economic implications of the neoliberalsiation of conservation, but have been rather quiet on the political implications in terms of public and Indigenous participation in conservation governance. This research explores the relationship between political economy and the politics of conservation governance through two case studies of public protest against private tourism development within protected areas: Jasper National Park, Canada and Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Thailand. I analyze the nature and scope of both countermovements, looking at how and why situated actors articulate different visions of conservation and the role of national parks, what strategies proponents and opponents employ to enrol allies, and how and why certain knowledge claims about conservation gain currency over others. I argue that neoliberalisation, and austerity politics more specifically, create the structural conditions for the post-politicization of conservation governance, reducing democratic oversight of public provisioning. In such conditions, park authorities employ a series of strategies to remove debate from the public sphere, orchestrate the appearance of consensus and ultimately to legitimize unpopular tourism development decisions.

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Introduction

"It's almost like you're in a bizarre marketplace haggling with some vendor. You start out here, and they start out there, and you sort of come together."

I'm sitting with Sean Nichols of the Alberta Wildlife Association, listening to his impassioned frustration in dealing with Parks Canada consultation processes on a recurring basis. Nichols, like countless other conservation organization workers and engaged citizens, feels compelled to watch Parks Canada's actions. Critics feel the Agency is growing friendlier and friendlier with private tourism interests and that, perhaps consequently, decision-making on development projects is becoming ever more opaque. The recent decision to allow Brewster Travel to develop their Glacier Skywalk attraction in Jasper National Park despite an unprecedentedly tremendous and overwhelmingly negative response from the Canadian public left many feeling jaded with the public consultation process and suspicious of Parks Canada's intended future directions. To add insult to injury, since that approval in 2013, countless other controversial development projects have been proposed across the Canadian park system, including but not limited to: Maligne Tours' hotel proposal in Jasper, the Mother Canada statue in Cape Breton National Park, and the Lake Louise development guideline changes in Banff National Park. Public outcry against these projects has been significant. Former Parks Canada bosses and head scientists have been uniting and sending well-informed open letters to the Minister of the Environment and Parks Canada denouncing the developments as threatening to ecological integrity (Derworiz, 2015; Weber, 2014). A grassroots coalition in Jasper and Banff has also been gaining momentum

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with a campaign titled "Fight For Your Parks," asking citizens across Canada to demand political action in protecting parks from commercial interests.

One of the prime concerns for opponents is the troubling political economic trend they are seeing at the national level. Successive rounds of budget cuts have elevated the importance of revenues and land rents from private companies in the mountain parks (Interview with former Superintendent of Jasper National Park, 2015), to the point that opponents of development projects feel that even if Parks Canada wanted to maintain hard limits on growth, their 'hands are tied'. Because it appears that Parks Canada needs private partnerships now more than ever, and because it's no secret that the private sector's perpetual *modus operandi* is to increase profits, many local Albertans and park visitors fear that an increasing reliance on private revenues is in-appropriate and entirely antithetical to conservation.

Despite the sense of helplessness against what they see as a much broader political project, local organizations and citizens in areas around Edmonton, Calgary, Banff and Jasper are committed to 'protecting the parks from the politicians', as they say. Even though losses like the Skywalk and the Lake Louise guideline changes leave opponents feeling like their efforts are fu-tile, those losses also convince them that they are needed now more than ever to be the watch-dogs for the Agency and the Government of Canada more generally. "It's easy to say, 'Oh, we fought against it, and it happened anyway,'" Nichols explained. "The more valuable thing, I think, is to say, 'Yeah, but what would have happened if we hadn't?' What would have happened with the development if there had been no one to say anything?"

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Interestingly, although perhaps not surprisingly, debates around the appropriateness of private interests in protected areas and profit-seeking versus conservation are not limited to Canada, but have been animated worldwide, particularly since the 1980s or so when global conservation practice began rescaling to include local peoples and (often transnational) non-state market-based actors (Brockington et al., 2008; MacDonald, 2010). On the other side of the world, I am sitting in the garden (complete with roaming deer and peacocks) of the palatial Bangkok estate of the former Director General of Thailand's Royal Forestry Department, and the very first Director General of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Plodprasop Suraswadi. He is currently the Acting Deputy of Thailand's Pheu Thai party which was recently ousted by the military junta in the 2014 coup. Suraswadi has been wanting to remove the restrictions on private development in Thai parks for some time now. "You say you love Banff and Jasper…," he said. "Tell me whether you allow the private sector to build hotels, shops, you know, golf courses in the national parks? Yes? I told you already, I went to school in Canada, I learned from you. I went to school in the USA, I learned from them," he said confidently. Thailand needs to let the private sector get more involved in parks, "otherwise Thailand will be left in the Stone Age, as is happening now," he said.

But like Nichols and his fellow Albertans, many Thai citizens vehemently disagree with Suraswadi's philosophy. The private sector is far more regulated inside protected areas in Thailand than in Canada. There have been many cases where the Thai government has actually leveled private resorts that encroached even slightly into protected land, especially since the military government took over in 2014 and has since been looking for opportunities to prove their competency as leaders (Bangkok Post, 2015). But private interests are still 'invading' in national parks

in more inconspicuous ways, through recently formed quasi-private state agencies that can be granted permission to develop in protected areas where purely private bodies can not. Suraswadi is the Director of the Pingkanakorn Development Agency, the quasi-private state agency that is now proposing to build a giant cable car through Doi Suthep-Pui National Park in Chiang Mai. Opponents have been protesting the cable car idea since it was first proposed in the 1980s, and they continue to protest today based on concerns for ecological integrity, religious sanctity (there is a sacred Buddhist temple within Doi Suthep-Pui National Park), and concerns around the appropriateness of a for-profit business operating within ostensibly public lands. Many are also taking a stand against the paucity of the public consultation process and the lack of transparency around how opportunities and benefits will be shared.

Even though Canada's public processes are purportedly more democratic and transparent, opponents of the cable car in Thailand have had more success in forestalling the project than have opponents of mandate creep and development in Jasper. Members of conservation organizations in Chiang Mai feel that they have considerable power and influence in decision-making outside of official consultation channels. They understand that if they can create a social movement around an issue, the government will surely listen, even if that may be only to promote the appearance of benevolence or to avoid corruption charges. This is not to say that Thai citizens are confident in the public process. Critics feel that decision-making is opaque and that public consultation processes are purely pro forma if not set up by the proponents as PR exercises. But despite this, or perhaps because of it, opponents are again resilient and committed to holding park authorities and politicians to account.

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Despite the tendency of some of the critical literature to treat neoliberalisation as an unstoppable juggernaut (see Gibson-Graham, 2006; Lansing et al., 2015), there has been considerable public and Indigenous pushback against various top-down projects worldwide (Arsel and Buscher, 2012; Cavanagh and Benjaminsen, 2014; Igoe and Brockington, 2007). Networks of actants have been resisting the increasing inclusion of and power wielded by private sector interests in protected areas, questioning to what extent national parks are public versus private spaces (Friesen, 2015; Matichon, 2014). While neoliberalisation and decentralization are often touted as mechanisms to increase levels of local participation, critics have noted that neither are inherently democratizing (Brown, 2003; Vandergeest and Chusak, 2002). Some have actually argued the opposite - that neoliberalisation tends towards authoritarianism, oligarchy and/or overt attacks on democracy and civil liberties (Chomsky, 1999; Harvey, 2005). This is because a heavy hand is needed to make the populace swallow the hard pill of painful but "necessary" austerity-induced reforms (Zizek, 2008), among other reasons. Indeed, many fear that austerity politics will erode institutions of political democracy as "the freedom of the masses [is].. restricted in favour of the freedoms of the few" (Harvey, 2005: 70) and one's political purchase is bound to one's ability to generate capital (Brown, 2003; Ong, 2006).

As policies favouring deregulation, privatization, and cuts to public spending are becoming normalized around the globe, it's critical that we query to what extent there is space for political resistance and democratic participation in public provisioning such as conservation. The literature on neoliberal conservation has critiqued the ways in which integrated conservation and development interventions have narrowed the space for local forest-dwelling communities to participate in dictating the terms of their own development (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Gardiner,

2012; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2015) and have served to replicate previous forms of fortress con-

servation (Dressler and Roth, 2011). It has been rather silent, however, on the ways in which ne-

oliberalisation rearticulates the politics of conservation and the terms of democratic participation

through consultation, particularly in the Global North. Does neoliberalisation erode participatory

democracy in conservation zones, and if so, in what ways? Understanding the links between po-

litical economies of conservation, consultation and participation mechanisms, and depoliticiza-

tion is pertinent to understanding the outcomes of contemporary struggles and countermove-

ments against the privatization of park services.

Of course, 'participation' in conservation governance can mean anything from participat-

ing in park-led programs to actual partnership and power sharing between local people and con-

servation authorities. The most influential typology of participation is Arnstein's (1969) Ladder

of Citizen Participation, with eight rungs ranking participation systems from those that are top-

down and uni-directional to those where citizens have full control (see Figure 1.0). The first five

rungs represent varying degrees of 'non-participation' and 'tokenism', where power is held firm-

ly by government actors. Under 'tokenism', citizens or local people can either be (3) merely in-

formed about government-made plans, (4) informed and able to provide feedback, while the

government holds final decision-making power and is not obligated to comply with public sen-

timent, or (5) placated with an advisory role while the government again holds the power to de-

cide. When these are "proffered by powerholers as the total extent of participation, citizens may

indeed hear and be heard... [but] they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by

the powerful... There is no follow through, no "muscle," hence no assurance of changing the sta-

tus quo" (Arnstein, 1969: 217).
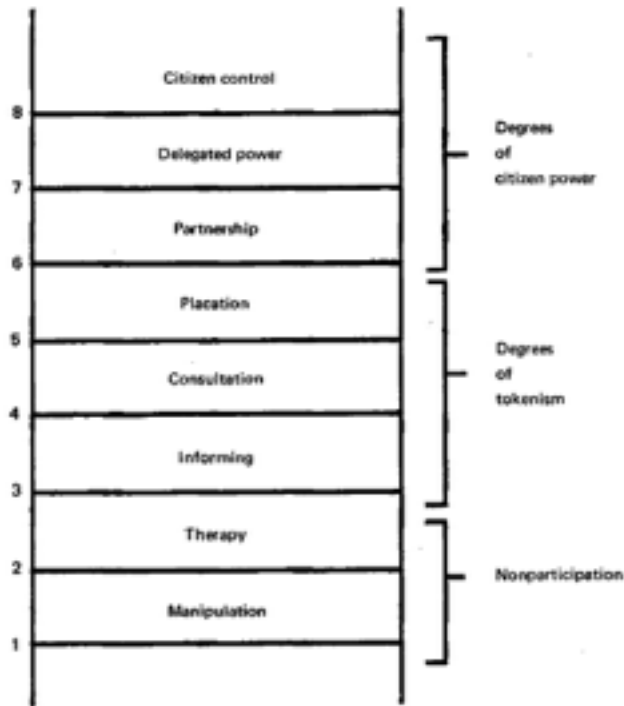
Figure 1.0 - Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

This typology, which is now dated, has been critiqued as being overly simplistic and for

the blanket assumption that moving up the ladder towards increasing citizen control is unques-

tionably desirable in all circumstances (Ross et al., 2002; Wondolleck et al., 1996). It is also dis-

connected from how political economy may influence how participation is structured, and cer-

tainly this configuration may not be applicable globally. At the very least, it does offer some in-

sight into the ways in which the status quo might be in fact reproduced and secured through con-

sultation mechanisms, particularly those that do not devolve any decision-making authority to

local or Indigenous actors and/or where there is a lack of transparency around how public feed-

back will be treated in decision-making. It is not my aim to characterize consultation or partici-

pation using such a typology here, but rather to explore local and Indigenous satisfaction with

consultation processes and how they perceive their role in decision-making in relation to private

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proponents within the context of neoliberalisation. Further, the cases I investigate shed light on the ways in which different political economies of conservation contribute to social movement success or failure, and the extent to which citizens and Indigenous peoples are able to create space for the practice of politics (Swyngedouw, 2010, 2011). The contribution of this dissertation, then, will be in elucidating the intersections between political economy, social activism and the democratic process in conservation practice. I'll be exploring these intersections through a comparison of two grounded case studies, one in the Global North (Jasper National Park, Canada) and one in the Global South (Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Thailand), which I will detail more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

These two cases, among others, evidence that conservation practice is a site of struggle; the outcome of continual debates and (re)negotiations about the role of national parks, the nature of 'nature,' and broader political economic imperatives. These debates are tied to a confluence of other truth claims about where humans fit within the non-human world; about national identity; about progress and development; and about the roles that governments and private companies should play in managing social services and public goods. Competing knowledge claims are advanced by networks of a multitude of actants, as both proponents and opponents of neoliberalisation or private development projects attempt to scale up the visibility of certain lines of thought, enrol allies and ultimately make their version of the truth stabilize and become accepted in broader arenas (Jasanoff, 2004; Matthews, 2011). The claims that do stabilize and have authority find practical application in conservation policy and practice (Forsyth and Walker, 2014).

Because conservation policy and practice are the contingent products of the iterative interactions of a multitude of human and non-human actants, there is ample potential to find and

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exploit the cracks and fissures and advance particular interests. Proponents of development projects may exploit legal loopholes, for one example among many, and likewise opponents may be able to exploit media attention to build public pressure on decision-makers. In other words, the collective performativity (Butler, 1990) of conservation practice leaves it perpetually open to change and reinterpretation. The results of any given struggle are arrived at through the relational agency of all actants (human and non-human) involved, rarely if ever the intended outcome of a single or small group of human actors (Jasanoff, 2004; Goldman et al., 2011; Whatmore, 2002). Although there is push and pull and negotiation around what is appropriate practice in conservation zones, the production of conservation authority is far from apolitical (Matthews, 2011). Political economic pressures and conflicts feature prominently in contestations around private interests in protected areas.

The increase of private sector involvement in and funding of conservation practice globally is often understood as part of the neoliberalisation of conservation, broadly involving some combination of the marketization, commodification, privatization, deregulation and financialization of environmental goods and services and the rescaling of conservation practice to include non-state and market-based actors (Buscher et al., 2014; Castree, 2010; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2015; Roth and Dressler, 2012). The neoliberalisation of conservation has been studied exceedingly in the last decade or so as scholars the world over recognize the potentially concerning social, environmental, economic and political implications of "the market knows best" philosophy. While the social and environmental implications have been roundly studied (Buscher et al., 2012; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2015), less attention has been paid to the political implications in terms of democratic environmental governance.

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In terms of governance, an emerging body of literature suggests that neoliberalisation may tend toward the use of anti-political or post-political strategies which evacuate political debate and antagonism from the public sphere and produce the appearance of consensual decision-making through techno-managerial planning (Fletcher, 2014; Rancière, 1998; Swyngedouw, 2010, 2011; Zizek, 1999). While the concepts of anti- and post-politics treat depoliticization in slightly different ways and come out of different traditions —development studies and political philosophy, respectively— both explore strategies of depoliticization that contain challenges to the status quo. Given that there is a broad trend in global conservation practice towards neoliberalisation and the rescaling of practice to include non-state and (increasingly) private market-based interests, it is critical that we question how political economies of conservation relate to the exact strategies of depoliticization that proponents deploy and the factors that lead to their relative success or failure. If neoliberalisation does indeed represent a trend towards a concentration of political power and an erosion of participatory democracy (Brown, 2003; Harvey, 2005), what are the mechanisms through which this is achieved and how do these play out on the ground in varying geographical and socio-political settings?

Since there are so many moving parts in neoliberal political economic philosophy, a multitude of disparate interventions can and have been critiqued as 'neoliberal', which can take away from the potency of critique and generate confusion around how and why certain conservation practices are neoliberalised and what is at stake. Here I will be talking specifically about austerity politics and moves to allow private development of tourism infrastructure or privatization of tourism services in parks. I argue that political economy factors prominently into the degree to which opponents of development are able to exert power in decision-making through official

channels. Economic incentives prompt the use of antipolitical or post-political strategies to nullify resistance, orchestrate the appearance of consensus (Fletcher, 2014) and uphold the legitimacy of conservation authorities in the face of broad public and Indigenous discontent. In what follows, I tease out how the networks of actors/actants, tools, strategies, processes, places and politics interact to produce the divergent outcomes we see in two very similar struggles against private interests in protected areas in two very different geographical and socio-political settings.

Conceptual Framework

I situate my research within the field of political ecology. My central framework of inquiry surrounds depoliticization, drawing from development studies (antipolitics) and political philosophy (post-politics) in particular. Under the umbrella of political ecology, I also draw elements from science and technology studies (the production, circulation and application of knowledge) and political economy (neoliberalisation). Very broadly, political ecology "combines the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. Together this encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself"(Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987: 17). Key concepts in political ecology include: the production of marginality through political, economic and social processes (Li, 1999; Peluso, 1992; Scott, 2009); the relationship between marginality and resource conflicts (often interrogating the political and economic barriers to access to resources) (Fairhead and Leach, 1996; Peluso, 1992; Roth, 2004; Vandergeest, 1996); the politics of representations of nature (Braun, 2002; Fairhead and Leach, 1996; Haraway, 1992) and attention to the agency of nonhumans (Castree and MacMillan, 2001; Haraway, 1992; Latour, 1993; Whatmore, 2002);

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critical analyses of meta-narratives of environmental degradation (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Fairhead and Leach, 1996; Forsyth and Walker, 2008); and deconstructing conservation and development discourse and practice and the related technologies of governing/technologies of the self (Li, 2007; Tsing, 1999; Sundberg, 2004). The underlying consensus in the field is that the ways in which nature or environmental problems are understood and represented are inescapably political; they are at once socially constructed and have material implications for local peoples whose lives will be altered by policies based on those particular understandings of nature and society (Forsyth, 2003a; Fairhead and Leach, 1996). Understanding nature as both socially constructed and materially independent of our knowledge of it is termed 'critical realism', the philosophical foundation for political ecological inquiry. Critical realism "acknowledges the ontological independence of the biophysical world while at the same time recognizing that our understanding of the natural world is partial, situational, and contingent" (Neumann, 2005: 10).

As knowledge of 'nature' is partial and contingent, political ecologists emphasize the idea that science itself is a discourse (Forsyth, 2003a; Haraway, 1992; Jasnoff, 2004), not the objective representation of a true 'nature', and as such it can be wielded as a tool of power to legitimate coercive or unequal conservation regimes (Forsyth, 2003; Forsyth and Walker, 2008). Feminist and poststructuralist work in political ecology challenges the assumptions of objectivity and neutrality that underlie scientific practice, arguing instead that all observation is situated, embodied and partial (Haraway, 1992; Rocheleau, 2008). The scientific and/or technocratic 'rule of experts' (Mitchell, 2002) has been criticized as being exclusionary and for legitimating the centralization of decision-making authority, particularly in relation to marginalized and Indigenous groups (Ellis, 2005; Spak, 2005). It is important to take seriously the limitations and biases laden

in scientific claims about nature because contestations around environmental governance often centre around tools like environmental assessments produced by hired scientific 'experts,' which can stage consensus through official documentation (Fletcher, 2014). For proponents these may be tools used for political legitimation, and for opponents these may offer opportunities to critique the policy in question, although often based only on scientific merit. Opponents may also enrol science to make claims or counter-claims about the potential impacts of any given policy decision. If accessible, science can be enrolled in the service of social or environmental justice (Peet and Watts, 2002), where a multitude of factors coalesce to determine which claims will stabilize over others, or who will be authorized to speak as 'expert'. There is therefore much ongoing boundary work (Jasanoff, 2004) to determine what is 'good' versus 'bad' science in many struggles around conservation policy, including those in Jasper and Doi Suthep-Pui.

For this reason I draw from science and technology studies (STS) to add to the political ecology framework. STS looks explicitly at the kind of boundary work that is necessary to police and stabilize certain knowledge claims, acknowledging that there are debates within science itself, it is not monolithic (Goldman et al., 2011). STS also posits that analysis of how and why certain 'states of knowledge' are arrived at and either held in place or abandoned is necessary to understand how science and society are coproduced (Forsyth, 2003a; Goldman et al., 2011; Jasanoff, 2004). Certain claims gain currency as they resonate with broader discourses through the relational agency of networks of human and non-human actants, and not all outcomes are explicable solely by human intention or interests (Mitchell, 2002; Whatmore, 2002). As Latour (1996) explains, an actant is "something that acts or to which activity is granted by others. It implies no special motivation of human individual actors, nor of humans in general. An actant can

literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of an action" (Latour, 1996: 375, underine in original). A caribou may have no conscious intention of altering conservation practice, for example, but through their daily struggle to subsist in the park they may inspire Species at Risk legislation and/or may be enrolled into environmentalist movements. The daily, iterative actions, however mundane, of all actants involved make up the 'performativity' (Butler, 1990) of conservation practice - or, in other words, these daily actions and interactions bring conservation practice into being, where conservation is a process that is always becoming.

Further, a solely political economic focus on material interests and structures of power ignores the "broader politics that shapes the production and circulation of the competing knowledge claims that are enrolled by actors and help shape the outcome of struggles" (Goldman et al, 2011: 4). In contestations around private interests in protected areas, proponents and opponents strive to produce, circulate, and ultimately apply particular environmental knowledges in conservation practice. The relative abilities of different actors to enrol allies into certain ways of knowing, representing and valuing non-human nature will affect the ways in which parks are managed, by whom and for whom.

Political economy is the other major determinant of how conservation and development projects will be managed, by whom and for whom. Neoliberal political economy and ideology are important concepts in this study as they relate to the anti- and post-politics of environmental governance. Neoliberalism is notoriously packed term, and in practice is always an incomplete and contested process, never a static thing. In the literature, neoliberalism is understood in several distinct but related ways: 1) as a political-economic theory that reorganizes capitalism with a focus on controlling inflation, offering an alternative to the Keynesian fiscal policies that preced-

ed it which focused on providing full employment (Harvey, 2005, 2006; McCarthy, 2012), 2) as a political project concerned with the restoration of elite class power (Harvey, 2005), 3) as an 'art of government' in the Foucaultian sense, a technology of governing that produces a new kind of neoliberal political subject (Fletcher, 2013; Foucault, 2008; Ong, 2006), and 4) as an ideology, one that is not independent of class struggle but provides intellectual and moral justifications for particular interventions and political-economic restructuring (McCarthy, 2012).

As a political-economic theory, neoliberalism proposes that the 'self-regulating' market is the best means to deliver all necessary goods and services to society (Castree, 2008). Individual (or corporate) entrepreneurial freedom is considered the best means to advance human well-being. The state is not to interfere directly in market transactions, but must play a strong role in securing private property rights and in creating an institutional framework that supports the efficient operation of free markets and free trade. Neoliberal enthusiasts seek to dismantle the welfare state, cutting state spending in the public sphere and allowing private enterprises or NGOs to step in to fill the void left by state rollback in service provision (Harvey, 2005; Castree, 2010) — a trend witnessed in this dissertation.

While most scholars believe these logics are common to 'ideal type' neoliberal projects (Castree, 2008; Bakker, 2010), they also recognize that in practice, neoliberalisation is a path-based and contingent process that is never found in this 'ideal' type. "A focus on process (neoliberalisation rather than neoliberalism), plurality (neoliberalisations rather than neoliberalisation), unevenness (the geographical, temporal, and sectoral variability of neoliberalisations) and incompleteness (the always in-process nature of utopian projects) has been central to this evolving way of thinking about and doing research on neoliberalism" (McCarthy, 2012: 184). As I will

explain in Chapter 2, the variegated, uneven and incomplete nature of neoliberalisation was one of my motivations to take a comparative case study approach to this research.

In Canada, particularly under the Conservative Harper government between 2006 and 2015 when the bulk of the development controversies were unfolding, neoliberalisation of environmental governance proceeded at the state level in several ways. The federal government cut the budgets of various departments and agencies (like Parks Canada), removed environmental protections (Bill C-45) and streamlined the environmental assessment process to facilitate development and resource extraction projects (Peyton and Franks, 2015), and signed Canada onto transnational trade deals like the Trans Pacific Partnership that would deregulate trade barriers and allow foreign multinationals to sue our state government in a tribunal outside of our judicial system if we enacted environmental protections that interfered with global trade. In Thailand, the push and pull between neoliberalisation and more developmental political economic formations has been rather complex and contradictory (Glassman et al., 2008; Hill et al, 2011; LaRocco, 2011). I will expand on the history of politics and economics in Thailand in Chapter 4, but in terms of environmental policy, the neoliberalisation of conservation has advanced primarily in terms of rescaling conservation practice to increase entrepreneurial participation from local communities (such as through community-based ecotourism projects) (Dressler and Roth, 2011; Youdelis, 2013) and through the creation of various quasi-private state agencies that may be granted licenses to develop in protected areas in co-operation with private companies. Politically, it is more difficult to make claims on a private company than on government; governments hold responsibility to citizens while corporations hold responsibility to their shareholders, so public versus private management affects the possibilities for political action (Ong, 2006).

Neoliberalisation is also increasingly understood as more than just an economic project but as an entire way of thinking and being (Foucault, 2008). While I will not be dealing directly with the governmentalizing technologies associated with neoliberalisation in this dissertation, Peyton and Franks (2015) argue that the Harper government in particular pursued a 'totalizing strategy' to produce new citizen-subjects who understand non-human nature as mere fodder for economic development, and who accept or are even complicit in its commodification. In Thailand, discourses around nature conservation and neoliberalism are more contested. Particularly in the northern region, there is a history of Keynesian-style populism and an environmental movement that is concertedly anti-capitalist (Glassman et al., 2008; Hirsch, 1997). I point to these distinctions as competing knowledge claims gain currency through resonating with the broader discourses around neoliberalisation and conservation in any given struggle.

The relationship between neoliberalisation and the depoliticization of citizen and Indigenous participation in conservation governance is the central thread tying the two contestations featured in this dissertation together. I draw on two prominent and related frameworks for analyzing depoliticization/the practice of politics: anti-politics, which grew out of development studies, and post-politics, which grew out of political philosophy. Although each concept comes out of a different academic tradition, I would characterize post-politics as a subset of anti-politics, where anti-politics obscures and depoliticizes the role of political economy in perpetuating the status quo while post-politics more explicitly involves the orchestration of consensus around neoliberal political and economic ideology, containing dissent and foreclosing alternatives.

More specifically, the notion of antipolitics was born from Ferguson's (1994) critique of development discourse and practice. Using an anthropological approach, Ferguson took the de-

velopment apparatus itself as the subject of inquiry, not the people who were subject to the development interventions. He argued that development interventions obscure the political and economic reasons that poverty exists and thus continually fail to improve a given population's standing because interventions ironically reproduce existing relations of inequality. Development interventions are designed to operate within existing political economic structures, not to question or alter those structures themselves, and thus developers must portray interventions as technical as opposed to political solutions (Ferguson, 1994; Li, 2007). In a Foucaultian sense, developers construct different populations as particular kinds of "object[s] of knowledge, and create a structure of knowledge around [those objects]" (Ferguson, 1994: xiv), which then informs the interventions they enact. Although the interventions 'fail' on their own terms (due to the obfuscation of the political economic determinants of the problem), development interventions are not abandoned because they serve other important political functions, such as extending state bureaucratic power into the distressed communities (Ferguson, 1994). Ferguson writes, "[the development apparatus] is an "antipolitics machine," depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power" (1994: xv). Antipolitics in the context of development, then, means that political debate around inequality in access to resources is foreclosed and the political economic structures that contribute to the need for 'development' are left unquestioned. Meanwhile, the political motivations of state actors to pursue particular interventions and not others are obscured.

Büscher (2010) re-operationalizes the concept of antipolitics in his critique of neoliberal conservation discourse and practice, arguing that antipolitics is an essential political strategy

within neoliberal conservation interventions and within a neoliberal political economy more generally (Büscher, 2010). He argues, as does Ong (2006), that antipolitical strategies fit especially well within a neoliberal political economy as commoditization or trading of interests are used to replace debate over the unequal distribution of power and benefits. Antipolitics goes beyond mere technocratization and involves positioning interventions outside the realm of politics in order to do away with social contemplative processes and "pre-determine decisions and/or social and public outcomes" (Büscher, 2010: 24). Antipolitics thus involves designing measures to contain challenges to the status quo (Li, 2007), and is understood to be anti-democratic (Büscher, 2010; Ong, 2006). Ong (2006) elaborates that neoliberalisation produces new political subjects where those with more available capital and/or more potential to contribute to development agendas hold greater political influence than those without. Antipolitics in the context of the neoliberalisation of conservation, then, means that political debate around how the park should be managed, for whom and by whom, is removed from the public sphere and policy decisions become technical exercises that attempt to maximize both conservation goals and economic development. Nadasdy (2005) also critiques the antipolitics of comanagement arrangements with Indigenous peoples in Canada, which I will elaborate on in detail in Chapter 5 along with the coloniality of the Indigenous consultation process in Canada.

Post-politics is a closely related and emerging body of literature coming out of discussions between French political philosophers around the meaning of *politics* and *democracy* in liberal democracies (Badiou, 2008; Mouffe, 2005; Rancière, 1998). Post-politics builds on these philosophers' distinctions between 'the political' (le politique) and 'polic(e)y/politics' (la politique). 'The political' signifies the "antagonistic differences that cut through the social" (Swyn-

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gedouw, 2011: 373), or the non-existence of society as a cohesive political community. Rancière (1998) understands the properly political to be a disruption on the part of 'those who have no part,' or those whose material conditions are not such that they can enjoy the same liberty and political influence as the capitalist or oligarch classes. Liberal democracy posits the demos as encompassing the whole, imagining freedom and equality of opportunity to be similarly universal, which obscures the domination of private property owners and the "monopolizers of the common property" (Rancière, 1998:8). This, he argues, is the 'miscount' of liberal democratic ideology, which imagines that there is a 'common good' that can be arrived at through a mere balancing of interests and not a fundamental reorganization of society. 'The political' is inherently antagonistic, which the post-political order disavows (Mouffe, 2005).

If 'the political' represents the antagonistic encounters initiated by those who have no part, 'the police/politics' represents the institutionally choreographed field of policy-making that attempts to structure or grant cohesion to the otherwise absent social order (Marchart, 2007; Nancy, 1992; Rancière, 1998; Swyngedouw, 2011). 'The police' therefore reproduce the "miscount" of liberal democracies by taking for granted and erasing the structures and processes that marginalize 'those who have no part,' and by reducing democracy to the technocratic management of what Badiou (2008) calls the 'capitalo-parliamentary order.' 'The police' depoliticize the economy itself and reduce politics to the construction and management of consensus around the market as the preferred institution for resource allocation and social provisioning, which "limits or circumscribes the political choices offered to the citizen" (Swyngedouw, 2011: 372). Crouch and others consider this new regime 'post-democratic', where public debate is a "tightly controlled spectacle" managed by "professional experts in the techniques of persuasion, and consid-

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ering a small range of issues selected by those teams" (2004: 4). In such a regime, citizens have increasingly passive roles while elected officials predominantly represent business interests. The understandable growing apathy of the citizenry with respect to political processes only allows for a more seamlessly choreographed spectacle (Crouch, 2004: Giroux, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2011). Particularly pertinent to the cases in this dissertation, "the public management of consensus relies on the opinion poll (rather than the ballot box), the perpetual canvassing of 'popular' views, signalling the parameters of what needs to be 'policed'" (Swyngedouw, 2011: 372).

In a post-political regime, then, 'the political' as the space for the practice of politics proper (ie. the open expression of dissensus and agonistic struggle for recognition) is sutured by 'the police' (ie. consensual techno-managerial policy-making and administration). The political dissensus and debate requisite for the practice of democracy is evacuated from the sphere of policy negotiation, and governance is reduced to 'policing' consensual politics and technocratic policy-making (Mouffe, 2005; Rancière, 1998; Swyngedouw, 2010, 2011; Zizek, 1999). Post-political governance is based around several 'taken-for-granted' discourses such as 'there is no alternative' thinking around neoliberal capitalism as the basic socio-economic order, and other 'agreed upon' aims such as sustainability, participation, etc. (Fletcher, 2014; Swyngedouw, 2011). Indeed neoliberalism's rhetorical celebration of decentralization and public participation can serve to enrol a wider network of people into the decision-making process, but perhaps on narrow and circumscribed terms, keeping important political economic decisions beyond public debate. Consensus is not manufactured (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) in the sense that consensus is actually achieved, but the appearance of consent is 'orchestrated' (Fletcher, 2014) "as one of

the tactics through which spaces of conflict and antagonism are smoothed over and displaced" (Swyngedouw, 2010: 226).

Taking a political ecology approach, this research thus unites the lines of thinking around, political economy, anti- and post-politics and participatory environmental governance. I show how debates around private interests in parks and our understandings and practices of conservation policy co-evolve, as well as how the increasing inclusion of private sector stakeholders shapes public and Indigenous participation in conservation governance.

Chapter 2, the methods chapter, will outline my main research questions and the methodology I employed carrying out this research. I detail the specifics about the two controversies and the two field sites, along with an explanation of why these two sites were chosen and what we gain by looking at two cases together. I also discuss my positionality and how this may have impacted the research.

Chapter 3 is a revision of an article being published in *Conservation and Society* (Youdelis, Forthcoming). In this chapter I investigate the co-evolution of social activism and conservation policy in Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada. Countless controversies around private sector interests in national parks have erupted throughout Canada within the last 5 years. These controversies have been arising within the context of budget cuts to Parks Canada and related imperatives to increase visitor numbers and 'visitor experience' to recoup costs and strengthen public support for Canadian parks. This chapter explores the post-politicization of consultation in Jasper through a study of two public contestations around Brewster Travel's Glacier Skywalk development and Maligne Tours' hotel proposal. I argue that due to substantial budget cuts, the interests of Parks Canada and certain corporate interests are aligning, to the

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detriment of democratic decision-making in the park. Park authorities, under fiscal pressure, employ post-political strategies to remove debate from the public sphere, 'orchestrate' the appearance of consensus and ultimately to legitimize unpopular tourism development decisions.

Chapter 4 is also a revised version of an article I published in *Environment and Planning A* (Youdelis, 2016). This chapter looks at the degree to which Indigenous actors in Jasper are able to participate in park decision-making. Although Canada has been applauded for its co-management arrangements in recently established national parks, it continues to struggle with its legacy of colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples, especially in its older and more iconic parks. First Nations were evicted from the earliest parks such as Banff and Jasper in a process of colonial territorialization that facilitated a 'wilderness' model of park management and made space for capitalist enterprises like sport hunting and tourism (Binnema and Niemi, 2006; MacLaren, 2011). In Jasper National Park today, private tourism development proposals trigger a Duty to Consult with nations whose Aboriginal or Treaty rights may be impacted by development. In the last few decades Jasper has made strides towards "reconciliation" including forming the Jasper Aboriginal Forum in an attempt to improve consultation with First Nations. I argue that Jasper's approach to reconciliation and consultation reproduces and further entrenches unequal colonial-capitalist power dynamics, relying on antipolitical strategies to produce the appearance of inclusion and to naturalize the park's ultimate decision-making authority in First Nations' traditional territories. Park management attempts to incorporate First Nations' input and certain "cultural" rights into existing state-led science-based management structures while leaving the legitimacy and justness of those structures unquestioned. As a result, Jasper's approach to consultation obscures the ongoing neocolonial political and economic violence of alienating First Nations from

their land bases and consequently reinforces existing inequalities. Ultimately I argue that this antipolitical approach facilitates tourism development projects that benefit government and industry and not Indigenous communities.

Chapter 5 explores the co-evolution of social activism and conservation policy in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park in Chiang Mai, Thailand. 'Forest encroachers', be they private developers or local communities, have long been a hot topic for the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation in Thailand. The military has been more fervently targeting and demolishing private tourist resorts that encroach onto park lands across the country since the coup in 2014, while ironically simultaneously entertaining a quasi-private proposal to build a cable car through Doi Suthep-Pui National Park in Chiang Mai. This proposal elicited a significant public countermovement. Proponents here similarly employ antipolitical strategies to contain dissent and reduce the public's role in decision-making. However, I argue that due to the unique political economy of conservation, opponents in Chiang Mai have had great success in shelving the cable car project since the 1980s and feel that they have considerable power in decision-making. Steady federal funding to the national parks has reduced pressure to streamline the approval process or allow private development to recoup costs, and thus despite having relatively weak consultation mechanisms and a repressive military government, local people and ethnic minorities feel relatively empowered.

Chapter 6, the discussion chapter, will bring the two cases into conversation with one another. I will reflect on how looking at these cases alongside one another can contribute to broader discussions around political economies of conservation, anti- and post-politics, understandings of

nature, and settler-colonialism. Chapter 7 will be a brief concluding chapter where I return to my

research questions and discuss some of the implications of this work.

Chapter 2
Research Design and Methods

This research project compares two case studies in two different countries to help tease out the discursive and material politics associated with private infrastructure development in public national parks. Consistent with a political ecology framework, I take a critical realist perspective on the nature of reality, recognizing that although there is a material nature out there independent of our consciousness, our knowledge of nature is always socially mediated, partial, and contingent (Haraway, 1993; Neumann, 2005). Although there are material forests and ecosystems that opponents of development are concerned for, and that may be impacted by the developments in question, there are multiple and contested ways of knowing those ecosystems and of understanding concepts like conservation, national parks or 'ecological integrity'. As this dissertation will explore the production, circulation and application of competing knowledge claims, I should make clear that I understand the construction of knowledge as an iterative, performative process involving both human and non-human actants (Butler, 1990; Jasanoff, 2004; Whatmore, 2002). I see bureaucratic or 'expert' knowledge and authority as does Matthews (2011), "as a public fiction, which can only be sustained by a skillful collaboration between apparently authoritative officials and their audiences, in a kind of public intimacy" (loc323). The power of conservation officials is halting and vulnerable because public audiences can act to refuse assent to these performances (Li, 2007; Matthews, 2011). Given that moves towards neoliberalisation are often met with public pushback demanding more protectionist markets (Youdelis, 2013), the performative nature of conservation authority offers countless opportunities for various actors to subvert or obstruct the rollout of neoliberalised conservation projects.

Thinking about knowledge and power in this way, I must highlight the important interplay between structure and agency throughout this dissertation. When tracing associations it is possible to lose oneself in the network and downplay the very important political and economic structural processes that produce (and maintain) marginality and contribute to determining who has the power to speak truths and whose voices become silenced. Conversely, critics of an overly materialist perspective argue that structures become superficially reified and granted agency with such an approach. Instead, I attempt to recognize and respect the pressures that structural processes exert on socionatures while also understanding that those processes are enacted by people in relation with each other and non-humans and thus outcomes are not pre-determined but emerge from the relational agency of all actants involved (Whatmore, 2002). This leaves all political 'outcomes' perpetually open to be taken in a new direction.

I do not purport that my work is value neutral. I am undertaking this research, like all of my work, with a desire to contribute to emancipatory politics within academic scholarship, within the field sites where I am active, and, if possible, beyond. I am concerned with the political implications of the increasing influence of private sector stakeholders in conservation practice because although the majority of critical literature on neoliberalisation focuses on economic and socio-environmental consequences (Buscher et al., 2014; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2015), there is increasing evidence that despite the rhetoric of decentralisation being democratising, moving towards 'free' markets or private governance tends toward authoritarianism, oligarchy, and/or attacks on civil liberties, putting democratic decision-making at stake (Brown, 2003; Chomsky, 1999; Klein, 2008; Zizek, 2008). Many parks globally are facing funding cutbacks, particularly in times of recession and austerity, and thus private sector partnerships and/or and donor funding

for protected areas can be enthusiastically welcomed if not deliberately sought out (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2011). It is therefore imperative to understand how private sector influence might shape or transform public and Indigenous participation on 'public' lands —contested as Indigenous nations' traditional territory— in addition to the implications of this kind of rescaling for the future of conservation practice.

My initial fear or hypothesis was that if there are indeed consequences for democratic decision-making, along with environmental and socio-economic implications, then these would be very difficult to reverse as more and more authority and responsibility for funding is rescaled to private interests. As discussed in the Introduction, however, I do not want to treat neoliberalisation as an unstoppable juggernaut. Like capitalism, neoliberal governance is a social relation (Hardt and Negri, 2000); an unstable set of relations between people, institutions, corporations, and non-human actants that requires continual performance and public assent, as does conservation governance. Methodologically, it is challenging to trace the unstable set of relations involved in neoliberalisation. Treating neoliberalisation as unstable methodologically means being attentive to the multiple and variegated ways neoliberalisation presents itself. It also means taking seriously the public countermovements and local realities that temper and adjust what is possible in terms of implementation. Controversy and contestation police the boundaries of what is and is not possible for alternative political economies of conservation, and it is this sort of performative boundary work on which I focus.

In the chapters that follow, I explore how and why public countermovements against private sector partnerships and development take shape, how debates around private actors in parks shape and are shaped by changes in conservation policy, and to what extent corporate-govern-

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ment partnerships transform public participation in park decision-making. I have two main research questions. The first is how do social activism and conservation policy co-evolve? Flowing from this major question, I am interested in how and why situated actors articulate different visions of conservation and the role of national parks, what strategies proponents and opponents employ to enrol allies, how and why certain knowledge claims gain currency above or exclude others, and how debates around private interests in parks shape understandings and practices of conservation. The second major question is how does the increasing inclusion of private sector stakeholders shape or transform public and Indigenous participation in conservation governance? I am interested in how consultation processes have evolved over time, how public and indigenous actors perceive the consultation process and understand their role in decision-making, and ultimately whether the rescaling of conservation influences who exerts power in park management.

I chose to take a comparative case study approach to these research questions to reflect my commitment to take seriously that neoliberalisation is a variegated and unstable process. Within debates in political ecology, scholars have called for more attention to the variegation and path-dependency of "actually existing neoliberalisms" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) in response to the inadvertent tendency of some of the literature on the neoliberalisation of nature to paint neoliberalism as an unstoppable juggernaut. In seeking to understand how the dynamics of neoliberalisation influence and are influenced by social activism and consultation mechanisms in conservation practice, I believe that it's important to understand how the path-dependency inherent to neoliberalisation might come to bear on the linkages we may observe in any one specific locale. It is undeniable now that neoliberalisation unfolds very differently in different cultural

and geographical locations, and thus a comparative approach helps us to develop a more comprehensive picture of which dynamics of neoliberalisation in particular may facilitate the post-politicization of conservation governance, and how a variety of other factors (politics, history, institutions, etc.) influence the relationship between political economy, conservation practice, and depoliticization. Differences in how consultation operates in differing field sites may also hold implications for how opponents organize countermovements and attempt to politicize the issues. I have therefore chosen to explore and compare the experiences of citizens and Indigenous actors in two case studies, one in the "Global North" and the other in the "Global South", to interrogate how neoliberalisation might be either reified, reshaped or subverted in interaction with context-specific histories, institutions, regulatory landscapes, and on-the-ground engagements with conservation practice.

A final motivation for the multi-sited approach is to bring critical literature on conservation in Canada into better conversation with the rich body of critical literature on conservation and neoliberalisation globally. The majority of the literature on neoliberal conservation focuses on interventions in the Global South, which are often funded and implemented by donors and organizations from the Global North. I believe that a more sustained investigation of the implications of the neoliberalisation of conservation in the Global North —and an exploration of how these dynamics either mirror or diverge from experiences in the Global South— is pertinent to better understanding the challenges faced by both conservation officials and citizen-activists in different political economic settings. This understanding has political import for the networks of opponents trying to challenge both neoliberalisation and depoliticization, as more comprehensive understandings of the 'problem' can inform better targeted and more holistic political interven-

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tions and 'solutions'.

I chose these two field sites in particular because despite having very different histories with colonialism, democratic engagement and economic development, the details of the controversies in both sites are starkly similar. The truth claims advanced by opponents as well as the strategies of depoliticization employed by proponents hold many parallels. However, the sites differ drastically in terms of political economies of conservation and in the organization of and politics espoused by civil society. Looking at the two together, then, can help us shed light on which political economic dynamics in particular hold implications for the post-politicization of consultation, and can enhance our understandings of political economies of conservation, theories of settler-colonialism, strategies of depoliticization, and consultation and protest. I will return to these themes in the Discussion chapter, Chapter 6.

For context, Canada is a 'developed' settler-colonial and liberal democratic constitutional monarchy (where the role of the British monarchy has been curtailed and is largely symbolic). Thailand is a 'developing' constitutional monarchy, where the King's role has been similarly curtailed but arguably has a greater role in public life. Thailand has also been described as having the "world's harshest lèse majesté law" (Cochrane, 2017), severely punishing anyone who speaks ill of the royal family. Politically, Thailand has recently been usurped by a military coup, posing serious deleterious implications for democracy. Both Canada and Thailand's national park frameworks have been shaped by colonialism despite the fact that Thailand has never been formally colonized. As I will outline in detail in Chapters 3 and 4, Canada's park system began as unabashedly colonial, and, in many respects, continues to be to this day.

Following the Yellowstone model, conservation in Canada was a mechanism through

which settler-colonizers amassed power over land and resources and opened these up to white settlers for commercial gain (Campbell, 2011; Binnema and Niemi, 2006). Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, sought to develop the West, and so collaborated with the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) company to link the disparate parts of the country together. Banff and Jasper were sold as spectacular destinations to the CPR's upper- and middle-class tourists. Bella writes:

> "[The early parks] were built not to preserve a natural landscape, but to centralize control of that landscape in the hands of the railroads. That control was used to reduce competition in the parks, and to restrict access to the mountains. Businesses that might be patronized by the working class were not sufficiently aesthetic. Access to the mountains was provided instead to upper- and middle-income tourists willing to pay substantial sums for a sanitized view of the mountains." (1987: 24)

In seeking to produce this sanitized view for tourists, other commercial operators were similarly grandfathered into the early mountain parks, including Brewter Travel and Maligne Tours, the two companies responsible for the proposals under scrutiny in Jasper.

Brewster in particular has a long history in the park. In 1886, the government hired Bill Brewster senior as a carpenter to work on the bath houses by the hot springs in Banff. Bill noticed that there were no dairy farms between Calgary and Revelstoke and suggested to his brother, John, that this was a potential business opportunity. John travelled to Banff with his two sons, Bill and Jim, and serviced the new park townsite and hotel with milk. Guided by a member of the Stoney Nakoda Nation, William Twin, Bill and Jim explored the mountains and developed a knack for guiding (Bella, 1987; Pitts, 2017). They set up a small outfitting operation with profits made from their father's dairy business, and when the CPR decided to move away from outfitting, they sold the Brewsters the Banff concession. "This allowed the brothers to build a large

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outfitting and livery empire under CPR protection" (Bella, 1987: 17). When the automobile re-

placed the railroads as the preferred method of transport in the parks, the Brewsters began offer-

ing tours via bus fleets under the name of Brewster Transport (Brennan, 2005; Pitts, 2017). The

Brewsters have thus played an important role in producing Banff and Jasper as tourist destina-

tions for middle-class settlers, which continues to this day. Eighteen years after Jim's death,

Brewster Transport sold to Greyhound (Brennan, 2005), and was then acquired by Viad Corpora-

tion, based in Phoenix, Arizona. Viad's Travel and Recreation Branch, recently rebranded as Pur-

suit, offers 'experiential' travel and recreation services in national parks in the U.S. and Canada

(Viad, 2018). Brewster Travel is now among the companies under Pursuit's umbrella, as is the

recently acquired Maligne Tours (Katz, 2017).

Maligne Tours is the second company coming under fire in recent controversies in Jasper,

for their luxury hotel proposal at Maligne Lake. Maligne Tours is also historically connected to

the Brewsters. Fred Brewster built the Maligne Lake Chalet and guest houses in 1927, setting up

a popular backcountry camp. In 1928, Donald "Curly" Phillips built the Maligne boathouse and

set up the first boat tour of the lake and Spirit Island, a popular and well-photographed tourist

destination (Interview with General Manager of Maligne Tours). Boat tours are today the main

attraction of Maligne Tours Ltd., which has proposed to expand operations to include a luxury

hotel, tent cabins, and other attractions such as horseback riding and wilderness mazes. Viad

Corporation acquired the company in 2016.

Given that private interests have been operating in the mountain parks since their incep-

tion, there have been periodic clashes and movements organized against profit-seeking and de-

velopment in Banff-Jasper, first in 1910-1930 and then in the late 60s and 70s. Between

1910-1930, the Alpine Club of Canada and the National Parks Association fought proposals for

hydroelectric dams in the parks. In the 60s and 70s, environmental groups fought urbanization,

the expansion of highways, and ski developments (Bella, 1987; Campbell, 2011). Interviewees

who were part of those movements felt that they had more leverage at that time —that public

hearings were more involved and that decisions did not appear to be foregone conclusions. For

example, opponents of the proposal to build a lower village at the ski hill of Lake Louise were

successful in their movement despite the power and pressure wielded by the ski lobby (see Bella,

1987).[1] The conflicts between citizens and developers culminated in two independent reviews of

Parks Canada in the 1980s and 90s, and stricter wording around ecological integrity in the Na-

tional Parks Act of 2001. Ecological integrity is now the top priority of the Minister when mak-

ing decisions relating to park governance, although in recent years Parks Canada has positioned

visitor experience as an (almost) equally important pillar. Parks Canada was transformed into a

business headed by a CEO in 1988, and has since faced subsequent rounds of austerity whereby

the importance of revenues from private interests has increased. Chapter 3 will explore to what

extent the changes to how parks are managed and funded since the 1980s influence the degree to

which citizens and Indigenous actors have continued space for political debate and democratic

participation in decision-making.

   While Thailand is not a settler colonial state, the treatment of ethnic minority communi-

ties has been starkly similar to the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada, with parks simi-

larly used as tools of territorialization (Leblond, 2010; Vandergeest, 1996). Thai forest laws were

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[1] Respondents who participated at that time explained that pubic consultation involved lengthy public hearings, where the press was invited and each person or environmental organization that wished to speak was given floor time. Organizations were given the opportunity to make entire presentations, recorded by the press, and there was room for open debate.

adapted from the British colonial system in India and Burma. Protected area laws were, like in Canada, adapted from the American 'Yosemite' model (Vandergeest, 1996). Thus although Thailand was never formerly colonized, colonial understandings of nature, territory and conservation are nonetheless imbued in the Thai park system. While there have also been tensions between tourism development and conservation in certain popular parks in Thailand (FAO, 1998), particularly in the popular southern parks like Koh Phi Phi (the set of the 2000 movie *The Beach*), the private sector remains barred from developing in parks. Private businesses have not been grandfathered into the northern parks like Doi Suthep-Pui. In fact, there have been several cases where federal authorities demolished private operations that were encroaching into park territory (The Nation, 2014a, 2014b). Protecting the environment from encroachment (loosely protecting 'ecological integrity') is the top priority of park authorities, however officials are allowed to break the rules laid out for private persons or the private sector in order to facilitate public education or tourism (National Parks Act, 1961). Despite the unique history and political economy of each field site, the proposals and countermovements, including the knowledge claims put forward for and against, have looked remarkably similar in both countries.

Research Sites

I've been intrigued by the 'conservation versus development' conundrum (understood as capitalist development) since my undergrad. My Master's work grew out of this interest and looked at the contradictions involved in using ecotourism as a market-oriented conservation strategy in Doi Inthanon National Park in northern Thailand. This work critiqued the issues that arise when interventions simultaneously encourage profit maximization and conservation-friend-

ly living. That project explored processes of neoliberalisation in terms of the rescaling of conservation to include local actors and encouraging increased entrepreneurial market engagement through neoliberal environmentality (Youdelis, 2013), but ecotourism was run and managed by local ethnic minorities and was not a consequence of budget cuts or a restructuring of how parks are funded at the state level. When I began my PhD, I began to think about what might happen if national parks, like other areas of state spending, were to be privatized or managed in partnership with private sector actors due to broader political economic imperatives. After doing some digging, I realized that there were many controversies around private interests trying to develop and manage new tourism opportunities in national parks in Canada. I knew that this was very likely an issue that many parks were facing globally, so I began looking for other examples of controversies around the world. I found there had been similar conservation versus development controversies occurring around Thailand as well, with one particularly interesting case of ongoing opposition to a cable car proposal in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park in Chiang Mai. Since I already had a well-established network of contacts in Chiang Mai and was familiar with the critical literature on conservation in Thailand, I thought this would be the perfect second field site to analyze alongside the Canadian experience. I thus chose my two research sites for both personal and intellectual reasons.

I will outline the specifics of the two cases below, but both involve considerable public countermovements to proposals for private/quasi-private tourism development proposals within national parks. The two cases underscore that these kinds of contestations are playing out in both quote unquote 'developed' and 'developing' countries, and that the concerns of opponents and the philosophical debates around public vs. private development and management of national

parks take similar shape in very different geographical and socio-political settings. They also underscore Polanyi's (1944) point that moves towards 'freer' markets are often if not always met by public push back and demands for more protectionist market engagement to tether the troubling social and environmental externalities of the pursuit of the 'free market' ideal. Neoliberalisation looks very different in the two sites, attesting that it is a messy, path-dependent process – an always incomplete achievement.

I take local and Indigenous satisfaction with public consultation and decision-making processes as a central concern, exploring the nature and scope of countermovements to development projects posed by these actors and how and why we see certain results. In Chapter 6, I will be putting the cases into conversation with one another to draw some broader conclusions about the relationship between market governance and the democratic process.

Jasper National Park, Canada: The Glacier Skywalk

Figure 2.0 - Map of Jasper, Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks[2]

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2 Source: http://thecanadianrockies.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Station-Map.png

Jasper National Park straddles the border between the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia in Canada, and connects with the other mountain parks of Banff, Yoho, and Kootenay via the Yellowhead Highway. Since 2011, Parks Canada has been entertaining several proposals to privatize tourism services in these parks and others across the country.[3] Well-known controversial cases include the privatization of the hot springs in both Banff National Park and Jasper National Park in Alberta (Stephenson and Ellis, 2012), the private operation of the golf course and the recent Mother Canada Statue development proposal in Cape Breton Highlands National Park in Nova Scotia (Collins, 2012), the construction of the Glacier Skywalk and the proposal to build a hotel at Maligne Lake in Jasper National Park (CPAWS, 2012; Mertz, 2015), the Lake Louise ski guideline changes in Banff National Park (Derworiz, 2015), and the fracking controversy in Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland (CBC News, 2013). These proposals were being put forth within the context of budget cuts to Parks Canada, changes to Canada's environmental protections (Bill C-45), and recent calls to enhance visitor experience and attract new Canadians and urban youth (Parks Canada, 2011a).

The Glacier Skywalk in Jasper National Park, proposed by the now American-owned company Brewster Travel Ltd., was and remains an especially contentious project. The Glacier Skywalk has been described as a "theme park-like attraction" (CPAWS, 2011) that includes a 400-metre walkway, meant to be an educational trail, and a glass-floored 'skywalk' extending 30

[3] As explained, there is a long history of private interests in the mountain parks in particular, where certain operators have been grandfathered in. However, guidelines that cap or limit the scope of future development are being reconsidered in the current climate of austerity-related restructuring, which I detail more fully in Chapter 3. Further, other parks across the system such as Cape Breton and Gros Morne are experiencing similar controversies around private interests in protected areas.

metres over the Sunwapta Valley (CPAWS, 2011; Wittmeier, 2012). Figure 2.0 below shows pictures of the completed product I took on various visits to the site.
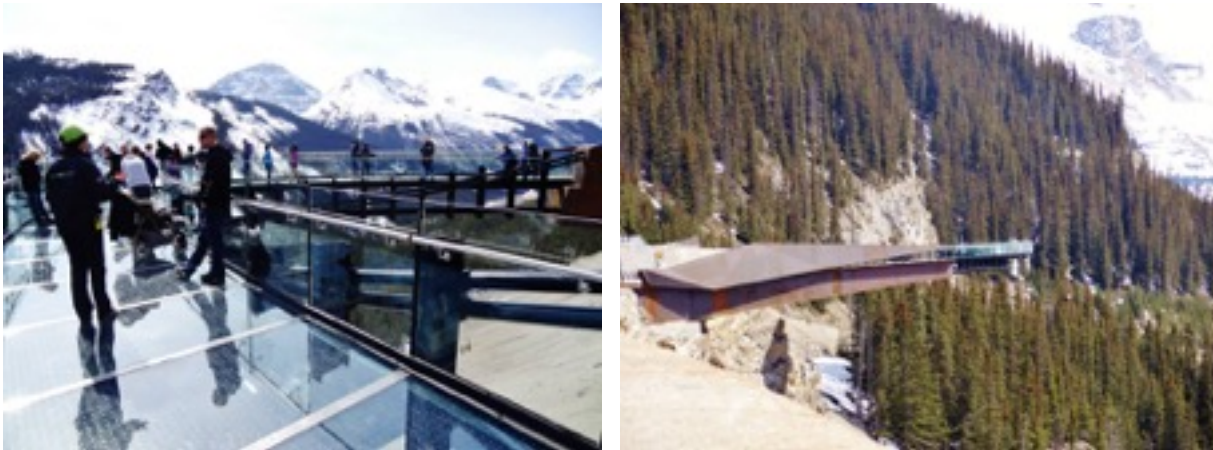
Figure 3.0 - Glacier Skywalk Visit, May 2014

Until now, public visitors to the area could take in the views over the Sunwapta Valley for free (although they would still need to pay the park entrance fee). Visitors are now charged $32 dollars before tax to visit the attraction, and they are no longer allowed to stop at the viewpoint but must drive another 6km down the road to the Columbia Icefields centre where Brewster Travel operates a commercial stage coach attraction, taking tourists out onto the Athabasca Glacier. A black tarp has been placed over the fence that surrounds the Glacier Skywalk so that visitors driving by can no longer take in the views without paying Brewster Travel, which many find highly egregious. The fee and the removal of a public viewpoint is deemed reasonable by Parks Canada and Brewster Travel, as they are marketing the Glacier Walkway as an educational experience meant to connect Canadians with the land and each other, as well as a possible world

tourism icon in which Canadians can take pride (Bajula, 2012; Parks Canada, 2011b; Wittmeier, 2012).

This proposal elicited a significant countermovement, with citizens, environmental groups, journalists, academics, politicians and foreign tourists all expressing offense and disapproval of the project. Public concerns included: corporate-government partnerships seeking profits over conservation principles, the ability for all Canadians to access park services, public resources becoming privatized, a commitment to democratic participation, and respecting the role of parks as understood to protect 'wilderness' or our national heritage. The campaign began with Jasper residents sending letters to Parks Canada and voicing their concerns at public meetings (CBC News, 2012). Opponents then turned to Avaaz.org, an on-line activist organization, to publicize and broaden the campaign by initiating an on-line petition titled "Save Jasper National Park". They collected over 180,000 signatures by asking Canadians to save our 'natural wonders' from American development, highlighting the fact that Brewster Travel is now owned by the American multinational Viad Corporation. The petition letters, sent to former superintendent of Jasper Park Greg Fenton, begin as follows:

> "Privatising Jasper National Park will set a dangerous precedent to allow destructive development by private corporations in World Heritage Sites across Canada. This goes entirely against what Canadians – and visitors – expect and deserve from Canada's wild and magnificent national parks." (Avaaz.org, 2011)

Additionally, thousands of letters were sent to former Minister of the Environment Peter Kent and over 5,000 postcards were sent directly to former Prime Minister Stephen Harper in hopes of halting construction (Jasper Environmental Association, 2012; Wittmeier, 2012).

Despite public outcry, Parks Canada framed opposition to the project as a matter of 'personal values' and not a legitimate reason to turn down the proposal. Then Minister of the Environment Peter Kent stepped in to approve the project despite the fact that Parks Canada assured stakeholders that the decision was made at the park level by former superintendent Greg Fenton. Several stakeholders believe the decision to approve was made in Ottawa prior to public consultation, pointing to the fact that Brewster Travel was lobbying the government (OCL-C, 2013). The experience left citizens and environmental groups concerned with the efficacy of public consultation and the ability of Canadians to participate in park decision-making.

Parks Canada and Brewster Travel frame the Glacier Walkway as important to attract new Canadians and increase visitor numbers. This is related to their Learn To Camp programs, which aim to teach new Canadians how to camp and appreciate Canadian wilderness in order to acclimate to Canadian life and perform particular Canadian identities (Fitzhugh, 2013a; Keung, 2012). These programs target new Canadians from particular geographical regions (not typically from America or Europe, for example). Opponents argue that the Glacier Walkway and other private developments within parks have less to do with reaching different groups of people, as they question the evidence that new Canadians want this sort of attraction, and instead point to the significant budget cuts to Parks Canada over the years that have created opportunities for private market-based actors whose visions appear to depart from conventional public understandings of conservation and the role of national parks (CPAWS, 2012).

Parks Canada also claims to have consulted with several First Nations regarding their concerns with the project, but little information about these consultations is publicly available. There are currently no Indigenous nations residing within Jasper National Park, as they were

forced to leave in 1907 when the park was established and they were barred from practicing tra-

ditional livelihoods (Fitzhugh, 2012). Parks Canada states that after discussions with Elders, the

majority did not oppose the project and in fact several nations showed interest in employment

opportunities at the Glacier Walkway (Parks Canada, 2012). Chapter 4 will tell quite a different

story.

Jasper National Park, Canada: Maligne Tours Hotel

A year after the Glacier Walkway was approved, Maligne Tours proposed building a 66-

suite hotel along with 15 tent cabins, horseback riding trails and other attractions like a wildlife-

themed maze at Maligne Lake in Jasper National Park (Fitzhugh, 2013b; Global News, 2013;

Plummer, 2013). Once again, attracting new Canadians and urban youth is the stated goal of

most of the proposed attractions. The lake is home to the iconic Spirit Island, where Maligne

Tours currently operates a small boat service that brings tourists to visit the island and back.

There are only 7 commercial boats allowed on the lake, and none can go beyond Spirit Island as

the rest of the lake ecosystem and surrounding area is considered ecologically sensitive. Oppo-

nents feel that this new proposal gives credence to public concerns that the Glacier Walkway

would set a precedent for more private tourism development within the park (Green Party, 2012).

Again, citizen and environmental groups, journalists, academics, and tourists came together to

protest this development. Letters were sent to Parks Canada, the Ministry of the Environment

and former PM Stephen Harper opposing the project, and another Avaaz.org petition gathered

over 2,700 signatures (Avaaz.org, 2014). The petition script reads as follows:

Right now, Maligne Lake – home to the world-famous Spirit Island – is under threat from a tour company that wants to build a hotel for "premium-paying customers" on its north shore. We must speak out now if we are to save this crown jewel of the Rocky Mountain World Heritage Site.

The Maligne Valley is home to grizzly bears, harlequin ducks, and a small herd of threatened caribou that could be at risk if this project is approved by the federal government.

Since 1969, Parks Canada has refused overnight accommodation at this iconic wilderness lake. **But the government has slashed funding for our parks and is slowly re-shaping the places we love**. Two years ago, they approved a monstrous "skywalk" alongside the Icefields Parkway. Now they're considering approval of this hotel on the lovely Maligne Lake even though it would go against Jasper National Park's policies and guidelines.

Let's send a clear message now to the Harper government that defiling our national parks is not an option." (Avaaz.org, 2014, bold in original)

In a letter to Superintendent Greg Fenton, the Jasper Environmental Association and the

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society partnered with Ecojustice, an environmental law charity,

and jointly argued that the proposed development at Maligne Lake should not be approved, as it

is contrary to the 2010 Management Plan for Jasper National Park, contrary to the Parks Canada

Guiding Principles and Operational Policies and the Outlying Commercial Accommodation

Guidelines (2007), and contrary to the conditions set on the 2003 renewal of the lease and licens-

es of occupation for Maligne Lake developments. They argued that the proposed development

would jeopardize the survival and recovery of caribou herds, an endangered species in the area,

and would interfere with sensitive and threatened species like grizzly bears and harlequin ducks.

They also argued that there is a lack of social science evidence that supports the need for ac-

commodations at Maligne Lake.

Three former Canadian Wildlife Service biologists argued that the development will seriously threaten the endangered caribou herd. They wrote an open letter stating that at the time there were only 55 individual caribou in Jasper National Park, with only 5 individuals left in the Maligne subherd. That number has now dropped to 4. Increased traffic along the road to the lake, along with increased visitor numbers, power generation, and waste will arguably disturb or displace the remaining caribou from the area (Global News, 2013; Jasper Environmental Association, 2014; Plummer, 2013). Opponents argue that within a protected area, endangered species and ecological integrity should be given top priority, which should preclude the possibility for hotel development in critical habitat.

Several stakeholders also feel that, as in the Glacier Walkway dispute, public consultation on the project has not been adequate, as 'open houses' and informational sessions have replaced public hearings, and initially all public comments and concerns were being sent directly to Maligne Tours, not to Parks Canada (Fitzhugh, 2013b; Gadd, 2013). Given the result of the Glacier Walkway controversy, opponents were very wary of the consultation process and were pessimistic about their ability to stop development, but pressed on with opposition despite this. The Jasper Environmental Association (JEA) organized a protest along the road leading to Maligne Lake, and partnered with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) to organize a written petition. CPAWS distributed these petitions in Mountain Equipment Co-op stores across Canada. This time, Parks Canada appears to have listened to public sentiment, along with their own evaluation of the merits and drawbacks for ecological integrity, and turned down the hotel portion of the proposal, but greenlighted all of the other proposed attractions for further consideration. This includes the 15 overnight tent cabins, which opponents feel would have the many of

the same impacts as the hotel and which remain contrary to the park management plan, so opposition is ongoing from both public actors and certain First Nations.

Interestingly, Brewster Travel acquired Maligne Tours in January of 2016, after it was clear that the hotel would not be going forward. The acquisition means that Viad Corporation, based in Phoenix, Arizona, now owns two of the biggest money-makers in the mountain parks. It is unclear at this point whether they will continue to pursue the greenlighted attractions including the overnight tent cabins.

Doi Suthep-Doi Pui National Park, Thailand: The Chiang Mai Cable Car
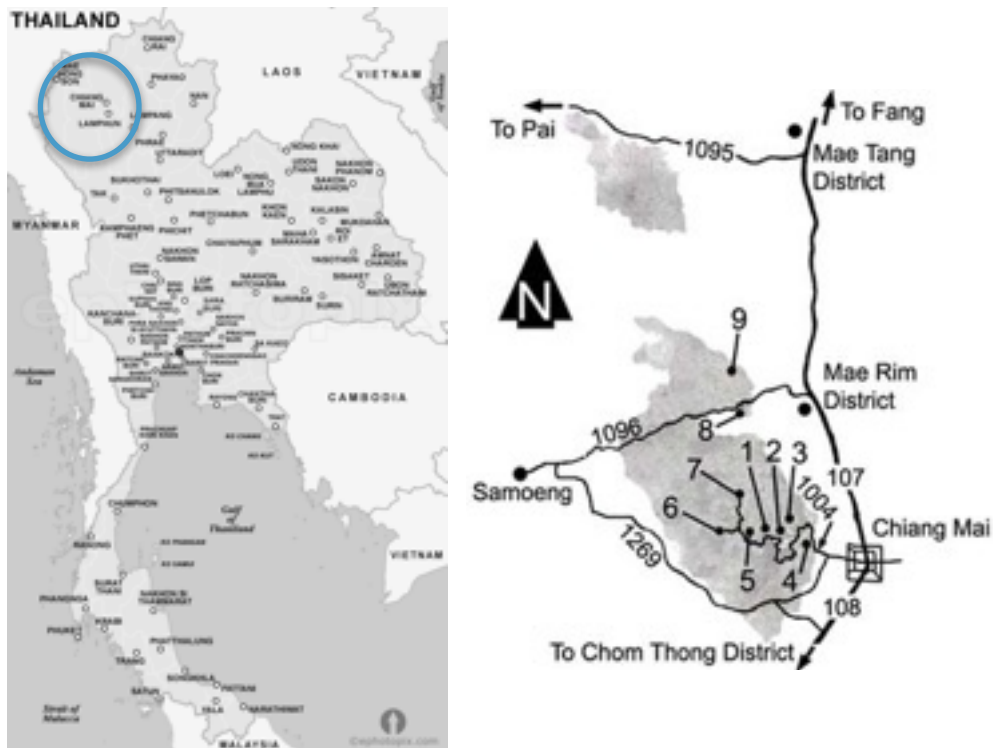
Figure 4.0 - Map of Thailand, Chiang Mai and Doi Suthep-Pui National Park[4]

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[4] Map sources: 1) http://www.emapsworld.com/images/thailand-provinces-map-black-and-white.gif!
2) http://www.trekthailand.net/north11/map.html

Doi Suthep-Doi Pui National Park is a 265 square kilometre protected area just northwest

of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, home to over 300 bird species, over 500 species of butter-

flies and thousands of species of plants and ferns (Swearer, 2001). The park also contains Phra

Tamnak Bhubhing, a summer palace and gardens for the royal family, two Hmong ethnic minori-

ty villages (including Ban Doi Pui which features an ethnic market popular with tourists), and

one of the most sacred sites in the northern region, Wat Phra That Doi Suthep (Doi Suthep Tem-

ple), which sits at the peak of Doi Suthep (1676m) overlooking Chiang Mai (Lonely Planet,

2014; Swearer, 2001). Given its proximity to Chiang Mai, development within and around the

park has long been a sensitive issue, as it has been in several parks throughout Thailand. Several

national parks have been critiqued for allowing "inappropriate facilities" (FAO, 1998) within

park borders, such as Koh Samet's bungalow resorts and Khao Yai's golf course. One of the ear-

liest and most controversial projects to spur public opposition was the Doi Suthep cable car

project proposal, first suggested in the 1970s but officially proposed and protested in 1985

(Forsyth, 2003b; Hirsch and Lohmann, 1989).

In the 1980s, the Tourism Authority of Thailand hired consultants to conduct feasibility

studies for potential new tourist locations in and around Chiang Mai. A private architectural firm

based in Bangkok, Four Aces Consultants, was hired to produce a master plan for tourism devel-

opment in Chiang Mai. They identified Doi Suthep as an area of great potential and proposed a

3-km, 115 million baht (US$4.6 million in 1985 rates) cable car, which would have run from the

base of Doi Suthep mountain in Chiang Mai to the Wat Phra That Doi Suthep monastery at its

peak (Pholpoke, 1998; Swearer, 2001). The project would have been a joint venture involving

Four Aces, another real estate company in Bangkok, and a finance company in the Thai Farmers'

Bank Group (Pholpoke, 1998).

Protest emerged as soon as the government submitted the proposal. Citizens, environmental groups, academics, journalists, students, and Buddhist monks came out in strong opposition to the project. The campaign began with academics in Chiang Mai University arguing that the cable car would negatively impact the park's high levels of plant biodiversity (Elliott et al., 1989). Opponents strongly opposed the destruction of forests required to build the cable car, arguing that this was inappropriate within the national park and would be a disturbance to rare animals (Hirsch and Lohmann, 1989; Pholpoke, 1998). Academics and local people also challenged claims that there was need for an expansion of facilities, asserting that the existing road to the summit was sufficient. Opponents were also protesting the notion that part of an ostensibly public resource, the national park, would become private without adequate democratic input into the planning and decision-making processes (Darlington, 2009; Pholpoke, 1998). Activists critiqued the conflict of interest involved as hired consultants became planners and then investors and would-be developers in the project. They argued that the social science data supporting the notion that Chiang Mai citizens were in favour of the project was also suspect, as surveys were conducted by close associates of Four Aces Consultants and only selected sympathetic respondents (no monks were surveyed, for example) (Pholpoke, 1998). In these regards, this controversy drew and continues to draw many parallels with the countermovements arising in response to private tourism development in Jasper National Park.

There was also a strong religious aspect to the 1985 protests in Chiang Mai, led by an emerging group of environmentalist monks. Environmentalist monks use Buddhist principles and

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concepts to inform environmental projects at local levels, reflecting the broader international movement of 'engaged Buddhism' (Masayuki, 2011). The 1985 Chiang Mai cable car controversy represents the first involvement of a large group of environmental monks in northern Thailand. Wat Phra That Doi Suthep is so highly revered by both monks and northern Thais in part due to the myth that surrounds its construction. According to legend, the monastery was established in the 14th century to house a Buddha relic requested by Ku'ena, the ruler of Chiang Mai between 1355-1385 (Darlington, 2009; Swearer, 2001). The relic is said to have divided itself in half, with half enshrined at the royal Flower Garden Monastery, Wat Suan Dok, and "the other half was placed on the back of an elephant to be enshrined wherever the animal was led by the gods, suggesting that supernatural forces determined its location on the mountain" (Swearer, 2001: 238). The Abbot of Wat Muen Lan, Phra Khru Anusorn Silakhan, argued that the monastery was "deliberately located in the mountain to make access difficult so that the pilgrimage emerges as a task of devotion" (The Nation, 1987). A strong motivating factor for public opposition was thus that people felt the cable car and the resulting increased commercialization would violate the sanctity of the site and devalue the intended pilgrimage up the mountain.

Protesters held peaceful demonstrations in Chiang Mai in 1986 and submitted a petition with 30,000 signatures to the government. Their combined efforts successfully shelved the project in 1986 (Darlington; 2009; Pholpoke, 1998). The cable car idea resurfaced once again in 2005-6, but again met protest and was shelved. It had not made much headway until 2013 when the Pinkanakorn Development Agency officially proposed a new and remodeled project. The PDA is a quasi-private government agency established in 2013 to promote tourism in Chiang Mai and the rest of the province (Bangkok Post, 2013; Bangkok Post, 2014). It manages several

attractions including the controversial Chiang Mai Night Safari, the Royal Botanical Gardens, and the Chiang Mai International Convention Centre. The agency is led by Plodprasop Suraswadi, the former Director General of the Royal Forestry Department and Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, and acting head of Thaksin's Pheu Thai party while Thaksin is in exile. He has proposed a 10-km, 2-billion baht (US$56 million in current rates) cable car to link the Night Safari with other sites throughout Doi Suthep-Doi Pui National Park (Bangkok Post, 2014; Gondola Project, 2014). The cable car would be the longest in the world if approved, and would cut through Wat Phra That Doi Kham, Wat Phra That Doi Suthep and Bhubing Palace (Chiang Mai Mail, 2013), which opponents find particularly upsetting as these are important cultural and religious sites. An environmental assessment report was conducted by the Department of Environmental Science at Kasetsart University and Tesco Company Limited, and, like in Jasper, both opponents and proponents are suspect of the document. Most feel it is more of a PR publication as it focuses predominantly on the benefits of the cable car with little exploration of the potential consequences or how benefits might be shared. Opponents spoke out at public meetings, held public protest events and press conferences, wrote letters to local authorities, published pieces in local and national media, and have been doing TV spots and interviews to gain visibility. Again, public concerns include the sanctity of the religious sites, the ecological impacts of such a development within the national park, and the transfer of a common resource to a for-profit business without the democratic consent of residents of the province (Bangkok Post, 2013; The Nation, 2014).

Research Design, Positionality and Challenges

This research takes a case study approach with semi-structured interviews furnishing the majority of the research data, supplemented by observation and document analysis. I was in the field from May 2014 to May 2015. I spent 5-6 months in each field site, beginning with Jasper National Park from May to October, 2014 followed by Doi Suthep-Pui National Park from November 2014 through April 2015. I lived in the township of Jasper in Alberta for the Canadian site, a small town of under 5,000 people entirely within the national park. In Thailand, I lived in Chiang Mai, the second largest city in Thailand with a metropolitan region pushing 1 million in population. It was a short (5 minute) drive to the national park office and to the park itself, which is immediately adjacent to Chiang Mai city.

Living close to the parks in both field sites, I was able to keep my ear to the ground on public sentiment around the development projects and observe when and how opponents organized protests. In Jasper, I attended the protest along the road leading to Maligne Lake on June 29, 2014. Members of the Jasper Environmental Organization met in the parking lot of Maligne Canyon and distributed big placard signs to everyone, about 12 people (see Figure 3.0).

Figure 5.0 - Maligne Lake Hotel Protest, June 2015

We spread out along the road and held up signs to cars as they headed towards Maligne Lake. At the lake, one of the members was there to greet the travelers and take signatures on the petition organized by JEA and CPAWS. This was a remarkable experience as I was able to observe and learn about the concerns, passions, and future plans of the environmental group as well as to see first hand the reactions from tourists. It was also a worrying and uncomfortable experience, though, trying to navigate my own positionality with the group. I had originally gone thinking I would observe how the group worked together and how they attempted to enroll allies, not wanting to be seen by business owners or parks people as being a protester. I soon realized once there, though, that this would not be possible, as everyone was to be splitting up and manning different positions along the road. A reporter from the local Fitzhugh paper came to cover the protest, so I kindly asked him not to take photos of me for the paper because I became very self conscious about certain interviewees seeing them. The environmental group was so glad that I came out, I did not want to let my discomfort and concern show either. Not knowing exactly what to do, I put on my big aviator glasses and pulled my hood over my head (luckily it was a cold, rainy and windy day), and I held the signs up in a way that didn't show much of my face to the road. The reactions from drivers going by were predominantly positive and in support of the messages shared by the JEA. Most would honk and give thumbs up at the signs, cheer to show support. Many would pull over and ask what was going on, and once I explained that there was a proposal for a hotel at the lake, they would express their disapproval and concern for keeping the parks as they are. Only a few cars drove on without showing much interest.

Luckily no one spotted me on the road other than Bob Covey, a reporter from the other local newspaper in Jasper, The Local. He had actually approached me for an interview because

he wanted to feature my research in the paper. He thought that it would be interesting for Jasper readers since a great deal of them were fired up in one way or another over the two development projects, and he thought it would help me to reach more potential interview respondents. He agreed to do an interview with me and help me with information and advice on contacts for my project, kind of an 'I'll scratch your back, you scratch mine'. I agreed, but again was plagued by anxiety over how the piece would read and how it might position me in the eyes of the towns-people and park staff. I told him that I was concerned about appearing biased in either direction, and that the description should focus on my research questions. He assured me that the piece would be descriptive, but when it came out, I felt that the tone was more critical of the park than neutral, and I worried for a while about what this might affect. I did end up getting some emails from people in town and from the outlying commercial accommodations in the park who wanted to talk. I will never know for sure if the piece had any affect on my interviews with authorities, although I suspect that institutional pressures had much more of an impact.

At the time I was in Jasper, many of the conservation authorities I spoke to (and scientists in general) were under a strict gag order from the conservative federal government (Turner, 2013), unable to talk to the media or researchers without first approving their responses with Ottawa. At first this was a huge stumbling block. Although I had been approved to speak with 4 park staff members from different departments, when I arrived, superintendent Greg Fenton was trying to make sure I only had one point of contact, a Senior Land Use Manager. Greg was not aware that I had already spoken with the Visitor Experience Manager, but because of the gag order, that interview was frustratingly fruitless. She read official responses to me and skillfully dodged my attempts to get her to be candid with her own opinions. Luckily I was able to have a

better and more productive talk with the Senior Land Use Manager, although personal opinions were also guarded. For a long time Mr. Fenton kept cancelling interviews with me, until it was time for me to leave Jasper and we still had not spoken. Thanks to connections via Dr. Roth and Dr. Lunstrum, I was able to interview the former CEO of Parks Canada, Alan Latourelle, over the phone in the winter of 2014. After this interview, I approached Mr. Fenton's office again, explaining that I had spoken with Alan but I still very much needed insight from the park level, which only he could provide. He agreed to meet with me in the summer of 2015, so I returned to Jasper for a week or so in July. Surprisingly, he was very candid at this time and provided a great deal of valuable information, perhaps because he knew he would soon be leaving his post. For the most part I believe the short piece in The Local had little to no effect on the interviews with park staff compared to the palpable pressure they were under to spout official speak or lose their jobs. I had much better luck interviewing retired or laid off wardens and park staff, who were extremely candid and informative with their responses.

This kind of official repression and opacity was also a challenge in Thailand. I had a very frustrating experience trying to obtain official permission to interview park authorities, which differed greatly from my experience applying for the same permission in 2011 for my Master's work. The military coup of 2014 shook up the government departments; all new Deputy's were assigned by the junta and dissent or openness with the press had been tethered. In 2011, to obtain permission to speak with a park authority, I filled out a straightforward application, dropped it off at the park office where I planned to conduct the interview, waited 30 days, and that was it. In 2014-2015, after filling out an inordinate number of forms and submitting them to the park authority I wished to speak with, the office presented me with an additional stack of forms to fill

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out and told me I needed to print and submit everything in both English and Thai. I had to print 7 copies of each form and sponsor letter in English, and another 7 copies in Thai. If I was missing any of these copies in either language, my application would be thrown out. Additionally, I had to have a sponsor at the University of Chiang Mai. I was very privileged to have Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti as a mentor, the esteemed head of the Regional Centre for Sustainable Development (RCSD) department in Social Sciences[5]. However what they asked of him was extremely invasive. They wanted copies of his passport and extremely detailed personal information, along with his assurance that he would be held personally responsible should I do anything illegal. His secretary told me that in all the years she has been working with him, she had never seen such an invasive and detailed application. My research assistant told me that she felt that the park office just did not want to talk to me about my research topic, so they were putting all of these obstacles in my way to delay me. I had to go back to the office with new, corrected or more complete applications 3 times.

On one occasion, the superintendent of the park put on a dramatic show of authority. He called the Doi Inthanon National Park office, where I had done an interview with a conservation authority in 2011 for my Master's project, and asked if they remembered me. Surely years later they would not remember the name of one Canadian girl that spoke to one conservation authority, who may not even still work there. The head of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park then started to accuse the head of Doi Inthanon of allowing me to conduct an interview without going through

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[5] Dr. Chayan and four others who attended the 13th International Conference on Thai Studies, which I also attended, were recently detained and charged for assembling more than 5 people for a "political event" without the military's permission, and for displaying posters that read "An academic forum is not a military barracks". It is unclear at this time what will come of the charges, but their experience demonstrates the degree of repression facing Thai citizens, especially those who are attempting to organize and protest.

the proper channels, saying that what I had done was illegal. The head of Doi Inthanon, getting defensive, said no, if I did in fact get an interview without going through the proper channels then I am the one to blame. The head of Doi Suthep then came over to Pim (my research assistant at that time) and I and spoke to Pim in Thai, scolding me for underhandedly (or illegally) obtaining my Master's interview and making us promise to go through the proper channels this time. Pim told me not to say anything in defense but to just apologize, smile, and agree. He dismissed us with yet more forms to fill out, and told us that we couldn't hand in the application at the park level but must mail the entire package to Bangkok to be processed.

After mailing in the phonebook of documents, the application seemed to disappear into a black hole. It took a lot of persistent calling on Pim's part (who was taken in circles, being told she had to call a different department, a different person, etc.) to finally get approval. After all of this hoopla, the head of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park was not guarded when he spoke with us at all, but was quite open about his concerns with government projects and with the cable car in particular, making the lengths we had gone to have this interview seem illogical and paranoid. But observing officials under pressure like this I think adds invaluable insight into the truly performative and uncertain power they wield. It also shows how volatile the issue of private infrastructure in public parks is, and how similarly national parks are understood around the world; as public, national treasures.

I conducted some more intentional participant observation in the tourist attraction locations as well. In Jasper, I visited the completed Glacier Skywalk several times and casually asked various tourists what they thought of the attraction and whether or not they were aware of the controversy that surrounded its construction. I visited Maligne Lake on various occasions as well

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and took Maligne Tours' boat cruise to Spirit Island. I observed and listened to tourists' experiences of the site, and similarly asked some tourists whether they were aware of the pending hotel proposal. In Chiang Mai, I visited Doi Suthep temple several times and observed tourists' and locals' experiences of the site. Due to language barriers, I did not ask tourists there whether they were aware of the cable car controversy, but observed locals' reactions to other events considered offensive to the sanctity of the site, such as when a group of Chinese tourists kicked the temple bells to make them sound.

While observation provided me with a good grounding and sense of place, the majority of the data used in this dissertation comes from in-depth semi-structured interviews. I interviewed 51 people in relation to Jasper National Park and 51 people in relation to Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, for a total of 102 interviews (See Appendices A and B for lists of interview questions and interviewees). In Jasper, I interviewed the CEO of Parks Canada, the superintendent of the park, the senior land use manager, the visitor experience liaison, former bosses like the former superintendent of Banff and former Chief Ecosystem Scientist for Parks Canada, former wardens, environmental groups, local business owners, the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Jasper, outlying commercial accommodation owners, journalists, academics, local residents (both opponents and proponents), the president of Brewster Travel, the general manager of Maligne Tours, and representatives from several First Nations. In Chiang Mai, I interviewed the former Director General of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNPWPC) and father of the cable car idea, Plodprasop Suraswadi, the Governor of Chiang Mai, the regional director of DNPWPC for the Chiang Mai area, the head of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, the vice president of the Pingkanakorn Development Agency, the representatives from Tesco Ltd. and Kasetsart

University that conducted the environmental assessment study, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, environmental activists and organizations, academics, journalists, the head of the Doi Suthep Temple Administration, the head of the taxi and red truck administration, the mayors of all of the four sub-districts affected by the cable car (Suthep, Mae Hia, Ban Pong, and Nong Khwai), headmen of 3 villages in each subdistrict (for a total of 12 headmen), and villagers from each subdistrict including those along the proposed route of the cable car and those close to the Chiang Mai Night Safari.

I took a flexible approach to the interview process, allowing space to probe further into interesting themes that emerged and giving the interviewee space to talk about what they found important outside of my line of questioning. I had a different set of questions for respondents from different positions in the debates; for example, a set of questions for park staff that differed from the set of questions for local residents. Many questions remained the same for all respondents, but each interview was tailored specifically for the interviewee at hand. Interviews were recorded using a digital device and transcribed immediately or at least within 24 hours of conducting the interview so that the conversation was fresh in my mind. In addition to the recording, I took notes during each interview and added notes at the end of certain transcriptions highlighting any important observations made about the conversation or any unusual or notable events.

For the interviews in Chiang Mai, I employed the help of several translators and research assistants. Through the RCSD department in Chiang Mai University, I was initially connected with a wonderful research assistant named Pim. She had done her Master's in the department and had gone to school abroad in Australia and Europe, so her English was quite good. We got along very well and became fast friends. She is my age, and like me, she was a hard worker and kept

herself organized. I didn't often have to ask her to do things, she would take initiative and follow up with people or reach out to contacts of hers for advice or connections. It was thanks to connections of hers that I was able to get a meeting with Plodprasop Suraswadi, a very high ranking official that would otherwise have been inaccessible to me. That meeting was in Bangkok, so I reached out to a friend from my Master's research, Saiaew, who had moved to Bangkok for work. Her English is also quite good from her time spent abroad in the United States, however Plodprasop prefered to speak in English, so she was only really needed to translate a few words that we were stuck on. For the initial interviews I had lined up in the Hmong village of Doi Pui, at the top of Doi Suthep mountain, I took my former research assistant from Doi Inthanon National Park, Sert. He moved from Ban Mae Klang Luang, a small Karen village in the national park, to Chiang Mai for work and to live with his girlfriend from Florida. He knew many of the Hmong villagers in Doi Pui from attending Community Based Tourism workshops and conferences in the area, so respondents were quite comfortable with him. He also had a motorbike we could take up, whereas Pim was too uncomfortable with the thought of biking up there. I had a good experience with him, but I did not want to call on him to help often, as he had now moved on and was working full time as a tour guide in Chiang Mai. Lastly, for the interview with the headman of the more remote Khun Chang Kian, I went with Pan, a friend of Pim's from Chiang Mai University. This was for logisitical reasons —once again, Pan was comfortable biking up to the village whereas Pim was not.

Pim had told me from the beginning that she would have to return to Bangkok, her home, at some point, to live with her parents and look for work. Despite knowing this, I was very dismayed when it came time for her to leave. I know that I would not have had access to many im-

portant people without her help. Whatever approach she took with officials, it worked; people were receptive of our interview requests and were happy to provide information. I asked again with the department of RCSD to connect me with another translator, and they connected me with Pat, a student completing his Master's of English at CMU. Pat is a few years older than me, and we got along quite well and again became fast friends. Pat was a bit less comfortable calling officials' offices, however, and for whatever reason it seemed a bit more difficult to make connections with official interviewees. I can't really speculate as to why, but at any rate, we were able to interview the majority of the respondents I wanted to speak with, and Pat was very professional during the interviews and I was happy with his work and friendship.

Working through translation certainly does shape the data, as different translators have different styles, and some will give more detailed accounts of what was said versus others where more is summarized. I am sure that much of the idioms or facetious remarks that people were saying were lost in translation, and likely some of the nuance in their testimonies as well. I learned quickly that my research assistant's contacts and networks were vital in gaining access to respondents. How I was viewed in both field sites also influenced who I was able to access and how comfortable people felt talking to me. As a young white woman (I was 27 in Jasper and 28 in Chiang Mai), I feel as though opponents of development in Jasper felt very comfortable with me. Since many were feeling a bit hopeless about the direction they saw Parks Canada taking, they were very excited to see a young academic taking an interest in the issue and showcasing what was going on there for other audiences. I think many saw me as an ally who could spread the message of the movement into new arenas, to some extent, especially some of the older former wardens. This was not so much the case for current park staff, the private companies, or the

chamber of commerce, however, who I think largely viewed me as one more person asking un-

comfortable questions that they were sick of answering. However I think that as a young woman,

I wasn't very threatening, and I think they were fairly open because of this. The general manager

of Maligne Tours was especially candid with me, likely because she was frustrated with parks,

but also likely because she didn't see me as a threat.

In Thailand, as I mentioned, my access to respondents was primarily thanks to connec-

tions of my research assistants, but also thanks to the prestige of Dr. Chayan of RCSD. For most

official respondents, we would send an official letter of request from RCSD signed by Dr.

Chayan. This actually helped me gain greater access to politicians and high ranking officials than

I could in Canada where I was just working on my own, and where public servants feel less

obliged to honour such requests. I feel as though being a PhD candidate from the west gave me a

certain degree of privilege there, and interviews felt more official than in Canada. Opponents

were of course happy to talk to me, again in the hope that I could more broadly publicize the is-

sue, and proponents were oddly quite happy to talk to me as well. The PDA in particular sent

several high ranking representatives to speak to me and to give an official presentation about the

project, likely in the hopes that I would advertise back in North America. Again, as a young

woman I feel I appeared less threatening, especially to high ranking male officials, and I think

this afforded me a certain degree of openness in their responses.

I coded interviews using Dedoose software, which allowed me to code the two projects

separately within the same interface. I often coded passages under more than one theme, and the

software allows for compilation of excerpts from overlapping themes, such as 'ecological in-

tegrity' and 'nationalism', for example. The software was extremely useful in showing which themes and concerns were most prevalent and for keeping excerpts organized.

In addition to interviews and observation, I conducted document analysis of various publications relevant to both cases, such as environmental assessment reports, parks department publications and press releases, promotional materials for the proposed attractions, media pieces, blogrolls and publications from environmental organizations or activists, legal documents, park management plans, etc. In Thailand, Pim and I translated these documents, including information on visitation and budgets for the national parks from the DNPWPC website, promotional materials, the EA, Thai newspaper articles and YouTube videos, but I was not able to analyze as many documents as I could in Jasper. This work gave me insight into how proponents and opponents used discursive choices, media representations or legal mechanisms to try to produce and circulate particular knowledges in hopes of enrolling allies and stabilizing certain understandings of conservation and the role of parks. In the following empirical chapters, I attempt to tease out the contestations and boundary conflicts in both sites that regulated what was and was not possible in terms of private tourism development.

Chapter 3
Austerity Politics and the Post-Politicization of Conservation Governance in Jasper National Park

Introduction

The recent series of contestations around private tourism attractions in Canadian parks, along with previous battles, illustrate conservation in Canada as a product of perpetual contestation around environmental and political economic knowledge claims. In other words, as an achievement that is always in the process of becoming. Parks Canada's authority is a performance "which can only be sustained by a skillful collaboration between apparently authoritative officials and their audiences" (Matthews, 2011: loc3223). In this way conservation practice is open for re-negotiation as public audiences can object to and refuse public assent to knowledge claims advanced by bureaucratic actors, and thus disrupt or obstruct the rollout of neoliberal projects. Public and Indigenous actors in the Jasper area mounted a significant countermovement to the private proposals in an effort to do just that.

This chapter will explore 1) the ways in which proponents and opponents mobilize truth claims in their contestations, and 2) the strategies as well as the political economic circumstances that shape public and Indigenous participation in decision-making. While proponents and opponents both employ various strategies and tools to enroll allies, I argue that due to substantial federal budget cuts, the interests of Parks Canada and certain corporate interests in Jasper and Banff have been aligning, which is diminishing the efficacy of public and Indigenous consultation. In the context of austerity politics and the growing 'common sense' of private sector partnerships in conservation (Fletcher, 2014), I argue that austerity politics create the conditions for a re-articulation of the politics of conservation governance as the interests of parks departments and private

sector interests are brought into alignment. Specifically, the politics of austerity can render single-issue controversies post-political. Austerity-related restructuring of conservation practice elevates the importance of public-private (P3) partnerships for sustaining the viability of the park system into the future, contributing to the construction of a post-political 'there is no alternative' discourse where neoliberal ideology in conservation is elevated beyond critique. To facilitate development, managers employ various strategies to reduce democratic oversight of public provisioning, removing opportunities for political debate and dissensus and orchestrating the appearance of consensual decision-making. Although neoliberal rhetoric stresses the importance of 'decentralization' and the participation of a wider range of actors, certain actors are brought into the process in very circumscribed and depoliticized ways.

Neoliberalisation at the state level since the 1980s in terms of shrinking budgets for parks and related discourses encouraging private operators and flanking mechanisms to fund and manage park services has certainly influenced the direction of policy and practice in Canadian parks. But, as explained in Chapter 2, this is also a continuation (and amplification) of past debates and struggles around the "balance" between 'ecological integrity' and 'visitor experience', and around the role of the private sector in parks and the extent to which mass tourism is compatible with conservation mandates.

Conservation as a Site of Struggle in Canada

The first national parks were created as tourist destinations for passengers of the Canadian Pacific Railway company. Banff, Canada's first national park, was established in 1885 when railroad workers stumbled upon hot springs and attempted to commercialize them (Campbell,

2011). The Canadian government recognized that the springs held endless revenue potential, and so seized control of the area by declaring a 26 square kilometre reserve around them (Bella, 1987). The Rocky Mountains National Park Act of 1887 expanded the reserve from 26 to 673 square kilometres and named it the Rocky Mountains National Park, which was later renamed Banff in the early 1960s. The area was originally reserved "as a public park and pleasure ground for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Canada" (Rocky Mountains Park Act, 1887), a very clear nod to the importance of tourism and recreation. The CPR built the Banff Springs Hotel and the Lake Louise Chalet, two high end choices for accommodation for CPR travelers. The other early mountain parks followed this lead —Yoho in 1886, Waterton in 1895, Jasper in 1907, and Kootenay in 1920.

For a young nation-state, the early mountain parks became icons of a very particular version of Canadian identity. Much like the US experience, vast and 'sublime' wilderness areas helped to distinguish Canada from Europe, which boasted awe-inspiring cathedrals and architecture (Braun, 2002; Cronon, 1996). For wealthy settlers, traveling to the national parks to marvel at these natural wonders was part of performing Canadian identity. But the parks as pleasure grounds masked a very disturbing and violent history. First Nations were forcefully expelled from park territories despite having produced the 'wilderness' character of these spaces through traditional livelihoods. Although the parks were symbols of a newly forming Canadian identity, the close ties between the Canadian Pacific Railroad and the mountain parks prohibited most Canadian settlers from experiencing them. The hotels in Banff and Jasper were accessible only to those who could pay the exorbitant rates in addition to the rates for railroad travel. The early travellers and adventurers thus tended to be wealthy, white and male, making experiencing

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'wilderness' and performing Canadian identity very particular and exclusionary (Bella, 1987; Braun, 2002; Campbell, 2011). Sandilands et al. (2005) argue that wilderness was also damagingly heteronormative. In short, the parks helped to promote a heteronormative, patriarchal, white settler vision of national identity, forcefully expelling Indigenous nations to create wilderness playgrounds for the settler elite (Sandilands et al., 2005; MacLaren, 2007; Sandlos, 2014).

This early history of elite tourism continues today, but the idea that it is an environmentally benign practice has been hotly contested from the beginning. Deep green conservationists have been battling with tourism promoters over the meanings of 'sustainable', 'conservation' and the role of national parks since the Dominion Parks Branch came into being in 1911 (Bella, 1987). The ambiguous dedication clause in the National Parks Act of 1930 (which has carried forward to today) left much room for differing interpretations of the role of parks and the private sector. The clause reads:

> "The National Parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education, and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and National Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations."

Words like 'benefit', 'enjoyment', 'use' and 'unimpaired' are all floating signifiers; they can be invested with any number of meanings and are bitterly contested by proponents and opponents of tourism development in parks.

In Banff and Jasper in particular, these performances have produced what is popularly understood as the 'pendulum effect', where certain decades saw the pendulum swing closer to strict ecological protection and others saw the pendulum swing towards tourism development and visitor experience. Banff sees just under 4 million visitors per year, and Jasper is second with

just over 2 million (Parks Canada, 2014). Because the early mountain parks were built around tourism, many of the private operators —like Brewster Travel and Maligne Tours— and the townsites were grandfathered in. Only 7 out of 188 parks in Canada contain townsites, 5 of which are in the mountain parks, so it is atypical to have so many private businesses operating within a national park. Because both parks also see so much visitation, these are really the money-making parks for Parks Canada at the national level, and thus in times of austerity they are perhaps under greater pressure to draw in more tourism revenue.

In the 1970s and 80s the 'pendulum' swung quite far towards the development side in Banff in particular. When the Yellowhead Highway from Edmonton through B.C. opened in 1968, developers in the park took advantage of the increase in middle class tourists flooding in by car, spurring urbanization of the townsites, ski developments, hotels, etc. (Bella, 1987). This frenzy of development spurred two momentous independent reviews of Parks Canada, the Banff Bow Valley Study (1994-96) and the Panel on Ecological Integrity (1998-2000). Both studies came to the conclusion that Canadian parks were in serious peril; that ecological integrity was increasingly threatened by tourism and infrastructure development. The studies forced Parks Canada to take action, which was mainly legislative. The National Parks Act of 2000 proclaimed that the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity shall be the first priority of the Minister when making decisions.

A more targeted action taken as a result of the revelations of the BBVS and the PEI was to develop the 2007 Outlying Commercial Accommodation Guidelines and include limits to development in management plans. Kevin Van Tighem, who was the superintendent of Banff National Park between 2007 and 2011, talked about the great lengths taken to come up with all of

the precise limits to development included in the 2007 OCA guidelines. He was the head of the

task force charged with negotiating with OCA owners to ensure each operator did not develop

the full span of their leaseholds.

> "It was a really painful process. Every one of these OCAs was given a certain amount of capacity to grow, like 6 or 10 more rooms you can have, and that was the carrot. The stick was, but you can only get approval to do that if you upgrade this, this, this and this, and do something to mitigate that, so it was sort of our way of saying we recognize what you need, now there's some unfinished business here that we need attended to so that we can say that we're managing well, so here's the package, but that's all you ever get and there ain't no more."

After about 5 years of work, the document was produced, which held each OCA to cer-

tain development limits. The 2010 management plans for both Banff and Jasper state that these

OCA guidelines are to be respected. The 2010 Jasper Management Plan also states that no new

land shall be released for overnight commercial accommodation.

Despite the stronger wording in the Parks Act and the written limits to development in

planning documents, many still consider the pendulum to have swung very far to the visitor ex-

perience and tourism development side over the past decade. Ben Gadd, a well-known naturalist

in the Banff area who was one of the original Parks Canada interpreters in the early 1980s, ex-

plained that when he first started, visitor experience was considered maintenance of trails and

campgrounds and quality interpretive programming by experienced naturalists. Interpretive

guides and other programming were free of charge for park visitors, and most if not all park staff

were trained biologists or ecologists. When the Conservatives came into power in 1984, Gadd

saw the naturalist program he loved completely dismantled. The free guided hikes and nightly

programming were cancelled, and people like him with secure positions were let go in favour of

seasonal low-skilled workers. "They were trying to get the most work out of the fewest people

for the least money. It was very unpleasant, so we all quit," he said. Private tour guides replaced

the park-run programs, for additional fees to visitors, shifting responsibility for 'visitor experi-

ence' largely to private outfitters.

While the groundwork was laid in the 1980s, austerity measures really came down in the

1990s under the Liberal government led by Jean Chretien. Between 1993 and 1998 Parks Canada

faced budget cuts of $123 million (Kopas, 2007). In 1998 the Agency Act changed Parks Canada

into a special agency, which opponents of development point to as the beginning of the end. The

Agency Act legislated that Parks Canada would continue to receive a yearly budget from the fed-

eral government, but that revenues generated at each park could also be retained. Shrinking pub-

lic purses then effectively started to put pressure on parks to make up the difference. Kevin Van

Tighem, former superintendent of Banff, said:

> "What [the Agency Act] did was it basically hardwired a potential for serious mandate
> drift, because it means that now we are completely in the same bed as the tourism
> industry in the sense that we live or breathe on revenues. So there's a real revenue
> imperative now. That revenue imperative becomes even more powerful.. It get's
> magnified with every bit of budget cut you get."

With such high visitation, Banff and Jasper are also anomalies in the system in terms of

how much they rely on revenues versus appropriations from the government. Most parks receive

a combination of appropriations, which is tax dollars, and revenues, coming from things like

camping, gate fees, commercial land rents and percentage of gross from commercial operators.

In Banff and Jasper, the great volumes of people coming to the park and the higher number of

private operators means that 80% to 90% of funds are related to revenues with only about 10% to

20% from appropriations.The mountain parks have a revenue target to reach each year, some of

which is shared with other parks across Canada that don't earn as much in revenues, and any-

thing earned over and above that target is kept by the park. Even though the mountain parks are making much more than other parks in tourism revenues, this does not mean that they have more money available for conservation programs. Money collected from visitor offerings is meant to be reinvested in visitor experience. There have not been any significant inputs of funding into conservation programs since these were significantly depleted in 2012 and the years following. Enacting the politics of austerity, the federal government cut $6 million dollars in 2012-2013, about $20 million in 2013-2014, and about $29 million for both the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 seasons, totalling approximately $84 million (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat2016).

Stephen Woodley, former Chief Ecosystem Scientist for Parks Canada and current member of the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, said that Parks Canada lost 30% of their science capacity in the 2012 funding cuts. He said that there has been a reduction in the number of major ecosystem types being monitored in each park, a reduction in the number of measures from each ecosystem type, and a reduction in sampling frequency. In many cases monitoring is simply not being done because there is no one to do it. "I estimate that only about 60% of monitoring measures are being properly measured", he said. The restoration and prescribed burn programs have also been worryingly reduced.

The Visitor Experience and External Relations branch of Parks Canada came into being in 2005, which Jasper's Visitor Experience Manager called a "major organizational shift". While visitor services staff used to be seasonal and mostly operational, after 2005 there were several new positions created: promotions officer, operations co-ordinator, product development officer (which has additional support staff), and creative/media development staff. Each park now has both a conservation branch and visitor experience branch, where visitor experience personnel

have degrees in marketing and business instead of ecosystems management. For many of the former wardens and environmental activists, this is a completely wrongheaded since marketers and advertisers are looking primarily to increase visitation, not necessarily to promote the park mandate of maintaining or improving ecological integrity. Karsten Heuer, former warden and current head of the Yellowstone 2 Yukon initiative, blamed the budget cuts and the organizational push towards visitor experience as the reason he grudgingly left the agency, and he was not alone:

> "When I started with Parks, for instance, we had 12 people covering the full extent of the backcountry. By the time I left there was basically 1 and a half of us, maybe 2. At the field level, you no longer had an ecosystem scientist, there was no longer any communication between what the park was doing and what was happening on the surrounding provincial landscape. It was just this progression of undermining how we could actually even track how the ecology of the park was doing. We saw the ecological side of staffing plummet over the last 10 years, and the visitor experience side is skyrocketing in terms of numbers of positions."

He and other former wardens and conservation specialists told me they left for the same reason; that suddenly they found they could not support the agency they once loved as its emphasis, funding and capacity shifted towards visitor experience, and there simply was not enough money on the conservation side for them to carry out their jobs effectively any longer.

The perceived pendulum swing towards visitor experience and tourism development in Jasper and Banff of the past decade can be attributed to several related factors. As I mentioned, the new dedicated focus on marketing and increasing visitation shifted the priorities of the agency, which diverted funding and staff capacity to these aims. Federal budget cuts in 2012 ex-aggerated the importance of gate fees and revenues in Banff-Jasper, including land rents and per-centage of gross from private tourism operators within the park. This is especially so since the

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park infrastructure built predominantly in the 60s and 70s has fallen into disrepair, creating a

$2.8 billion dollar backlog in deferred work across Canada (Boutilier, 2014). To recoup costs and

stay 'relevant' to changing demographics in Canada, Parks Canada's new target is to increase

visitation by 2% per year. A senior manager in Jasper said that this is "the first time that's hap-

pened in my career and to my knowledge." In his 27 years of experience, PC "has been passive

about visitation, so this is new," he said. All of this coupled with a conservative government un-

der PM Stephen Harper between 2006-2015 that was unapologetically pro-development and anti-

environment (Peyton and Franks, 2015), created a situation where the interests of Parks Canada

and private operators in Banff-Jasper began to align. To the dismay of public actors, these fiscal

pressures and new alliances have left most with little confidence in public consultation and feel-

ing as though the public has no real role in decision-making.

Co-evolution of Social Activism and Conservation Practice in Jasper

At the heart of the two controversies are contested meanings of conservation and national

parks, which include a confluence of truth claims about nature, national identity, accessibility

and inclusivity, progress, and political economic imperatives. Although the production of bu-

reaucratic knowledge involves a diffuse network of actants which each have agency, not all ac-

tors exert the same power in decision-making. I argue that the politics of austerity augment the

private sector's ability to exert power in park conservation practice, leading Parks Canada to uti-

lize post-political strategies to reduce space for the practice of contentious politics (Swynge-

douw, 2010) and streamline the approval process. In the rest of this chapter, I explore the tools

and strategies proponents and opponents employ to enrol allies and to what extent public and In-

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digenous actors are able to participate in decision-making. First, I will elucidate the conflicts around the series of truth claims that encompass discourses of conservation and the role of national parks, starting with 'wilderness' thinking.

The 'Wilderness' Ethic

Both proponents and opponents drew upon 'wilderness' tropes in interesting and at times contradictory ways to advance their claims. The main take-away points from Cronon's The Trouble With Wilderness are that: 1) wilderness is not natural, it is created; 2) envisioning wilderness as depopulated and pristine does violence to First Nations who have lived in and shaped that wilderness for centuries, legitimating their expulsion; and 3) an environmentalism that does not see humans as an integral part of non-human ecosystems is doomed to failure. As mentioned, scholarship in Canada has also critiqued the concept's hetero-patriarchal, racist and classist associations as wilderness was historically a wealthy white straight man's playground (Braun, 2002, 2003; MacLaren, 2007; Sandilands et al., 2005). In the early mountain parks, First Nations were expelled from the spaces they had contributed to producing in order to create 'wilderness' as playground for wealthy white travelers.

Protecting intact wilderness as the raison d'etre for national parks came through in the majority of interviews with opponents of both development projects. The Skywalk was particularly offensive since it was such a large steel and glass structure in the middle of the mountains. Mrs. Ogivly, longtime resident of Jasper, said,

> "Sure, visitors think the glass thing is awesome, but do they have any contact with nature? What they told parks was that it was going to bring people closer to nature to appreciate the parks. Now, I've never felt further from nature in my life walking down

that silly thing."

The Skywalk was viewed predominantly as an unnatural thrill-based attraction that took away from visitors' ability to truly appreciate and experience the wilderness character of the park. Similarly, the majority of Jasperites found the notion of a luxury hotel by the iconic Maligne Lake to be distasteful and insupportable. Monika Schaefer, former warden and current member of the JEA, said:

> "If you impact and sacrifice the ecological integrity because you're trying to quote unquote "balance" it with visitor experience, what do you have left? You don't have the thing that people came for. What they're doing is they're changing the attraction. It's now the ziplines and the entertainment factor as opposed to coming here to experience wildlife and wilderness at it's core, in it's natural state."

This sentiment was echoed by most respondents who felt that highly consumptive infrastructure like hotels or intense-use ski hills should be built outside of the national park, it's not necessary or appropriate to offer those activities within.

Opponents skillfully appealed to the public's sense of admiration and want to safeguard wilderness spaces in online petitions (as outlined in the previous Chapter), through signage at protests, through interviews and spots in the media, and on postcards that were circulated in hopes that people would mail them to former PM Stephen Harper. Some of the signs held up at the JEA Maligne Lake protest, for example, read "Support nature not more development at Maligne Lake" and "Grizzlies ✓, Caribou ✓, More Development ⊗ at Maligne Lake". CPAWS ran a nation-wide petition against the Maligne proposal, asking the public to "help keep Jasper's spirit wild" and say no to overnight commercial accommodation at the lake (CPAWS, n.d.). Although the bulk of their reasoning against the proposal had to do with breach of park policy and the Species At Risk Act, appeals to people's emotional connection with wilderness were recur-

rent within material circulated by environmental groups, either through impassioned wording or spectacular imagery. This was quite an effective strategy for raising awareness and gathering petition signatures, particularly with European tourists who perhaps shared a Western understanding of 'wilderness', many of whom felt that Canadians would be remiss to develop over these wild spaces as had largely been done in Europe.

While most opponents felt very passionately about protecting the ecological integrity of the 'wilderness', there were some interesting points of nuance amongst respondents. Several respondents felt that humans were indeed part of nature and wilderness, but that one needs to distinguish between different kinds of human environmental activities lest we misguidedly conclude that any and all human activities in nature are benign because humans are a part of nature (see Braun, 2002; Keeling 2008, 2013). Kim Wallace, a teacher in Jasper, said:

> "For me, ecological integrity includes humans. We are a part of nature. We do belong here. But what I see with Parks Canada in the mandate is a bit of a pathology, because we're not allowed to use what's here to help us live, but we're allowed to destroy what's here to help us have 'visitor experience'."

She was referring to the fact that while First Nations' traditional livelihoods have been banned in the park, consumptive townsites are considered benign and individualized environmental action via 'ethical consumption' through tourism is accepted as best practice.

Opponents diverged on what levels of consumption were considered sustainable. Typically, luxury hotel stays that are highly consumptive in terms of energy use, heat, water and waste were considered inappropriate due to their overall ecological and carbon footprints, while activities such as camping or staying at accommodations like the Maligne Hostel, which is a small cabin without electricity or running water, were considered less impactful and thus appropriate in

a conservation zone. Publicly funded programming was also considered more appropriate than private tourism as the growth economy was not considered sustainable and thus antithetical to long-term conservation. Opponents considered the privately operated Brewster Skywalk, which relies on big bus tours and requires diesel buses running to and from the site every 15 minutes, to be overly consumptive and inappropriate within the park. Parks Canada and proponents may argue that hotels concentrate people in the front country which could be considered less impactful than many hikers in the backcountry, but opponents understood these as very different kinds of impacts operating at very different scales.

Most opponents follow this line of thinking, however there are a few who feel that tourism should be drastically reduced and that the townsites should be removed altogether. Those that want to see tourism limited are defending a people-free 'wilderness' but are giving assent only to the creation of wilderness as a very specific kind of 'low-impact' form of tourist playground. For those who would prefer low-impact activities over mass tourism, opponents are largely against wilderness as white, male playground. The vast majority feel that more activities in the park should be free of charge and accessible to all Canadians regardless of race, gender or class (I will expand upon this in the next two sections).

Additionally, some First Nations have been forming alliances with the environmental groups in Jasper to try to stop Parks Canada from developing the parks, and others express similar desires to protect and respect the land and ecological integrity, echoing sentiments that these developments are damaging to the forest ecosystems that Parks Canada are supposed to protect (see Chapter 4 for further detail).[6]

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[6] Of course, understandings of ecological integrity and the role of traditional livelihoods in environmental stewardship differed between settlers and Indigenous nations.

Interestingly, the private sector was trying to recognize all that is problematic about wilderness thinking and leverage it to further their business interests. Dave Mckenna, former president of Brewster Travel, had often used the idea that First Nations had always been a part of nature in the Banff-Jasper area to argue that in fact the commercial Skywalk attraction was appropriate and sustainable. "Out at one of the Banff Lake Cruise Tours there's an old archaeological site that First Nations have been using for well over 10,000 years," he said. "So human beings have always been part of this environment, we can't separate that, so it's really about how we interact with our environment to make sure we don't over-stress it."

Opponents have pointed out the irony of Brewster developing an attraction based around bus trips when the bulk of their revenue comes from taking tourists out onto the rapidly retreating Athabasca Glacier, questioning what "sustainability" means to business proponents. Dave McKenna himself said the impetus for the Skywalk was to create a "zero impact" attraction, but was taken aback when I asked if he planned to make his bus fleet run on renewable energy. Nonetheless, by strategically aligning themselves as progressives trying to move beyond wilderness thinking, private actors and Parks Canada have been employing the discourse to discredit opponents as extremists who are against progress of any kind. There is likely some truth to this, but I also question the extent to which mass tourism attractions challenge wilderness thinking in parks. While McKenna made reference to First Nations' use of the land for millennia, First Nations traditional lifeways remain inappropriate within the park while mass tourism attractions benefiting parties like Viad Corporation are touted as both inclusive and sustainable. Banff and Jasper were built around private tourism operations at the expense of First Nations, which continues today as multinationals continue to build attractions for profit on stolen territories, the

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proceeds of which are not shared with Indigenous nations (see Chapter 4). Wilderness here was created for commercial tourism, and it appears not much has changed.

For opponents, appealing to broader discourses that pit capitalism against wilderness did broaden awareness and engagement in their cause. For proponents, including Parks Canada, the trope was used to argue for private development as a tool to connect Canadians with 'wilderness'. Both proponents and opponents agreed on the creation of wilderness for tourism/ leisure (except the few opponents who wanted to see little to no tourism at all), but only disagreed on what kind of tourism was acceptable. This underlying point of 'agreement' about the main tenets of wilderness lent support to Parks Canada's official statements regarding the importance of connecting visitors with nature via tourism offerings, with official documents and statements performing the appearance of collective agreement (Fletcher, 2014; Forsyth and Walker, 2014).

National Nature, New Canadians and Urban Youth

Nationalism and national identity are also very much tied up with arguments for and against, as nationalism and the wilderness ethic go hand in hand in North America (Braun, 2002; Cronon, 1996). Parks Canada and the companies involved position the proposals as opportunities to make the park more exciting and accessible for Canadians, many of whom aren't keen to have rugged backcountry experiences but would prefer activities that are easily accessible by car. According to Parks Canada visitor data, approximately 65% of visitors in the mountain parks fall into what they call the 'view from the edge' category, meaning that they seek activities that don't stray too far from paved roads or trails, or that involve built infrastructure and comfortable facili-

ties. The Skywalk in particular was marketed as an attraction that is very comfortable, an easy way to learn about the wilderness that surrounds, and accessible to handicapped and elderly Canadians.

Ease of access is also considered vitally important for new Canadians and urban youth, two increasingly important demographic segments for Parks Canada. The agency realizes that demographics are changing rapidly in Canada, sparking a great deal of anxiety around staying relevant to this changing population. Parks Canada's official position/assumption is that new Canadians and urban youth are less interested in wilderness experiences and would prefer attractions that have the comforts of the city. While senior managers admitted to me that they have no social science data that would indicate what new Canadians and urban youth are looking for in parks, they assume these demographics would want more 'view from the edge' type attractions. There has been a significant push to increase tourism by altering park offerings to attract people who are looking for more comfort, for example with the introduction of yurts and oTentiks to the campgrounds. A 2014 park survey showed that visitation is key for developing a sense of connection to national parks, national pride and feelings of stewardship towards the parks (Parks Canada, n.d.), which the Agency asserts is crucial for garnering support for parks in the yearly federal budget. Brewster Travel and Maligne Tours very skillfully invoke Parks Canada's own discourses around the dire need to attract new demographics to parks to promote their development proposals.

Opponents see these tropes as strategies to shut down debate and promote a growth-based park agenda. Former warden Monika Schaefer said,

"It's just their way of shutting down debate and discussion. It's politically incorrect to say no, the handicapped or wheelchair bound people can't actually get somewhere, that sounds like you're a crass, cruel individual. It shuts down debate!"

Many pointed out that the old viewpoint was as accessible or even more accessible than the Skywalk attraction. Opponents feel that to some extent the new Canadian and urban youth trope similarly shuts down debate as no one can argue that new Canadians should not be able to enjoy the parks, but the discourse assumes that people in these demographics wish to enjoy the park in this particular way. While urban and new Canadians may very well be drawn to attractions like the Skywalk, there remains no evidence to suggest this is the case and no follow up has been done to see if indeed this attraction is reaching these target demographics.

Peter Duck, former Parks Canada interpreter and current member of the Bow Valley Naturalists, said that like many others, he applauds Parks Canada for trying to make parks more inclusive and is enthused about free programs like Learn to Camp. But he and others believe that a better way to reach youth and new Canadians is through education, allowing school groups free access to come into the park for interpretive programs and providing more programs like Learn to Camp or free guided hikes for new Canadians. Though critics disagree with the mass tourism approach to reaching these demographics, the underlying points of agreement between proponents and opponents - that parks should be accessible and inclusive - are being mobilized to 'orchestrate' the appearance of consensus here (Fletcher, 2014; Swyngedouw, 2011), while alternative visions of how to do this and consequently alternative management options are being foreclosed (Forsyth and Walker, 2014; Matthews, 2011).

Opponents argue that if access is really the issue, then building more for-profit attractions make the parks less accessible to all Canadians. They argue that parks belong to all Canadians

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and thus everyone, rich and poor, should be able to access the full breadth of park experiences.

Opponents question the Maligne Tours Hotel proposal in particular, which was slated to be very

high end, around $500 per night, and argued that this would be well beyond the means of most

new Canadians and urban youth, and that these demographics were just being used as an excuse

to develop business for wealthy travelers. Nik Lopoukhine, former Director General of Parks

Canada and current chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, said

> "The thing that really gives me heartburn is the rationale for putting up a high-end hotel
> is that it falls within the Parks Canada interest of building up visitation from youth and
> new Canadians. A very valid and worthwhile target group, but frankly I can't see how you
> can marry a high-end hotel with those two particular target groups."

Many argue also that the Skywalk ($32+tax per adult) and Spirit Island cruises ($65+tax per

adult) are just added expenses for these demographics in an already expensive park.

Practically, opponents have similarly appealed to the public's sense of national pride

around national parks in campaign materials including posters and online media. Opponents con-

struct the parks as part of Canadians' collective national heritage, belonging to the Canadian pub-

lic and not the private sector, and encourage public actors to fight to keep our national treasures

safe for future generations of Canadians. Appeals to national pride were especially invoked in the

campaign against development at Maligne Lake, as it and Spirit Island are such iconic places. Jill

Seaton of the JEA told me that their opposition to Maligne was "more the fact that that lake is so

special to Canada. It's probably one of the most photographed views in the world. It's just so

iconic. It's been on the back of a 5 dollar bill and everything," she said. While appealing to na-

tionalism was effective in broadening awareness and public involvement in the campaigns, ulti-

mately Parks Canada's appeal to discourses that receive public assent (such as accessibility and

inclusivity for all Canadians) lent inadvertent support for decisions to go ahead with development in the face of opposition.

Political Economies of Conservation

At the core of both controversies are diverging beliefs about whether social services or public goods should be managed publicly or privately. Opponents took serious issue with the neoliberal ideology they saw driving these changes, calling this the 'race to the bottom' of conservation:

> "The net effect of the cut in funding is that more funding has to come from the private sector, which then produces another cut in funding. We're chasing the system to the bottom of the barrel. The basic right wing philosophy is if you don't pay for services, they won't happen unless the private sector does it. Rich people can always afford those services, and they don't care about the poor." -Ben Gadd, former Parks Canada interpreter

> "That's ideologically driven. You know? You cut the budgets, and then you say, well we need these P3 partnerships or whatever they call them. We need to build these structures or else we don't have any money. Well, that's ideologically-driven. That's a political decision to not invest in the national parks!" -Monika Schaefer, former park warden

Opponents feel that all of the PR around visitor experience and connecting people to nature is just a dog and pony show to detract from the underlying politics of austerity driving these changes.

Because of this, opponents of these development projects feel that business interests are driving the management process, not the other way around. Former CEO of Parks Canada, Alan Latourelle, denied that budget cuts significantly challenged Parks Canada's ecological capacity. However former Jasper Superintendent, Greg Fenton, said that at the field level:

"It is extremely difficult to get increases in appropriations. If you look at the governments, irrespective if its Conservative or Liberal or anybody else, there are always deficits to manage. When you're in a deficit situation there isn't money to go out to departments and agencies. That's why it becomes so important for us to increase visitation and revenues."

It is clear that austerity-driven restructuring of conservation in Canada has increased the pressure felt by park managers in Banff-Jasper to partner with private interests and increase tourism and visitation. The following sections will examine the public countermovement as well as the public consultation processes to reveal the ways in which this austerity-driven pressure has contributed to the post-politicization of conservation governance.

Strategies to Enroll Allies

The bulk of both campaigns involved writing letters to decision-makers and politicians, along with having pieces published in local and national media outlets, organizing petitions, and holding public rallies and protests. The protests organized for the Skywalk were in very good humour. On May 12, 2011, about 20 opponents organized a Monty-python style "Silly Walk" (as the Skywalk was cheekily dubbed) through the town of Jasper (see video at https://youtu.be/Ps-BUAHFbPww). They put on costumes and paraded through town, and others began to join them. They described it as being good fun, something to help them laugh a bit about the situation.

On September 7, 2012, protesters held a peaceful demonstration at the Columbia Icefields Centre, where Brewster operates its glacier stage coach service. About 70 people came from Jasper, Banff, and the surrounding area, with representatives from different local environmental organizations coming to pass on the information to their networks. People dressed up as goats

wearing "evicted" signs to signify their opposition to animals and nature being disturbed for commercial gain. Protesters then paraded through the info centre and answered questions.

Figure 6.0 - Skywalk Protest at the Columbia Icefields Centre, Sept 2012

Both rallies were well-received, and were also strategies to brighten opponents' spirits as trying to scale up interest and movement around the projects was taxing work. "Finding the time and resources was really tricky. Finding the resources to make us loud enough, present enough. The businesses have that, the multinational corporations have that," said Kim Wallace. Feeling as though all of your time and efforts are for naught is emotionally, mentally and physically draining for opponents, and many have become bitter, jaded and quite pessimistic about the public's role in decision-making as a result.

"We just exhaust ourselves caring about processes that are fixed in advance," said Ben Gadd. "If you're really going to oppose this stuff, you have a lot of work to do. You have to read the briefs, you have to get up on the issues, and then you have to be willing to take the kind of punishment that comes from it. In the end it wears you out, because the system is too hard to fight." Many respondents felt that parks actually hopes for this, that opponents will exhaust

themselves, become jaded, and stop showing up to fight. Indeed, Swyngedouw explains that in a post-political regime, "the growing apathy of ordinary people with respect to the democratic political process is noted but banalized as not central to the 'proper' functioning of democratic institutions" (2011: 372).

Perhaps because of this, the level of engagement dropped slightly with the Maligne Tours proposal. But even though there were fewer letters sent or signatures on the Avaaz petition, most locals were far more upset about the Maligne Tours hotel than the Glacier Skywalk because the implications for ecological integrity were far more severe. The endangered caribou herd and threatened bears and harlequin ducks were grave concerns for most Jasperites. These non-human actants were critically important for opponents' strategy. The woodland caribou were actually 'upgraded' from threatened to endangered during the height of the controversy. "It's critical caribou habitat and there should be no development in a critical habitat of an endangered species," said Volker, co-owner of Maligne Canyon Hostel, an OCA in Jasper. "In the end these are the arguments that shot [the hotel] down, because parks realized that in the federal courts this would not go through, not under the Species At Risk legislation," he said. As mentioned in Chapter 2, opponents also held a protest along Maligne Road on June 29, 2014 (Nichols, 2014).

Policy itself became the second major point of strategy for opponents against Maligne. The fact that parks was considering breaking the 2007 OCA guidelines that prohibit new overnight commercial accommodations outside of the townsites of Banff and Jasper was held up as proof that Parks Canada cares more about enhancing visitor experience than ecological integrity. Terry Winkler was the one who brought this to parks attention at an open house meeting. Amber Stewart, a park land use manager who was fielding questions at the meeting was caught a

bit offguard with the question, and answered that parks would consider changing it. It appeared that parks had not been aware that the proposal contravened the OCA guidelines or the management plan at the outset, as they told General Manager of Maligne Tours, Pat Crowley, that they had no policy problem initially. Pat was livid with parks, and felt strongly that they are completely disorganized:

> "I have a letter from December of 2012 which said they had no policy problems and no realty problems with the proposal. Now they say they have a policy problem. Their letter said the initial policy screening found no problems. Well what is so in depth and complicated about that policy? I've done all this work, taken up the time of his department, my time, and NOW you're deciding that maybe you have a problem with policy?"

Kevin Van Tighem, Steven Woodley, and Nik Lopoukhine, three former Parks Canada managers, made headlines across the country with their open letter to then Minister of the Environment Leona Aglukkak, which stressed the danger of breaking these guidelines (Appendix C). Very plainly, all of the OCA owners who had negotiated their caps on development could argue for more if Maligne Tours is able to break the guidelines to put a hotel in critical caribou habitat. When Parks Canada turned down the hotel portion of the proposal but greenlighted the tent cabins for further review and environmental assessment, opponents were not the least bit appeased:

> "I feel that commercial forces still got what they could out of the minister. The draft decision permits 13 of 14 elements, violates the OCA guidelines and requires the changing of a management plan for more development. Note that the decision was not to open the management plan for caribou conservation! The tent cabins are the equivalent of a small hotel in terms of staff, traffic and laundry," said Former Chief Ecosystem Scientist, Steven Woodley.

> "There is no such thing as being half-pregnant. They greenlighted a new commercial accommodation operation in spite of all the policy work over three decades to put a lid on that. It's a complete disaster, and shameful to witness," said Former Superintendent of Banff, Kevin Van Tighem.

Parks Canada asserted that since the tent cabins are not fixed roof structures, they do not count as OCAs. Yes, they are outlying overnight accommodations run by a commercial operator, but if they have a fixed bottom with no fixed roof, technically they are exempted from the OCA guidelines. However, they cannot be exempted from the 2010 management plan which states that no new land will be released for commercial accommodation.

The JEA and CPAWS partnered with EcoJustice and attempted to make use of the law to stop development, or at the very least to make a point about the responsibility of the park superintendent as a decision-maker. They argued in court that it was unlawful for Parks Canada to agree to consider a project that would contravene the management plan at the request of industry. Gerry Levaseur, former owner of Maligne Tours before the Brewster buy out, was very openly chasing the opportunity to develop accommodations at the lake for the past decade. He had actually sued Parks Canada twice before because they refused this request. While it is obvious that conservation practice involves intense pressure from several stakeholders, some for and some against development, opponents found it egregious that Parks Canada should have to give in to private interests in their decision-making at all. "The [private sector] has a role to play within the parks and they should be allowed to offer services and accommodation and so on within national parks, so long as their operations and the need for them to make a profit in order to stay in business doesn't become the driver of policy. To my mind, that was exactly what was happening," said Dr. Ian Urquhart of the University of Alberta.

The law, generally, upholds the authority of Parks Canada Agency to make decisions regarding ecological integrity. In this case, the Judge upheld the superintendent's authority to consider projects that contravene park policy, but ruled that no project that does contravene the man-

agement plan could be approved (Veerman, 2016). The case may therefore have been quite an effective strategy for opponents, since it would be difficult to re-open the management planning process and remove the line that prohibits the release of ne w land for accommodations in the face of such strong public disapproval.

Environmental Assessment and Public Consultation

Consultation for the Skywalk was structured through the environmental assessment (EA) process, conducted in 2011 by Golder Associates, a private consulting company hired by Brewster[7]. While it may have followed the letter of the law, the assessment was critiqued on methodological and ethical grounds. Opponents have largely critiqued the merit of the report, arguing that the 4-month assessment based largely on camera studies was not thorough enough to adequately assess impacts on mountain goats. Several stakeholders also felt that public consultation was not meaningfully sought, as there were only 4 open houses held in Jasper, Banff, Calgary and Edmonton, which respondents likened to information sessions rather than forums for open debate. These were held on consecutive days just a few weeks after the 169-page environmental assessment was made available in Jasper. In a letter to the Superintendent, Dr. Ian Urquhart of the University of Alberta critiqued Brewster Travel for using a marketing survey to demonstrate the potential strength of the Glacier Walkway as an attraction, polling only people who had previously supplied their e-mail addresses to Brewster for leisure purposes.

What was worrying to most local residents was that much of the EA read like a commercial for Brewster and the Skywalk itself. They got the feeling that the attraction had already been

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[7] The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (1992) that held until changes in 2012 states that responsible authorities may delegate the assessment to proponents.

approved, and that Golder was promoting the attraction instead of conducting an objective assessment of its potential impacts. Here is but one example from the EA:

> "Guests will be brought into the experience through the interpretive story telling combined with the spectacular vantage points stimulating their senses. Design will integrate the built infrastructure seamlessly, harmoniously, and with stunning effect into the rugged environment sculpted by glaciers, providing a sense of harmony mixed with awe. The experience will be emotive, with impressions of the landscape forever burned into memory, making this unique experience one that guests will speak about for years afterwards." (Golder, 2011: 15)

Opponents questioned why an objective third party hired to assess the project's environmental implications would use such flowery language promising visitor satisfaction.

In contrast to the Skywalk proposal, consultation for the Maligne developments was sought during the conceptual proposal phase, before the EA phase. Maligne Tours released a 106 page Conceptual Proposal in 2013, which was opened for public comment, however there was much initial outrage over the fact that Parks Canada had instructed people to send comments directly to Maligne Tours, which residents felt was a grave conflict of interest. Park staff then clarified that comments should be sent to both Parks Canada and Maligne Tours.

Notably, the company repeatedly highlighted the role it could play in filling the gaps created by funding cuts. Here are two examples from the Conceptual Proposal:

> "MTL's role has become more and more significant over time as diminishing resources within Parks Canada have impacted the degree to which JNP (Jasper) can fulfill some of its customer aspirations." (p. 28)

> "If MTL is going to continue in its role as Parks Canada's partner and the caretaker of Maligne Lake - together with all of the responsibilities the company has assumed or inherited over the years due to changes in Parks Canada's priorities or budget cutbacks at Parks Canada - then there will need to be incremental sources of revenue by way of more customers purchasing more products or fewer customers spending more for higher quality experiences." (p. 32)

These kinds of statements reify the post-political 'there is no alternative' discourse and not-so-subtly suggest to opponents as well as to park staff that an increasing role for private interests and incremental increases in tourism offerings are inevitable (or else!). In the final sections I detail the post-political strategies employed to suture the space for political dissensus and debate in response to these structural pressures imposed by austerity politics.

Post-political Strategies

Proponents and opponents employed several strategies and tools to enroll allies, but I argue that there is an increasingly narrow window of opportunity for public and Indigenous actors (see Youdelis, 2016) who oppose such projects. Parks Canada, under the oversight of a federal government enacting politics of austerity, employed a series of post-political strategies to remove political debate from the public sphere and construct the appearance of consensual decision-making. In post-political fashion, neoliberalisation and austerity politics themselves were elevated beyond critique or open debate and several measures were taken to contain and disavow dissent. I identify five strategies that rendered decision-making post-political: disciplining dissent, predetermining outcomes, black-box decision-making, co-opting dissent, and the 'rule of experts'.

Disciplining Dissent

The first blatant and heavy-handed strategy to render this controversy post-political was the strongly worded dictat sent by the Superintendent to all park staff prohibiting them from speaking out against any development proposal or against any Agency policy or practice[8]. At the

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[8] Contacts shared the Superintendent's email to all park staff with me. This was not published information but I was able to access it. I also have testimony from former wardens and park staff discussing the gag order.

time, the Harper government had similarly been silencing federal scientists and civil servants in the media (Turner, 2013), and the Parks Canada Agency required all correspondence between park staff and the media, or people like myself asking questions, to be approved in Ottawa.

Terry Winkler, a warden who was laid off in the 2012 cuts, was severely reprimanded for asking about the OCA guidelines at the open house meeting for the Maligne hotel. Because Parks Canada laid him off close to retirement age, he had the option of taking an educational leave for two years to minimize the number of years he would be penalized. According to Parks Canada, although he had been dismissed, while he was on educational leave he was still subject to the employee code of conduct, which meant he could not attend public meetings and ask questions as a member of the public. He grieved the disciplinary letter that was put on his file, which said that if he did not cease and desist immediately further action could be taken including being fired outright. "I was asking a question about a policy that they had on file that is part of their man-agement plan. I wasn't criticizing, I wasn't doing anything! I just said 'Do you have this policy?' Yes you do. 'Okay, how does that affect what we're discussing today?'" he said. "It's not some-thing they should be pretending doesn't exist. It's in a public document."

Residents of Jasper were also shocked and dismayed by the unexpected dismissal without cause of the former senior scientist, John Wilmshurst. John held this position for 15 years and was extremely well-respected within the agency and with the townspeople of Jasper. More than 100 former Parks Canada employees and scientists have come out against his firing, which many feel is another politically motivated dismissal of an esteemed scientist who would not give the agency his endorsement on various tourism development plans. In an open letter to the leaders of the three opposition parties at the time, these 100+ signatories accused the government of taking

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such measures to instil fear among those still working for the agency (Pratt, 2015). Wilmshurst left Jasper and has not issued a statement regarding his puzzling dismissal, but residents and former park staff feel strongly that this fits firmly with the government's silencing of evidence or information that may impede development plans.

Silencing public servants from bringing forth information that may hamper development is an overt strategy to remove important points of debate from the public sphere and to centralize and control public discourse. This stifles public knowledge and consequently the potency of public critique as information that could be politicized is kept under wraps.

Predetermining Outcomes

The Skywalk proposal had already passed through most of Parks Canada's channels before they brought it to the public for comment, and unbeknownst to the public, Parks had already determined that they had no policy problem with the proposal. They had been working back and forth with Brewster to refine the proposal into something both parties found acceptable before proceeding to the environmental assessment. The EA process would include an opportunity for public and Indigenous engagement, however by the time the assessment was being done, there was a palpable sense that the decision had already been made. Even Loni Klettl, one of the lone supporters of the project, felt that parks had really "screwed up" the consultation process. "Well they screwed it up, a lot of it was done before it actually went to the public. They screwed up so bad on that one, because they just didn't expect the explosive reaction, so their pants were way down," she said.

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Likely because of the extreme resentment around the Brewster process, Parks Canada brought the Maligne proposal to the public at the conceptual level. This helped the public to inform parks early on that the proposal would contravene policy, which helped to shelve the hotel portion of the proposal. However most opponents, including former Parks Canada managers, felt that due to the pressures created by the budget cuts, the political decision to approve overnight accommodation, whether via hotel or the tent cabins, had already been made.

Because of this, opponents and even proponents of development feel that seeking public input is simply a formality. "The public consultation process to me seems strictly proforma. Everything has the indications of getting decided in advance," said Ben Gadd, a former park interpreter. Sensing that the political decisions have been made in advance, many felt that consultation has become a perfunctory ritual completed to meet regulations and create the appearance of including all stakeholders in decision-making, inviting public comment for the sake of participation but not opening political decisions for debate.

Black box decision-making

Submission of written comments is the preferred method of consultation over open debate or public hearing, and thus the final decisions on any project are often completely opaque. Opponents' feel as though their letters go into a black void, and there is little effort to address these points or convince the public that they should be discarded:

> "They come back and say okay, here's what we heard, it's a bunch of opposition. And they start going ahead anyway. So we'll say, 'Wait a second, all these people said, and now you're doing this... how do you reconcile those two opposing things?' And often we don't, or often we get chain letters, frankly. 'Thank you for your feedback, we appreciate that you took the time to communicate your thoughts to us..'. Mostly it's just copy and

paste, we get the same letter we got from them 5 times before with a slightly different intro paragraph." Sean Nichols, Alberta Wilderness Association

"I think it was mostly disappointing. I didn't really... I couldn't see the public comments being taken into account, considering how strong the sentiment that I was gauging was. I would say that no, I didn't get a sense that Parks Canada was saying 'We thought about what you were saying, and you made some valid points, but these are the reasons that it's going to be wonderful for the national park'. It sort of seemed like 'It's done, let's move on'. It's hard because I don't really have a good sense of why, and I don't think anyone really does." -Bob Covey, editor of The Jasper Local

When Parks Canada receives volumes of correspondence, they divide comments into categories and summarize these in "What we heard" reports. However, the number of concerns in any given category is not revealed. There could have been 1,000 comments regarding inappropriateness or commercialization, 950 comments expressing concern over habitat loss, and 3 comments expressing support for enhancing visitor experience, but the reports will list all of the categories as though they were equally represented. The "What we heard" reports for the Skywalk and Maligne proposal followed this format. The Brewster report went further and provided official responses that disavowed concerns raised through consultation or provided justification for proceeding anyway (Parks Canada, 2012). The report noted:

"Although the majority of comments reflected a lack of support for the proposal, numbers for or against were not the only factor that Parks Canada considered when evaluating public response… In the end, the consultation process is not a plebiscite."

Producing such reports is one way in which consensus is staged through official documentation. Concerns are neutralized or disavowed, and information regarding the number of responses in any category is kept from public actors. This contributes to misunderstanding around the nature of public sentiment, as well as how concerns are weighted and addressed and to what extent the final decision reflects public input.

Co-opting Dissent

In addition to feeling frazzled by sending comments into a black hole, opponents are exasperated by the fact that their feedback is often turned into a reason for construction:

> "They had used what people had said negatively and twisted it around to make it into a positive reason why this project should go forward. For instance, people were saying that Maligne Lake is so much more than this like 9-5 destination, it's a place where people go in the evening and they just sit by the lake, and they enjoy the peace of quiet of it because there's nobody there, or there might be 5 other people there, but you don't even see them because they're on the other side of the lake. You know? So they used that as a reason why it should be opened up to people staying there, so they can see it in the evening. It's just crap. And they're really good, too, at taking that opposition and being like 'this is what we heard, but this is the truth'. You know? They counter everything so that it shines brightly on them." -Nicole Veerman, editor of the Fitzhugh

Many respondents have stopped engaging in park issues for this reason, because they feel that the current channels just co-opt their concerns and they are consequently disenfranchised.

Opponents feel that discursively concepts like 'ecological integrity' and 'visitor experience' have similarly been co-opted by business interests. Both are quite nebulous terms, but leaving them vague with no specific criteria for evaluation leaves room for both to be employed in support of development. If no criteria for evaluation is required, Parks Canada can easily claim to be respecting 'ecological integrity' and increasing understanding, awareness and connection with nature via new private tourism offerings, presenting the appearance that there is consensus around both the importance of these things and how to achieve them. Co-opting dissent thus serves to neutralize and disavow public concerns in final decision-making, orchestrating the appearance of consensual problem resolution.

'Rule of Experts'

In a post-political frame agonistic politics are evacuated from the sphere of policy-making and replaced by expert and techno-managerial administration (Swyngedouw, 2011). Parks Canada had already been working with Brewster and had already determined that there was no policy problem with the Skywalk before coming to the public. Consultation was thus structured through the EA process where they were only looking for comments specific to the scientific merit of the EA itself. In short, the project could have only been shelved if opponents had brought forward new scientific evidence regarding ecological integrity. The important political and philosophical points raised by opponents about appropriateness, commercialization, access, and precedent setting were all but ignored as "personal values." As discussed earlier, dissent from scientists within the organization was also overtly silenced and only federally approved expert opinions were permitted in official discourse.

Further, the EA itself was done by private contractors hired by Brewster, the majority of which read like promotional material. Opponents were extremely agitated by this conflict of interest, which is common practice in Canada. As I mentioned, opponents had several qualms with the assessment in that it was a 4 month long camera study and otherwise relied on dated secondary data. Kevin Van Tighem (the former Superintendent of Banff) who was quoted in the EA saying that goat habitat would not be severely impacted said that his comments had been extremely 'watered down'. "I didn't like what their consultants did with my input. I don't personally agree with the mitigations they put in place around mountain goats," he said. Although it is questionable whether goats have been seriously impacted, there was a skillful art in the way the ex-

pert interviews and data were presented to the public, once again staging consensus despite the ongoing boundary conflicts around whether this was 'good science'.

Mitigation measures were also employed as means of assuaging and neutralizing public concerns in lieu of opening debate around the appropriateness of the project itself. Public comment was sought primarily to gauge which mitigation measures are appropriate, not to give the public opportunity to alter the political decision on development itself. Several 'mitigation measures' promised by Brewster never did come to fruition. The public strongly opposed a public viewpoint becoming private, so Brewster was meant to leave one section free and open to the public, which did not occur. They were also meant to build a trail up from Tangle Ridge so that people could access the site and viewpoint on foot, which also did not transpire.

Structuring consultation for the Skywalk through the depoliticized EA process speaks to the degree to which fiscal pressures made development a foregone conclusion. However the power of public resistance was demonstrated by the fact that the Maligne process went differently. But once again, Parks Canada was looking for information specific to ecological impacts that would sufficiently challenge Maligne Tours' claims, not opening space for philosophical or political objections to the P3 partnership itself. Although opponents were able to enrol Parks Canada's science on dwindling caribou numbers in their countermovement, ultimately Parks Canada authorities are the authorized 'experts' who have the power to deem whether or not ecological integrity will be impacted, and scientific research can be inaccessible or unfeasible to conduct for the average citizen/activist.

In these ways, science and the law are employed by proponents and Parks Canada to stabilize claims around protecting ecological integrity and doing due diligence with public input.

Opponents have no legitimate channels through which to express outright disagreement with private development in a public park. All philosophical and political concerns are disregarded or at best 'mitigated', but the political decisions are not open for debate.

Discussion

Due to the palpable sense that Parks Canada needs P3 partnerships to recoup costs from successive rounds of austerity, and due to the frustration felt in the face of post-political maneuvering, public actors involved in these two cases feel strongly that the public has little to no role in decision-making in this political economic climate. As the interests of Parks Canada and profitable private leaseholders in the park are aligning in terms of increasing visitation and the revenue imperative, public actors feel increasingly disenfranchised. I argue that this is no coincidence. Following scholars who argue the post-politicization of the public sphere converges with processes of neoliberalisation (Fletcher, 2014; Swyngedouw, 2010; Zizek, 1999), I argue that the politics of austerity create the structural conditions for the post-politicization of public consultation, reducing democratic oversight of environmental governance more broadly. Austerity politics contribute to a post-political 'there is no alternative' discourse, where the notion of private development and management of park services is accepted as necessary to fulfill park mandates and is elevated beyond political debate. Strategies such as disciplining and co-opting dissent serve to condition people to this post-political discourse, while strategies to predetermine outcomes, including black-box decision-making and deferring to technocrats, serve to suture space for dissensus and debate and orchestrate the appearance of consensual decision-making. Agonistic politics are thus replaced by "technocratic questions of cost-benefit ratios from which politi-

cal considerations are largely effaced" (Fletcher, 2014: 330). Austerity politics themselves are left unquestioned and, by structural necessity, private sector revenue generation is normalized as the main method to satisfy park mandates.

Although neoliberalisation is in theory concerned with decentralization and enrolling a wider network of actors into participation, certain actors are enrolled in the process in increasingly depoliticized ways. Public actors are enrolled as contributors but within narrowly prescribed parameters —invited, for instance, to suggest changes that could improve the implementation of a given project rather than to open debate around the appropriateness of the project or of the neoliberalisation of conservation itself. Many Jasper residents no longer wish to engage in the process as they feel disempowered and cynical about the real purpose of consultation. This case thus has implications for our understanding of the role of consultation in neoliberal conservation. Lest we be lured into thinking that neoliberal modes of conservation governance lead to more participatory and effective public engagement, this case demonstrates that engagement within a neoliberal framework can be pernicious as it serves to disenfranchise public actors to lubricate 'painful-but-necessary' private sector development, leading to a level of distrust among public actors that can deter them from future engagement. Should conservationists desire stronger public participation they need to be attentive to the terms of that participation and the results of their engagement strategies.

Further, the post-political acceptance of austerity politics and private development as an integral part of conservation has tremendous implications for park management and ecology going forward, in Canada and abroad. By strategically controlling public participation in certain ways, we are ensuring that certain logics gain prominence over others; that only certain kinds of

knowledges are recognized while others are disallowed. In effect we're seeing a recentralization of whose knowledge counts, with private sector voices becoming indispensable for park functioning and the rule of particular experts becoming reinforced as a means of discounting dissent. I note that it is *particular* expert voices becoming elevated since those who break from or challenge neoliberal restructuring are at best marginalized and at worst terminated from their positions in overt strategies to discipline dissent. These disciplinary tactics forcibly police the boundaries of 'acceptable' logics.

Such strategies make it more likely for business interests to take precedence over ecological ones. The case discussed here lays bare the claim that increasing revenue will lead to better ecological conservation since, as conservation increasingly takes on values associated with the private sector, the ecological gets backgrounded. In this case an increase in revenues from visitor activities will go back into visitor offerings and does not necessarily translate into more money being available for ecological conservation. Managing new mass tourism attractions will also come with unique ecological challenges, made clear by the issues brought up in this case, particularly at Maligne Lake with respect to the effects of changing patterns of human traffic on sensitive species.

Conclusion

Forsyth and Walker (2014) and Matthews (2011) argue that the production of official knowledge that informs bureaucratic and/or political order is never solely top down but is an iterative performance that involves and requires assent from a multitude of actors. Bureaucratic authority and conservation policy in Jasper exemplify this, as local residents and environmental

groups challenge Parks Canada on a variety of truth claims and private proponents similarly strive to steer Agency discourse and practice. Some concessions were made with these two developments thanks to the tireless efforts of opponents, including the consideration of only the tent cabins and not the hotel at Maligne Lake. However certain underlying points of agreement - that EI should be balanced with VE, that parks should be inclusive, that parks are facing serious budget issues- ultimately lent support for Parks Canada's official decision to address these issues through private tourism offerings, "excluding other social perspectives and environmental management options" (Forsyth and Walker, 2014: 414). Silencing these alternative knowledges was accomplished primarily through post-political strategies that at once produced ignorance (Matthews, 2011), removing points of debate from the public sphere, and contained and disavowed dissent through a post-political orchestration of consensus (Fletcher, 2014). I have argued that this was requisite under neoliberalisation at the state level, as pressure grew to increase visitation and revenues. Importantly, this is not to say that these outcomes were inevitable in any way —in fact, the Maligne Tours tent cabins and other attractions still may not be built, since environmental groups obtained the court ruling that will require an amendment to the management plan for the tent cabins to be approved. Continual pressure from environmentally concerned citizens and the media advancing counterclaims may very well shift conservation practice in another direction. As an iterative performance, conservation practice remains open for re-negotiation, and certainly the passionate residents of the Jasper area will continue to press for change.

Chapter 4
The Colonial Anti-politics of Indigenous Consultation in Jasper

Introduction

Early conservation in Canada was a violent site of struggle between the invading settler-colonizers and First peoples. While colonial ways of knowing nature clashed entirely with the collective natureculture ontologies and lifeways of First Nations, the knowledge wars here were distressingly one-sided. The settler-colonizers opened no space for debate and their use of sheer force and violence coerced Indigenous compliance despite protest. Racism and 'Othering' of first peoples encouraged public assent from the settler population for evicting/restricting First Nations from park space, their former traditional territories (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2014; Sandlos, 2014). Today, institutional racism maintains their alienation from their land bases and their subjugation to state authorities.

This chapter explores the colonial anti-political strategies employed by park staff in Jasper attempting to secure and maintain their bureaucratic authority, territorial power and related material benefits, and why this was successful despite sustained opposition from First Nations. While Büscher (2010) analyzed how antipolitics operates in a neoliberal political economy, my work here analyzes how antipolitics operates in a neoliberal colonial political economy through an exploration of the lived experiences of local First Nations. Antipolitics is a useful concept to think through how park authorities carry out the consultation process within the context of increasing pressures to approve private tourism projects that have the potential to generate much-needed revenue. Jasper's approach not only gives the appearance of consent by various First Nations, but also obscures the ongoing colonial political and economic marginalization of

Indigenous peoples and consequently reinforces existing inequalities. Colonial power dynamics and bureaucratic knowledge remain unquestioned and are effectively reproduced and secured through consultation.

Colonization through Conservation

Canada is a settler-colonial state, founded on the violent dispossession of original peoples from their lands in order to facilitate European settlement and capitalist expansion (Alfred, 2005; Loo, 2006). Importantly, colonialism is not an 'event' that occurred squarely in the past, but a structure of continual exploitation "because Settlers… have rewritten histories, have created a legal system that justifies their rule, and have normalized a racist and unjust socio-economic system"(Alfred and Tomkins, 2010). Understanding colonialism as a structure and an ongoing process instead of an event is critical to understanding how the current politics of recognition and "reconciliation" in Canada ironically further normalize colonial appropriation of and control over Indigenous lands and structurally unequal socio-economic relations between settlers and Indigenous nations (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2014).

Coulthard (2014) explains that First Nations' struggles for self-determination have long employed the language and concept of "recognition" (recognition of the nation-to-nation relationship, the right to self-determination and self-government, the right for First Nations to benefit economically from the use of their lands, etc.).[9] However, he and others (see Alfred and

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[9] The Government of Canada recognizes that First Nations have an "inherent right to self government" as an Aboriginal right under the Constitution of 1982, Section 35. This inherent right is explained as "the right to govern themselves in relation to matters that are internal to their communities, integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions, and with respect to their special relationship to their land and their resources" (Government of Canada, 2010). Federal, provincial, and First Nations jurisdictions thus overlap in many cases across Canada.

Tomkins, 2010) argue that the very pursuit of recognition from a colonial oppressor is self-defeating, as First Nations have to implicitly concede that the Crown's sovereign reign over all lands in Canada is just and legitimate, and thus the Crown has the power to either bestow or disallow recognition. Since statutory authority rests with the federal state, First Nations are only able to govern themselves in ways deemed acceptable in the Canadian legislative system, not as truly self-determining people (ie. free to determine their own culturally-specific forms of political governance and pursue their own social, cultural and economic development with authority over their lands). In a similar vein, gestures towards "reconciliation," such as the public apology from former Prime Minister Stephen Harper for the atrocities Indigenous peoples suffered in Residential Schools, or creating space for Indigenous peoples on resource comanagement boards –although powerful forms of recognition and points of hope for many Indigenous people– run the risk of further legitimating colonial hegemony and relations of power (Sandlos, 2014; Waterstone and de Leeuw, 2010). A reconciliatory politics that imagines colonial injustices as occurring in the past does nothing to confront the ongoing alienation of indigenous peoples from their lands so that their territories remain available for neocolonial-capitalist gains (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2014). Similarly, Cameron (2008) argues that recent settler acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples' past use of park lands often has a ghostly or spectral nature. Imagining Indigenous presence on park lands as ghosts of a time past permits disavowal of present-day Indigenous claims and the role of parks in ongoing dispossession.

National parks in Canada were, as they have been elsewhere, early tools that facilitated colonial injustices, and many today arguably help to maintain the neo-colonial present. Understood as instruments of primitive accumulation (Carroll, 2014; Kelly, 2011) (or accumulation by

dispossession (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012)), national parks enclosed valuable natural territories and removed First Nations whose land-based lifeways were an impediment to the colonial-capitalist project (Coulthard, 2014). State territorialization of protected areas was legitimized by the racist assumption that Indigenous peoples were too primitive to hold sovereign rights over their territories upon contact with Europeans, and thus that Canada was a terra nullius to be claimed (Baldwin, 2009; Braun, 2002).

The earliest national parks in Canada were developed in the Western provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, followed by the expansion of the system into eastern Canada and the northern Territories (Peepre and Dearden, 2002). Importantly, the experiences of First Nations with park establishment vary starkly between southern and northern parks (Sandlos, 2014). In the name of "conservation," countless nations were forcefully evicted from the earlier southern parks (Binnema and Niemi, 2006; Sandlos, 2008). By contrast, more recent parks established in the northern Territories have been established in varying degrees of partnership with First Nations because Parks Canada has had to deal with comprehensive land claims. These comanagement arrangements have given Parks Canada international recognition as a "leader" in Aboriginal relations (Campbell, 2011). Some argue that these steps mark a significant improvement in a parks system historically based on the Yellowstone model of fortress-style wilderness conservation that precluded Aboriginal habitation (MacLaren, 2011). However, critics point out that 'comanagement' is very loosely defined, "it can range from as little as receiving information from the government, to fulfilling an advisory role of the government, to being delegated legislative authority, and finally to assuming co-jurisdiction of resources with government"(Rodon, 1998: 120). Co-management has also been roundly critiqued for reinforcing colonial power relations and con-

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straining First Nations in decision-making because most comanagement boards have advisory status only, while statutory power always rests with the Crown (Mabee and Hoberg, 2006; Sandlos, 2014). Further, most comanagement boards aim only to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) more effectively into existing science-based decision-making processes, not to reconfigure decision-making power (Devin and Doberstein, 2004). Often TEK can be cooptated or 'scientized' by non-indigenous decision-makers (Ellis, 2005), or is simply discarded if it conflicts with scientific evidence that is presumed to be superior (Spak, 2005).

Jasper, as one of the early southern parks, follows the southern history of exclusion. Jasper Forest Park was established in 1907 (and became Jasper Park in 1909), at which point the Metis families homesteading in the park were suddenly declared "squatters" on park land. In 1909, John W. McLaggan, Jasper's first acting superintendent, served eviction notices to these families: the Moberly's, the Findlay's/Finlay's and the Joachim's (Murphy, 2007; MacLaren, 2007).[10] Some descendants of these original families moved to what is now the Grand Cache area and form the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, while others moved to nearby Hinton and Edson, the most senior of which form the Upper Athabasca Elders Council. The area has a long and complex history of occupation, however. The Metis families along with seasonal inhabitants and travelers used the area for centuries as the fur trade developed and brought nations from across Canada into the Rockies. Many nations, "including Cree, Stoney, Shuswap, Ojibwe, several groups of Metis, Sekani, Carrier, Iroquois and white consider the valley a part of their abiding

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[10] Henry John Mobery (1835–1931) was born in Ontario. He moved to the Jasper area in 1855 working with the Hudson's Bay Company. He led a hunting team with Iroquois hunters and married Iroquois Suzanne Karaconti in 1861. Suzanne and her ancestors pre-dated Henry John Moberly's arrival there (Iroquois from theMontreal area worked for the NorthWest Company in the West since the late 18th century), and various other groups were known to use the area seasonally. Henry and Suzanne had two sons, Ewan and John. Ewan married Madeline Finley (10 children) and John married Marie Joachim (8 children). These families built permanent habitation sites in the park and were the ones living in the park upon its establishment (Murphy, 2007).

heritage"(MacLaren, 2011: 335). The complicated history of overlapping claims to the area is why we see about 2 dozen First Nations as members of the Jasper Aboriginal Forum. Many of these nations signed Treaties with the Crown that promised them the right to continue traditional hunting and trapping livelihoods. Despite this, they were barred from entering and using the park for livelihood purposes while non-native settlers were able to live and develop within the town-site of Jasper and profit economically from the influx of tourists. In recent years, Jasper has been trying to 'rectify' these exclusions through their Aboriginal Engagement program, which centres around the Forum, a mechanism I will elaborate on later in this paper. I argue that although these are steps in a positive direction, the antipolitics of indigenous consultation in Jasper obscures the ongoing neocolonial and neoliberal capitalist exploitation of First Nations' lands.

As I explained in Chapter 2, the notion of antipolitics was born from Ferguson's (1994) critique of development discourse and practice and was re-operationalized by Büscher (2010) in relation to neoliberal conservation. Nadasdy (2005) also adapted and applied the concept of an-tipolitics to co-management arrangements between First Nations and the government of Canada. He argues that comanagement discourse and practice has unintended political consequences sim-ilar to those described by Ferguson (1994). He writes,

> "The need to integrate co-management processes with existing institutional structures of state management has led to a tendency to view co-management as a series of technical problems (primarily associated with the question of how to gather "traditional knowledge" and incorporate it into the management process), rather than as a real alternative to existing structures and practices of state management" (Nadasdy, 2005: 216).

Antipolitics in the context of comanagement, then, means that existing colonial relations of pow-er and state-led management remain intact.

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Coulthard (2014) and Alfred (2005) also poignantly show how the politics of "recognition" and "reconciliation" ironically further the colonial project, entrenching unequal colonial-capitalist relations and normalizing the Crown's sovereign rule over stolen territories. The critiques of reconciliation contribute to our understanding of what the antipolitics of consultation models invisibilize: the denial of Indigenous sovereignty, the reification of colonial power dynamics (including ongoing land dispossession), and the facilitation of 'business as usual' development projects that benefit government and industry and not First Nations. The spectral nature of past Indigenous land use (Cameron, 2008) is likewise a tool that helps to evade present-day Indigenous politics. The antipolitics of consultation is not just a discourse of settler colonial power but produces mechanisms which deny First Nations' voice and political agency.

Parks Canada and the Exclusion of First Nations

Displacement and/or exclusion has long been associated with protected area establishment, and in the current era of neoliberal governance it is often associated with lucrative nature-based business ventures (Brockington and Duffy, 2010; Igoe and Brockington, 2007). This has led many scholars to argue that conservation enclosures (and colonialism more broadly) are processes of primitive accumulation and/or accumulation by dispossession (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012; Kelly, 2011). National parks have long been critiqued as playgrounds for wealthy urban tourists (Loo, 2006; MacLaren, 2007), valued for their exchange value as places of recreation, whilst First peoples who rely on those areas' use values were deemed antithetical to conservation.

Recent controversies around the appropriateness of private tourism development proposals in Jasper reflect a system-wide trend, occurring in part due to shrinking budgets for Parks Canada and related ambitions to increase visitor numbers and enrich visitor experience. The Brewster Travel and Maligne Tours proposals trigger the Crown's Duty to Consult with First Nations whose traditional territories overlap with park boundaries. The Duty to Consult is not confined to park management but applies to all territory in Canada where First Nations have land claims or may assert title. The Crown's legal and constitutional obligations to First Nations are laid out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982, and have been further defined through various Supreme Court cases. The Haida (2004), Taku River (2004) and Mikisew Cree (2005) decisions are important in relation to the Duty to Consult. The Supreme Court of Canada determined that "the Crown has a duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate when the Crown contemplates conduct that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or Treaty rights" (Government of Canada, 2011). This means that the duty to consult still holds regardless of whether Aboriginal rights or title have been formally proven through litigation or treaty agreements. In the recent Tsilhqot'in (2014) decision, the Supreme Court ruled that development on Aboriginal title lands can only proceed if the Crown obtains consent from First Nations or demonstrates that it effectively discharged its duty to consult and accommodate and justifies infringement as per R. v. Sparrow (1990) (Hansen and Bear Robe, 2014).

Critics point out, however, that the Duty to Consult itself remains colonial and paternalistic, and is thus a flawed mechanism (Alfred, 2005). It is premised on the idea that the Crown holds the ultimate sovereign power to either bestow or disallow certain rights upon Indigenous

peoples within an unquestionably "just" state legal system. Although traditional livelihoods are meant to be protected as inherent rights, 'justifiable infringement' allows industry to infringe on these rights for a whole host of reasons, "ranging from conservation to settlement, to capitalist nonrenewable resource development, and even to protect white interests from the potential economic fallout of recognizing Aboriginal rights to land and water-based economic pursuits" (Coulthard, 2014: loc 2677). If Aboriginal or Treaty rights conflict with the economic imperatives of the Canadian state or the broader settler public, they will be "justifiably" denied.

To date there is a fair amount of literature that covers the duty to consult in Canada (Land, 2014; Olynyk, 2005), but little to no work that explores Indigenous experiences with and perceptions of consultation processes, particularly within Canadian national parks. In light of this omission, my research asks what Jasper National Park is doing to meet its Duty to Consult and how this is being received by different First Nations.

The data used in this chapter comes primarily from interviews done with various members of the Jasper Aboriginal Forum, Jasper park management, then CEO of Parks Canada Alan Latourelle, and leaders from Brewster Travel and Maligne Tours, supplemented by information gathered through document analysis of relevant policies, proposals and consultation protocols for various First Nations. On July 3, 2014, I sent a letter to all members of the Forum asking them to participate in an interview regarding their perceptions of the consultation processes for the Glacier Skywalk, the Maligne Tours hotel, and their thoughts on the efficacy of the Forum in general and how Jasper's moves towards reconciliation are being received. Several representatives came forward at this time. I then sought out nations that were consulted directly on those two projects if they had not already responded to my initial letter. I was able to speak with 2 di-

rect descendants of the original Metis families, one Elder from the Upper Athabasca Elders'

Council, and representatives from 8 different First Nations (Aseniwuche Winewak Nation,

Stoney Nakoda Nation, Sucker Creek First Nation, Confederacy of Treaty Six Nations, Kelly

Lake Cree First Nation, Samson Cree First Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation, and Asini

Wachi Cree Band). I recognize that the representatives that sought me out in response to my ini-

tial letter may be those who are generally dissatisfied with the process and thus welcomed the

opportunity to discuss their frustrations. Several members were unresponsive after several at-

tempts, so the testimonies shared in this paper represent a good cross-section of members of the

Forum but I do not assume consensus amongst or within communities.

Reconciliation and the Jasper Aboriginal Forum

Jasper has been making strides towards "reconciliation" with Indigenous nations who

were evicted from the park upon its establishment. There are three main components to the out-

reach program. The first is showcasing Indigenous culture and history throughout the park. One

of the more well-received endeavours are the annual Aboriginal Days where nations are invited

to perform traditional song and dance, sell arts, crafts and food, and teach about various points of

interest like medicinal plants and Indigenous histories. In 2011, the park commissioned and

raised a totem pole along the main street in Jasper to signify their commitment to improving rela-

tionships with First Nations. Some respondents felt that this could be viewed as a positive since

Jasper was making a visible effort, however management took a grave misstep and erected a

totem pole of the Haida Nation who reside on the West coast of British Columbia. Many respon-

dents were concerned that this would spread misinformation to tourists about which nations lived

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in the Jasper area and felt slighted that the Alberta nations were not represented. "It's sort of like having Scottish highland dancers in Paris. That could have been done better, but they were trying," said the respondent from Stoney Nakoda Nation.

The second component is negotiating terms of park access and use. Jasper offered to sign Memorandums of Access (MOAs) with each nation which would secure free access to the park along with negotiated rights to practice ceremonies and collect traditional medicines. They held a Friendship and Forgiveness Ceremony with interested members of the AWN and held formal reconciliation ceremonies with Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation, which was the first nation to sign an MOA with the park. Despite these efforts, currently only 4 groups out of about 24 have signed MOAs with Jasper because there remain some concerns with the terms of the agreements and many feel they are paternalistic. The idea that First Nations need to negotiate for free access to their own territories is itself unjust. Some respondents also feel they are simply not ready to forgive the violence and emotional distress of being divided from their lands. "I would be the first one to say that that's what needs to be done, but it needs to be done when people are ready. There is a lot of hurt there," explained one Elder from the Elder's Council.

It is also problematic to conceive of "reconciliation" as forgiveness for an event that occurred in the past. The function of state apologies and other symbolic mechanisms of reconciliation is to construct egregious conduct as being bounded to a particular spatio-temporal setting in order to (re)produce and maintain the 'common sense' legitimacy of the state, so that hegemony is not overtly threatened (Waterstone and de Leeuw, 2010). Such reconciliatory gestures may be offered at the same time that comparable egregious conduct is taking place. The moral and affective work of state remorse is important for the buy-in of Canadians, and also importantly paints

those who do not accept the apology or gestures of reconciliation as unreasonable and beyond assistance (Coulthard, 2014; Waterstone and de Leeuw, 2010). But forgiving a past injustice does not question whether the current park-led authority over the Jasper territory is just, and it ignores the ways in which First Nations continue to be dispossessed from their lands in the name of colonial-capitalist growth. Likewise, conceiving of and celebrating Indigenous presence on the land as spectral, from a different time long past, downplays present-day Indigenous agency as political actors (Cameron, 2008). This should underscore the antipolitics of the third and central component of Jasper's endeavour towards "reconciliation," the Jasper Aboriginal Forum, formed in 2006 as a way to help re-integrate First Nations into the park and improve indigenous engagement in park planning and decision-making. The Forum meets twice a year in Jasper to discuss various issues within the park including new development proposals. Each nation is allowed to send 2 representatives to the meetings, and JNP pays the costs associated with transportation, food and accommodation for attendees.

The Forum followed the creation of the Upper Athabasca Elders Council in 2004. The Elders Council is composed of Elders of the descendants of the Metis homesteaders who were evicted from Jasper upon its establishment. Despite the fact that they don't identify as one unified nation, descendants are treated as one and are only allowed to send 2 representatives even though there are over 20 Elders. Representation is also an issue for the Stoney Nakoda Nation, which has three separate bands with three separate Chiefs. Two representative slots for three chiefs does not give equal representation to the bands, thus the respondent from Stoney Nakoda explained that he can not attend the Forum meetings until this issue is addressed.

These issues speak to many respondents' concerns that the Forum has not been designed in a way that makes sense for First Nations. All Indigenous peoples that claim to have ties to the park are welcome to the table as long as they can prove their relation to the park in some way. There is silent dispute amongst Forum members as to which nations should and should not be involved. Furthermore, people from different nations have created historical societies or other foundations, and any such society is also allotted two seats at the Forum table. Some feel that only recognized First Nations should be involved in the Forum, not other bodies. Some original descendants feel that only the Metis homesteading families should be at the table along with a handful of other nations who actually have physical homes in the park. In this politically thorny context, Jasper management will not make the judgement call as to who should or should not be there, but many feel that the looseness of the Forum compromises its efficiency and capacity to realize goals.

Anti-political Strategies

Although the creation of the Jasper Aboriginal Forum has created space for First Nations to provide input on park management, Jasper's current approach to consultation is not very well-received by many respondents. I suggest that the dissatisfaction with the approach stems from the fact that it relies on several strategies to neutralize political challenges from First Nations and legitimate the reproduction of colonial-capitalist relations of power. I argue that these strategies exemplify an antipolitical approach because they forestall political debate about the justness of Crown sovereign authority and give the appearance of consent by First Nations. This approach obscures the political-economic reasons that First Nations have been marginalised in both park

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decision-making as well as in terms of benefits received from development projects in their traditional territories. The ongoing alienation of First Nations from their territories to facilitate capital gains for the park and private business partners is normalized and sustained rather than consultation providing alternatives to current state-led science-based decision-making and management practices.

No Discussion of Treaty or Aboriginal Rights

Jasper calls their approach to consultation 'interest-based' (Interview with Senior Manager, 2014), meaning they only engage with groups who show an explicit interest in any particular development proposal. One very telling condition of the interest-based Forum process is that Aboriginal and Treaty rights will not be discussed in regards to any given project. This is, I think, the clearest example of the colonial antipolitics of consultation. The managers of JNP position Aboriginal and Treaty rights as outside of their mandate and hold the assertion that First Nations' rights to the land were extinguished when the park was established. The Crown's assumed sovereignty over park territory (and over Canadian territory more generally) is based on blatant denial of Indigenous peoples' ability to form systems of law (Borrows, 2010) and blatant denial that First Nations held sovereign power over their territories upon contact with European colonizers (Coulthard, 2014). By refusing to discuss Treaty or Aboriginal rights and title, park management effectively forces First Nations to unquestioningly accept that the Crown has full decision-making power within their traditional territories, normalizing their continued alienation. Political debate around active land claims and the role that First Nations should have governing their territories is precluded and consultation becomes part of a nice gesture, what park managers call being

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a 'good neighbour' (Interview with AWN, 2014). This is a very clear strategy on the part of the Crown to depoliticize colonial management structures within the park and to render consultation a technical exercise of providing information and gathering traditional knowledge of the area to be developed.

This approach erases First Nations' longstanding political and legal traditions that are tied to the land that is now called Jasper National Park. Each nation has their own governance (political, cultural and legal) traditions that are central to their visions of land management, stewardship and consultation. These include protocols that must be done whenever land is broken for development, such as pipe ceremonies to ask Mother Nature for forgiveness. Several nations expressed concern that their protocols for land management and consultation were not being respected:

> "We talk to the Creator before we even penetrate Mother Earth, because that relationship is paramount to anything we do. We smoke the pipe to honour that relationship. That's our mandate when it comes to the environment, and we're not even getting that respect to go and have a pipe ceremony." (Samson Cree Nation)

> "Our Nations also have protocols and ceremonies that we use to understand, maintain and balance the intent of the Treaties. Our protocols and ceremonial traditions give us the tools and legitimacy within our territories to make decisions on how we treat the land and its resources. Our processes pass on critical teachings and a management system based on generations of knowledge and information about our lands… However, Alberta's approach to consultation has not involved any significant attempt to incorporate our protocols and ceremonies into a mutually-agreeable approach." (Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations Position Paper on Consultation)

By continuing to deny the rights of traditional use enshrined in Aboriginal and Treaty rights, park managers both contravene and invisibilize Indigenous laws, politics and systems of knowledge.

Using the Forum as 'Consultation'

Because the consultation process is 'interest-based', unless Indigenous representatives speak up during a Forum meeting and request further consultation, their nation is often not consulted regardless if development could impact their Aboriginal or Treaty rights. If a representative happens to miss a Forum meeting where development proposals are discussed, their nation may miss the opportunity to engage in the decision-making process altogether.

Several nations expect that they will be consulted separately outside of the Forum but are dismayed when there is no follow up unless they proactively seek out park management:

> "We had a few situations where… we were thinking we would obviously be also asked outside the Forum, so we just didn't say much, and then [Parks] would come back to the table and say, 'Well all of these decisions have been made, and none of you guys said anything about it.' We just felt it was really inappropriate that the Forum be used for consultation. They've always been adamant that it's not, but it was starting to shake out that way." (AWN)

> "They did a brief presentation on what they wanted to do with the Glacier Skywalk and they asked for some feedback. The first thing that I remember one of the members saying was, 'This meeting is not consultation. It's not regarded as consultation.' What Jasper likes to do is have one or two meetings and say that's consultation." (Stoney Nakoda Nation)

> "They try to use it as a consultation process and we have always indicated to whoever comes to the table you can't do that, that's the first thing we have recorded. If they want to do true consultation they have to go back to the communities individually." (Sucker Creek First Nation)

There is clearly disagreement between JNP and Forum members as to what responsibility Parks Canada holds towards ensuring each nation receives individual consultation, and what that should entail.

Two respondents (from Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and Sucker Creek First Nation) had a more positive view of the process. They believe it is the responsibility of First Nations to be proactive and ensure that they are meaningfully consulted apart from the Forum:

> "I guess if we didn't seek them out that's probably what would have happened with us as well, them coming to the Forum and doing a presentation. That's the point where you start going after things… If you're proactive with consultation, you can pounce on that [opportunity] and get your own wheels rolling." (Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation)

Both respondents secured follow-up meetings with Brewster Travel and both spoke highly of the company and felt they were accommodating of their wants and concerns. I will explain why this proactive approach is difficult for many nations later in this section, but in addition to capacity issues (Mabee and Hoberg, 2006; Waterstone and de Leeuw, 2010), many respondents felt that Jasper's use of the Forum to gauge interest in more formal consultation represents a deficiency in their legal duty to consult.[11]

Similarly, many respondents felt excluded from the Maligne Tours consultation process. When Brewster Travel proposed the Glacier Skywalk, company representatives came to a Forum meeting to present their idea and follow up with interested nations. For the Maligne Tours hotel, Parks Canada presented the proposal at a Forum meeting but told Maligne Tours not to engage with Forum members until later stages of the approval process. As a result, many nations were confused about the process and were not aware that they needed to seek out management to re-

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[11] The respondent from Asini Wachi Cree Band explained his dissatisfaction with the consultation process for the Glacier Skywalk in relation to his understanding of the duty to consult: "In no way can any of these informal discussions be considered as Consultation. Like other parties, we have a Consultation Protocol. Such protocols have been in existence for decades. In no case were these protocols followed by Brewster, nor was there a Consultation report prepared and/or signed off on by any of the aboriginal parties. . .Given the history of Brewster's interaction with the aboriginal community, and the history of this project, we cannot accept the precept that Brewster 'Consulted' with the aboriginal community.We consider that this constitutes a Deficiency in terms of the Supreme Court Duty To Consult requirements of the Federal Government. We also believe that Parks Canada was Deficient in accepting Brewster's preliminary reports, given the lack of valid consultation."

ceive further information and consultation, so only three out of two dozen were able to provide initial input.

The respondent from AWN explained that they received a letter inviting them to the open house with Maligne Tours in Edmonton after the event had taken place. She sent the date stamped letter to JNP to question them on this. "They were just kind of like 'Oh, sorry, that's the way it shook out.' So we said, 'Well then how can we engage in this process?' And if we hadn't asked, we never would have been asked," she said. This illustrates one of the problems with using the Forum to gauge interest in more structured consultation, that of funding and capacity for First Nations. While Parks Canada pays for all travel, food and accommodation costs for Forum attendees, if a nation wants to engage in more meaningful individual consultation on a project they must bear those costs themselves unless the proponent steps up to cover them. To Brewster Travel's credit, they did cover the costs associated with consultation for nations that had the chance to do site visits. Since Maligne Tours was instructed not to engage initially, nations who wanted to do site visits with Elders and do Traditional Land Use studies had to bear all of those costs themselves. Such costs can be substantial and can exclude groups from the opportunity to meaningfully engage.

In assuming nations will take it upon themselves to engage in consultation with the park, the current approach ignores the capacity issues and economic hardships facing many First Nations that stem from dispossession from their lands. Only those nations with the capacity to stay on top of all park affairs are able to have their concerns heard, while the rest remain uninformed and uninvolved regardless if a project could impact their Aboriginal or Treaty rights. While increased funding alone will not transcend colonial power dynamics, the antipolitics of consulta-

tion invisibilizes structural racism and inequality as well as colonial decision-making power, shifting responsibility for consultation onto the nations themselves. If nations are not being consulted individually regarding development in their traditional territories, the approach also arguably eschews the park's political and legal Duty to Consult potentially impacted First Nations.

Integrating Consultation into Existing State-led Science-based Management Structures

Reconciliation and consultation processes should involve both parties in designing and agreeing upon what that process will entail (Land, 2014). If the terms of recognition and reconciliation are dictated by the colonizers to the colonized, consultation will not "significantly modify, let alone transcend, the breadth of power at play in colonial relationships" (Coulthard, 2014: loc753). Many respondents explained that Jasper has dictated the entire process instead of gathering input from First Nations on what a desirable and effective procedure would be. Furthermore, there is no one standard process that First Nations can expect Jasper management to follow, rather each seems to change on a case by case basis. The result is confusion on how and when to engage, who is responsible for consultation, whether consultation costs will be covered fully or in part by the proponent, how disputes will be resolved, and, if a project is approved, what kind of follow up post-construction can be expected. For some this can create a situation where pursuing consultation seems like too much work with uncertain results.

Several respondents felt that their input is downplayed due to the fact that they have to engage on Parks Canada's terms or not at all. The respondent from Confederacy of Treaty Six Nations explained, "We were there for appearances, we weren't there with a legitimate voice to be considered, because everything was prescribed. The discussion is framed by them, the issues

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are chosen by them, the agenda is set by them, so we have to speak on their terms or we don't speak at all." When asked if she felt meaningfully consulted on the Glacier Skywalk project, the respondent from Samson Cree explained that she did not because she did not agree to the process to begin with. "Consultation is by their definition. They didn't even take the time to find out what is Samson's definition of consultation," she said.

As park managers direct consultation, park managers decide at what point they will inform First Nations about a given project, which most respondents feel is far too late in the approval process to allow for meaningful consultation. At times many feel that projects are brought forward seemingly after decisions have been made. There was a palpable sense that the Glacier Skywalk was already going to go ahead by the time it was brought to Forum:

> "By the time that was brought to the Elders, it was basically approved. It's really just about kind of mitigating if we knew of any graves in the area or if it was sacred to us." (Descendent of Moberly Family A)

> "With the Skywalk, when we did start getting involved and once we realized they were going to go ahead with it anyway... We went in there frustrated and we left even more frustrated. It's really sad when you know that all that's happening is they're going to ask us for the sake of asking. Just so they can give the appearance of "Yeah, we asked them." (Confederation of Treaty Six Nations)

> "Brewster's plans had been made, and that was that. Brewster's interest in "consultation" seems to have been only in obtaining aboriginal approval and/or obtaining aboriginal information that could enhance their tour objectives. There was no interest in modifying the plans." (Asini Wachi Cree Band)

In stark contrast, the respondents from Alexis Sioux Nakota Nation and Sucker Creek First Nation had very positive experiences with the Skywalk consultation. Both nations received one on one consultation with Brewster and negotiated terms that would allow each nation to support the project. Most respondents, however, felt cut out of the process.

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When nations are only involved in the late stages of the approval process, management is largely interested in relevant Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) or knowledge of sites of cultural importance in the area that either need to be avoided or could be incorporated into the tourist attraction. Similar to the totem pole gesture, First Nations' cultural symbols and practices continue to be coopted into the tourist imaginary of Jasper National Park whilst their political and physical presence on the land is erased. This is a very particular kind of inclusionary politics, where non-threatening aspects of First Nations' cultures are celebrated to give Jasper the appearance of doing due diligence. However, Parks Canada tends to prioritize expert driven science in decision-making, so often important Indigenous input regarding spiritual significance of place or even TEK that calls into question scientific evidence is discarded (Ellis, 2005; Nadasdy, 1999; Sandlos, 2014). Since the early colonial erasure of First Nations from parks, the worldview treating nature as a playground managed separately from humans through science-based calculation has displaced alternative understandings of human/non-human interrelationships (Loo, 2006; MacLaren, 2007). Science has long been and continues to be a tool of colonial antipolitics. Integrating indigenous input into existing state-led science-based management and decision-making structures thus functions to downplay indigenous concerns, allowing nations only a narrow window of opportunity to participate in decision-making with the park, on Parks' terms.

There is also a lack of transparency around how the decision itself is made on any given project. It is unclear how many nations out of all those that participate in the Forum have to be consulted with individually and support a project for management to report that indeed First Nations were meaningfully consulted. Several respondents felt that this is purposely left unclear and consultation is simply a formality used to convey the appearance of consent to managers in Ot-

tawa. "It's all formality, is what it is," said Descendant of Moberly Family B. "Most of Canada believes that yes, we were consulted, but they don't know the reality." The respondent from Confederation of Treaty 6 Nations similarly explained, "They manufacture consent. They give the illusion that they've consulted with us and everything is okay."

These selectively inclusionary politics allow Parks Canada to appear benevolent without giving up any decision-making power over contested territories. Indigenous input is coopted to facilitate their ongoing alienation from their lands and further capitalist accumulation through corporate-government partnerships. Management tries to satisfy the duty to consult through mechanisms designed to work within existing management structures, not to question those structures themselves. As management can use Indigenous input to report that First Nations have been consulted, sadly consultation often works to legitimize decisions made in the centre.

Incentivization and Favouritism

Büscher (2010) argues that one aspect of antipolitics within a neoliberal political economy is that debate around the equitable distribution of power and benefits is replaced by the quantification and trading of interests in order to circumvent ideological conflicts. In JNP debates around more equitable power sharing, ideological conflicts around what makes the park significant (spiritual and cultural values versus science-based valuation), and debates around unequal distributions of rights and benefits between First Nations and park authorities are obscured by the colonial antipolitics of consultation and are often replaced by the trading of interests between groups who have the capacity to engage in consultation and Parks Canada/the proponents. The respondent from Sucker Creek First Nation explained that Elders of the community had many

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concerns about the Glacier Skywalk's potential impacts on wildlife and vegetation in the area, among other things. He explained that although Brewster could not sufficiently mitigate many of the concerns raised by Elders, the community negotiated terms that would allow them to support the project. Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation negotiated terms of their own, including a promise for employment opportunities for a few of their members. Currently there are no indigenous people working at the Glacier Skywalk, and it is unknown whether this will transpire in the near future. Similarly, the respondent from AWN explained that potential opportunities to sell crafts at Maligne Lake were offered to members of the Forum, which she saw as a way to incentivize support from various nations. Many respondents explained that employment or economic opportunities are often suggested as potential opportunities but are rarely if ever followed up on.

"Subsequent to the stating of our position Brewster no longer contacted us. However, they did continue discussion with some of the other Forum members who had been more accepting," said the respondent from Asini Wachi Cree Band. "[For] these they offered to finance an Elders Tour to the site, financed a blessing ceremony by these groups, offered wall display space at the site, and offered to finance a few other of their undertakings." Many respondents feel that often Parks Canada or proponents will offer incentives to those that appear open to supporting development, particularly Elders of different groups. Respondents felt that Parks Canada tries to "pull the wool over Elders' eyes" (Descendant of Moberly Family A) by taking them up in helicopter rides, offering them gifts or privileges, etc.

Most respondents felt that JNP chooses to deal more closely with certain groups and contacts that are generally more receptive to park initiatives and exclude those that present challenges. Some respondents like those from Alexis Sioux and Sucker Creek felt that they are al-

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ways kept in the loop and are able to provide input on park initiatives, while the majority feel that they are often in the dark on important projects and don't feel included in the decision-making process. Many respondents felt that this favouritism and incentivization culminates in a 'divide and conquer' approach, where Parks Canada and the private proponents try to isolate those that will be more receptive to development plans and negotiate terms to gain their support. This can cause rifts between groups or between members of a community. These kinds of monetary incentives to accept plans designed by government and industry detract from and reify unequal colonial-capitalist relations. First Nations may gain some potential economic returns if they accept and support park-made commercial development plans, but the park's unquestioned authority to make those plans on First Nations' lands remains intact.

Discussion

JNP's antipolitical approach to Indigenous consultation employs several measures to contain challenges to the (neo)colonial status quo and to legitimize decisions made on private development projects. Placing the onus on First Nations to come forward and request individual consultation removes accountability from JNP and represents a loose interpretation of the Crown's Duty to Consult. It also obscures the historical colonial dispossession and political-economic marginalization of First Nations associated with the establishment of the park and assumes that First Nations have the same capacity as park management to engage in consultation work. This approach excludes nations that lack the capacity to be proactive on park issues as consultation offices are overworked and underfunded. This consequently reinforces existing inequalities both between nations and between Indigenous peoples and park management, particularly since the

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economic benefits of development projects accrue to JNP and private industry and not to First Nations. Furthermore, by positioning Aboriginal or Treaty rights as outside of their mandate, Jasper's approach leaves no room for political discussions around to what extent First Nations with traditional territories that overlap with the park should have sovereign decision-making authority.

Further, the consultation process itself remains colonial as final decision-making authority always rests with park authorities. It is designed to work within existing structures and thus consultation is often 'rendered technical'(Li, 2007); managers gather input and TEK to meet consultation report requirements, but existing state decision-making authority and the assumed superiority of scientific knowledge is presupposed. For those nations that appear more receptive to park initiatives, trading of interests within existing relations of power again helps to sway sentiment in favour of development. Dealing more closely with more agreeable contacts and excluding those that present significant challenges to park management likewise serves to maintain the status quo and minimize the significance of Indigenous concerns.

Several respondents called Jasper's approach 'colonial' and question why other parks in Canada have effective co-management arrangements whilst in Jasper Indigenous input is merely sought in the spirit of being a 'good neighbour.' "I absolutely couldn't imagine this happening on Gwaii Haanas. You couldn't do anything without going to the Haida, so why is it different here? Shouldn't all parks have to have the same standard in their relationship with Aboriginal people? Why does Jasper get to act in a way that's very colonial when other parks absolutely can't?," questioned Descendant from Moberly Family A. The respondent from Kelly Creek First Nation

similarly expressed, "Not much has changed since the first white settlers came to Jasper, the same colonial attitude continues to exist with the JNP officials."

Ultimately the current approach facilitates development projects that benefit industry and government but have little benefit for First Nations. Many respondents are appalled at the fact that there are no Indigenous people working within Parks Canada in Jasper and few if any working within the Jasper townsite. Most respondents feel that the Aboriginal Liaison position with the park should be filled by an Indigenous person. "Until they get people to actually work in parks as liaison officers that are Aboriginal, they will never understand. They will never, ever understand. And I mean that with great respect," said Descendant from Moberly Family B. "If you had a person that was Aboriginal in there, they would know certain questions to ask, they would know when to pursue certain questions and things like that."

Respondents felt that hiring Indigenous people in prominent positions in Parks Canada should be a top priority. Furthermore, all respondents question why industry is able to profit economically from development projects within First Nations' traditional territories while they cannot:

> "The community has always questioned why there are not more opportunities for Aboriginal groups among the private sector in the park. I know there has been discussions along these lines of tourism opportunities, visitor centres and partnerships, but nothing has ever really come to fruition." (AWN)

> "If more of the nations were taking part or had more of the benefits that are going on with private industry then we'd probably have a different view, but by and large we're left out. If you go to Banff or Jasper, show me a First Nation shop or someone who is benefiting from the tourism industry. If you can't show me anybody, then you know where all of the benefits are going." (Stoney Nakoda Nation)

> "The private sector... I think their presence needs to be minimized if not completely shut down. I don't believe development should happen.. But any further development that

happens I believe it should be in partnership with the First Nations to give them some of the opportunities that they've never had in those parks. The private sector should be in partnership with the nations, otherwise they shouldn't be allowed to do any further development." (Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation)

This case mirrors other studies on market-based conservation where inequality results as the majority of the benefits associated with ventures within parks are captured by elites, government and industry (Fletcher, 2012; West, 2004; Young, 2003). Jasper's antipolical approach to consultation thus reinforces (neo)colonial neoliberal political economic relations where the Crown's sovereignty is fortified and capital generated on Indigenous territories is captured by private interests and Parks Canada. While hiring Indigenous people as Aboriginal Liaisons and providing more economic opportunities in the park are important first steps towards a more equitable and respectful relationship, these changes alone will not transcend the colonial power dynamics at play, and may even detract from or serve to invisibilize the further entrenchment of unequal colonial relations. Without the transfer of land and decision-making authority, the colonial antipolitics of consultation will continue to minimize First Nations' roles in decision-making to facilitate their continued dispossession in the name of industry-led development.

Conclusion

Uniting the theoretical lines of thinking about antipolitics and colonial-capitalist exploitation, this chapter provides a grounded example of the interrelationships between antipolitics, political economy and coloniality; how they operate in tandem and are mutually reinforcing. Although First Nations in Jasper have not given assent to the claims to territorial authority advanced by Parks Canada, nor have they given assent to the way in which consultation is sought,

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their physical alienation from the park makes their present day political agency largely invisible to the settler population of Jasper and surrounding areas, who unknowingly give assent to these practices through their activism around 'wilderness' preservation and their ignorance around Indigenous consultation mechanisms. Brewster Travel did not relay Indigenous concerns to public actors in Jasper in their report synthesizing comments received during public and Indigenous consultation. Maligne Tours did include some Indigenous feedback in their report synthesizing public comment, although respondents felt that it was 'watered down'. With little to no public visibility of Indigenous concerns and claims to their traditional territories, public actors in the Jasper area aren't actually given the opportunity to refute the colonial antipolitics of Indigenous consultation. Since most nations in the area are overworked and underfunded, they often can not stay on top of park affairs and certainly do not have the capacity to take Parks to court over improper consultation on many of these private proposals. There therefore seems to be little consequence for Parks Canada in not meeting the Duty to Consult, and Indigenous concerns and complaints can be quietly swept under the rug. While the Forum was established in theory as a way to enroll previously excluded First Nations into the decision-making process, they've been brought into the process in completely depoliticized and largely invisibilized ways. The original colonial power dynamics remain at play, replicated and stabilized through consultation.

Chapter 5
The Practice of Politics in Doi Suthep-Pui National Park

Introduction

Like in Canada, conservation in Thailand is an always changing achievement produced through perpetual contestation. Imported 'wilderness' ideology here clashed with local realities as forests, particularly the northern upland forests like those in Chiang Mai province, are largely inhabited by ethnic minorities with alternative understandings of nature and human's place within broader ecosystems. Although park authorities in Thailand have historically taken a heavy hand (Chusak, 2008; Leblond, 2010; Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995), imposing fortress conservation has not been a uniform or frictionless process, particularly in the northern region. Counter-measures have been taken by those groups who faced livelihood restrictions or even eviction from parks (Anan, 1998; Pinkaew, 2002), and alliances between academics, NGOs and rural communities have been working to change perceptions of forest-dwelling communities from 'forest destroyers' to 'forest protectors' (Forsyth and Walker, 2008). This struggle continues today as urban deep green environmentalists continue to either blame environmental degradation on minorities or simply believe humans have no place in 'nature' (Forsyth, 2003b; 2007). Importantly, discourses like ""hill tribes", "nature" and "conservation" in Thailand are not only constructions but are constantly "under construction""(Pinkaew, 2002: i), and thus the authority of officials to enact particular conservation measures is similarly malleable and contingent.

This contingent authority is well illustrated in the way that the Chiang Mai cable car controversy has unfolded since the 1980s. Civil society groups and environmentalist monks have been challenging the idea on environmental, religious, and socio-economic grounds for decades,

and each time —including the most recent push in 2013— networks of opponents have been successful in shelving the project (Darlington, 1999; Pholpoke, 1998). Like in Jasper, proponents employed several anti-political strategies to fashion the appearance of consensus, attempting to reduce and control public debate and authorize development. However, in this case there were no compelling budgetary pressures that would compel approval —in fact, by most estimations the cable car would have cost the Thai government more than it would have made. This important factor combined with the nuances of Thai politics and civil society in Chiang Mai have led this project to be shelved yet again.

This chapter will explore 1) the ways in which proponents and opponents mobilize and attempt to stabilize truth claims in their contestations, and 2) the strategies employed and the political economic circumstances that shape the degree to which public and Indigenous actors are able to participate in decision-making. I argue that ultimately the unique political economy of conservation here proves unfavourable to development, and thus opponents in Chiang Mai have had greater success in shelving the cable car project and feel that they have considerable power in decision-making. Steady federal funding to the national parks reduces pressure to streamline the approval process, thus despite having relatively weaker consultation mechanisms and living under a repressive military government, local and Indigenous peoples here feel relatively empowered.

Conservation and Neoliberalisation as Sites of Struggle in Thailand

Political and economic trends and popular discourses have shifted the terrain of conservation and development in Thailand. The state decided to adopt the British-influenced Burmese/

Indian forestry model and began appropriating forest lands for commercial forestry in the late 1800s, largely for teak production and export (Vandergeest and Peluso, 2006). Through a process of 'territorialization' the Thai state identified forest lands of national interest, drew borders around them, and prescribed appropriate behaviours and economic activities within them (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995). In the northern highlands, the production and dissemination of discourses that 'racialized' forest-dwelling ethnic minorities as non-Thai, as susceptible to potential communist indoctrination, and as illegal opium producers legitimated their expulsion from these areas via state-led displacement projects (Leblond, 2010; Lohmann, 1999; Vandergeest, 2003). In the late 1980s, the priorities of the Royal Forestry Department shifted from extraction to conservation. The rise in environmentalism in the 1980s prompted the official logging ban in 1989, the same year the Thai cabinet passed a strict watershed conservation policy (Anan, 1998). 'Conservation', influenced both by transnational science-centred discourses and notions of what it means to be 'civilised' in Thai society, then became a legitimizing factor in the expulsion of ethnic minorities or the strict restrictions placed on how they could make their livelihoods within protected forests (Chusak, 2008). As explained in Chapter 2, this particular understanding of nature and the Thai national park regulatory framework have colonial roots, despite the fact that Thailand was never formerly colonized. Thai forest laws were modelled after British systems in Burma and India, and protected area regulations were influenced by colonial wildlife regulations and the American national park ideal (Vandergeest, 1996; Vandergeest and Peluso, 2006). The eviction and/or restriction of ethnic minorities' activities in conservation zones also has parallels with the treatment of Indigenous nations in conservation zones in other former colonies (in the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa).

The ability of ethnic minorities to remain living in protected areas was a hard-won battle. Networks of rural farmers, academics and NGOs worked to dismantle the dualistic understanding of nature/culture undergirding Thai conservation practice, and to change the perception of ethnic minorities from 'forest destroyers' to 'forest guardians' (Forsyth and Walker, 2008). While this helped to shift the discourse around people in forests, at times this locked communities in the 'traditional' past, or privileged certain ethnic groups over others (Walker and Farrelly, 2008). In order for communities to remain in protected areas, swidden cultivation and hunting or gathering forest resources were banned in favour of paddy rice cultivation on smaller plots of land, and increasingly market engagement became the 'solution' to park-people conflict, most commonly in terms of cash cropping or ecotourism (Dressler and Roth, 2011; Youdelis, 2013). Ethnic minorities continue to be scapegoats for environmental degradation, but the preferred 'solution' has shifted from expulsion to market integration. Although critiqued by social scientists for reproducing inequality, degrading environments and contributing to global climate change, tourism has become commonly accepted as a low-impact alternative to other land uses such as agriculture (Youdelis, 2013).

Conservation was influenced somewhat by neoliberalisation since the 1980s, being partially rescaled to include local communities, or at least to grant them the ability to start their own entrepreneurial business ventures within certain parks. However the state is still central to the operation of parks, and this rescaling has largely excluded the private sector. Private guides can bring tour groups into parks for either day trips or overnight excursions, but private sector development of accommodations or other attractions within parks is officially prohibited. Funding to

the national parks has been modestly but continually increasing, thus looking to private operators to recoup costs has thus far not been a major concern or a very viable option.

Neoliberalisation at the state level has also unfolded quite uniquely in Thailand, as it has in many Southeast Asian states where neoliberalisation has awkwardly mingled with develop-mentalism (Hill et al., 2011). Some argue that the implementation of neoliberal policies has been patchy at best and quite openly opposed (Glassman et al., 2008; Thongchai, 2008). LaRocco (2011) argues that the Thai experience showcases the Polanyian double movement in action as a result of the failure of neoliberal policies to provide socioeconomic rights and safety nets to those most vulnerable. Others argue that certain 'neoliberal' ideals have advanced significantly in the post-fordist era, including "flexibilization of labour, the application of the logic of manage-ment to public administration, and a redefining of citizens as entrepreneurs" (Sopranzetti, 2017: 80; see also Dressler and Roth, 2011; Duffy and Moore, 2010).

Much of Thai environmentalism in the 1980s was anti-capitalist or anti-modernity, with people reacting to changes brought on by rapid economic growth. Thai citizens blamed the crisis that ensued after Asian financial collapse of 1997 on the IMF's pro-market structural adjustment programs, an over reliance on Foreign Direct Investment and the domination of transnational corporations (Khoo Boo Teik, 2010). Thanks to the IMF's imposition of austerity measures, the GDP fell 7.9% in 1997, 12.3% in 1998, and 7% the first half of 1999, making the crisis known nationally as *wikrit IMF* (IMF crisis) (Sopranzetti, 2017). This made social movements and civil society more candidly antagonistic to neoliberal forms of governance, provoking backlash from civil society, unions, intellectuals, NGOs and the rural poor (Thongchai, 2008).

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Post-crisis, the Thai Rak Party led by billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra (associated with the Red Shirts, see below) rose to tremendous popularity by providing a series of Keynesian measures such as debt forgiveness for rural farmers, national health care, and subsidized electricity (Khoo Boo Teik, 2010; Glassman et al., 2008). Although the TRT took a protectionist approach in some regards, the party also "made considerable concessions to transnational capital, including moving toward a number of FTAs and reopening the case for privatization of various state enterprises" (Glassman et al., 2008: 342). Thaksin was also pro-market in many ways, noted for projects like the One Tambon, One Product scheme and the Million Baht program where credit was much more readily available to rural residents. "Overall, this system was aimed at fostering universal participation in capitalism by making small business and low income people into free entrepreneurs —a classic neoliberal project— but it did so by expanding welfare provisions to protect these entrepreneurs from unexpected difficulties" (Sopranzetti, 2017: 81). In other words, the post-fordist era in Thailand espoused both neoliberal and developmental ideals, promoting individual 'freedom' and entrepreneurship while simultaneously expanding the state's role in regulating the national economy and providing social welfare.

While some have argued that the tense and at times violent divisions in Thai society between Red Shirts (associated with Thaksin's parties, broadly encompassing rural peoples, certain social and environmental NGOs, and left-leaning academics) and Yellow Shirts (associated with the monarchy, broadly encompassing the urban middle class, military, and NGOs) follow anti-neoliberal and neoliberal lines, respectively (Glassman et al., 2008), the picture is far more complex. Yellow Shirts are broadly aligned with NGOs, which are understood as 'flanking organizations' under neoliberalism (Castree, 2008), however as explained above, Red Shirts aligned with

Thaksin espouse many openly pro-market reforms. Although Thaksin did champion redistributive schemes as well, it's not possible to characterize either Red or Yellow as decidedly 'neoliberal'. The point is that neolbieralisation in Thailand has unfolded in inconsistent and quite contradictory ways.

But Thaksin's focus on (some degree of) redistribution and the rural masses made him considerable enemies in the elite forces, including the military and the monarchy, and he was ousted by a military coup in 2006, with new leaders seeking to dismantle many of the TRT reforms. While Thaksin was in exile, his allies formed the People's Power Party (PPP) led by Thaksin's sister, Yingluck Shinawatra. Promising more aid to the rural countryside, she was elected by popular vote in 2011, only to be ousted yet again by a military coup in 2014 (Khoo Boo Teik, 2010). Led by Prayuth Chan-ocha, this new regime (The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO)) is flagrantly oppressive, silencing dissent through arrests and threats and making social movement mobilization illegal. They dissolved the 2007 Constitution, and their revised Constitution that passed by referendum in 2016 has faced widespread critique for concentrating power in the hands of the military and impoverishing Thai democracy (Baird et al., 2016; Kornkritch, 2016).

With so much back and forth between protectionism and neoliberalisation, and so much animosity between different social classes, it's clear to see that 'actually existing' neoliberalisation here was not imported unabridged but arose from "selective and pragmatic adaptations of policies and measures conducive to neoliberal agendas and favourable to domestic capital" (Khoo Boo Teik, 2010: 6). The poorer classes in Thailand have not been afraid to voice their discontent with policies that favour the upward accumulation of capital, and to this day

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Western capitalism and big business are met with suspicion and derision by a sizeable portion of Thai society (Thongchai, 2008).

This is certainly a political economic history that is distinct from the Canadian experience. The responsibilities around public and Indigenous consultation and participation in parks also differ greatly between both field sites. As mentioned in the introduction, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNPWPC) is not required to consult with the public or with Indigenous groups on the majority of undertakings within parks. "By law, anything done in a national park, we don't have to ask anybody. By law. Because the national parks belong to the central government, to the country, not the Chiang Mai province. Otherwise we wouldn't call it a national park!", said Plodprasop Suraswadi, the 'father of the DNPWPC', as he calls himself. But he admitted that "if we want to see a project last long, no one can look after it better than those that live nearby, so that's why we often do ask them." In practice, consultation or some kind of public engagement happens on a sort of ad hoc basis, depending on the nature of the project and the likelihood of public push-back. For sizeable projects that require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), public engagement is mandatory and often structured in the form of public hearings (Manowong and Ogunlala, 2006; Swangjang et al., 2004).

In order to understand public participation in Thailand we must understand how decentralization has unfolded and consequently how Thai political life is structured. Although decentralization is theoretically linked with "democratization processes, participatory politics, local empowerment, and social and environmental justice" (Vandergeest and Chusak, 2002), in practice these promises are not often realized. The 1994 Tambon Administration Act (TAO) decentralized forest management authority to local governments, and this was further supported by the

Thai Constitution of 1997 which states that local peoples and organizations should participate in managing their natural resources. The economic crisis of 1997-1998 led to decentralization planning being open to collaboration with the private sector. The government began a Public Sector Adjustment Policy, reviewing the role of public agencies, and decided that all work that can be carried out by the private sector should be privatized, and all work that can be done by local people and organizations should also be transferred (Pragtong, 2000). The Government Decentralization Act of 1999 defined responsibilities for different administrative levels from the central government down to the smallest administrative level, the *tambon* (Fisher, 2010).

Administration for urban and rural districts differ slightly. Thai rural society is now broken down as follows: Every village has an elected Headman (*phuyaiban*), who stays in office until he or she is 60 years old. Ten to twenty villages together form a Tambon, with a Head of the Headmen (*kamnan*) elected from among all *phuyaiban* within the Tambon. The Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO) is comprised of a legislative branch, which is a council assembly made up of 2 councillors from each village, and an executive branch, led by the TAO Clerk. The *kamman* used to be the main authority at the Tambon level, however in recent decades the authority and wealth of the TAO and the TAO Clerk have grown dramatically, and now the Clerk and the *kamnan* often have overlapping authority. About ten Tambons make up a District, run by the *Nai Amphoe*, and about ten Districts make up a Province, led by a governor who is not elected but appointed by the central government. The four Tambons involved in the cable car controversy and consultations are Suthep, Nong Khwai, Ban Pong, and Mae Hia. Ban Pong and Nong Khwai are part of Hang Dong District, and thus fall under this rural system of admin. Suthep and Mae Hia both belong to Mueang Chiang Mai District, and thus fall under urban admin. Urban

administration is organized similarly to rural administration, however there are 16 Tambons that make up Mueang Chiang Mai District, and the district contains one city-municipality (Chiang Mai) which encompasses Si Phum, Phra Sing, Haiya, Chang Moi, Chang Khlan, Wat Ket, and Pa Tan subdistricts as well as portions of Chang Phueak, Suthep, Pa Daet, Nong Hoi, Tha Sala, Nong Pa Khrang, and Fa Ham subdistricts. The city of Chiang Mai has greater authority to self-govern than do other districts or subdistricts in Chiang Mai province (Various interviews, 2015). Because the cable car would begin in Hang Dong district and would cut through portions of Mueang Chiang Mai district, the governor of the province, the *nai amphoe*, and *kamnan* of the four affected subdistricts would be involved in decision-making. The national park authority would be involved in public consultation but would not be involved in final decision-making.

Vandergeest and Chusak (2010) write "If power is devolved to actors who are not accountable to their constituents, or accountable only to themselves or superior authorities within the government, then it is unlikely that decentralization will achieve its stated goal or be democratic"(5). In other words, decentralization is not necessarily democratizing. The *phuyaiban*, *kamnan*, and *nai amphoe* all have downward accountability to varying extents in that they are elected, although once elected a *phuyaiban* will retain office until retirement. However the Governor is appointed and thus has upward accountability, and he or she has greater decision-making authority with regards to mega-projects within the province. Additionally, agencies dealing with contentious natural resource issues often utilize cabinet resolutions to "facilitate or force cooperation across ministries" (Garden et al., 2010: 154). Cabinet decrees are top-down mechanisms often absent of much public deliberation, and thus can be rather undemocratic. The cable car

project was slated to be a Cabinet decision, likely due to the intensity of the controversy surrounding it.

Co-evolution of Social Activism and Conservation Practice in Chiang Mai

Despite repressive military rule, civil society is quite lively and organized, particularly in Chiang Mai, with many NGOs dedicated to either deep green (protecting forests from people) or red-green (championing the rights of rural ethnic communities to both live in and care for forests) objectives (Forsyth, 2003b). Although these two strands of environmental activists disagree fundamentally on the place of humans in non-human worlds, they find uneasy alliances around certain issues, such as the cable car proposal advanced by the semi-private Pinkanakorn Development Agency (PDA).

Plodprasop Suraswadi, former Director General of the Royal Forestry Department (and First Director General of the reformed Parks Department), takes credit for the cable car idea. He also spearheaded the controversial Night Safari in Chiang Mai, opened in 2006, which had to receive special allowance from her Majesty the Queen as it was originally built within the national park. The area covered by the Night Safari was declared a 'special economic zone', exempted from the park and from paying tax. The Night Safari caused a great deal of upset with surrounding communities, due to noise, pollution and broken promises of economic opportunities, and with the people of Chiang Mai concerned with how the animals were being treated. At the time of research, the PDA ran the Night Safari, the adjacent Botanical Gardens, and the Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Centre, and would have added the cable car to

its roster if approved. If approved, the area taken up by the cable car would similarly be declared a 'special economic zone' exempt from the park[12].

As I explained in Chapter 2, there's been a tug of war over the cable car idea over the last 3 decades. At the heart of the struggle are contested meanings of national parks and conservation, which include a confluence of truth claims about nature, nationalism, accessibility, religion, progress, and political economic imperatives. While proponents here similarly employed antipolitical strategies to reduce public influence in decision-making, there was no high-priority political economic pressure to approve development, which contributed to the success of the movement. In the rest of this chapter, I will outline the strategies of proponents and opponents to enroll allies and some of the factors that led the project to be shelved. I'll begin by teasing apart the conflicts around the series of truth claims pertaining to conservation and the role of national parks, starting once again with 'wilderness' thinking.

Wilderness Thinking

According to the Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Chiang Mai, both the city and province of Chiang Mai rely mainly on natural and cultural capital to attract tourists. Cultural tourism and ecotourism are the main draws to the region and national parks play a major role in providing both, promising intact forests alongside controlled spaces where tourists can experience 'hill tribe' cultures. Much like in Canada, wilderness here was produced in part as playground for the broader Thai society and foreign tourists, done so through the expulsion or strict restriction of local ethnic minorities within parks. Civil society groups and prominent acad-

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[12] In June of 2016, the Cabinet declared that the Pingkanakorn Development Agency was to collapse and its assets transferred to different departments. It is unclear why or how this decision was reached.

emics in Chiang Mai advocate for the rights for community members to remain in place. Some advocate for their rights to practice traditional livelihoods (Yos, 2003), but for many, remaining in parks comes with the caveat that ethnic minorities must live in certain circumscribed ways (paddy rice vs. swidden cultivation, no hunting or gathering forest resources, small scale eco-tourism rather than intensive agriculture, etc.) (Dressler and Roth, 2011; Youdelis, 2013). Thus the 'wilderness' ethic here is a bit complex - with varying views on what kind of 'nature' parks are meant to protect and to what extent (and in which ways) local communities fit in with broad-er ecosystems.

As I mentioned, the opposition to the cable car was shared between deep green and red-green actors. Civil society groups in Chiang Mai formed a network of opposition to the cable car despite differences in values. The majority of the groups and actors involved would be classified as more red-green, however a couple of actors were proudly deep green, believing there should be no communities living within parks whatsoever and that tourism should be strictly controlled without built infrastructure. "We have an alliance sometimes, and we're enemies other times," said Dr. Attachak Sattayanurak of Chiang Mai University, a red-green proponent. All of the groups were against needless destruction of the forest, particularly since the route would cut through class 1A watershed forest, which is the most strictly protected classification in Thailand, however different actors had different understandings of the role of parks in relation to pristine 'wilderness'. Regardless, opponents found an uneasy alliance campaigning against the cable car, and arguments that the watershed forest should be preserved in protected areas featured promi-nently in opponents' media outreach, including social media, television and news spots, in Q&A sessions at public hearings, and on signs held up at different protest events. One such sign read

(in Thai, but translated to English here) "We oppose the cable car. Don't invade the home of the wildlife." In an open letter to the Governor of Chiang Mai, several civil society groups argued that deforestation is a central concern and that the cable car is inappropriate in a natural setting, that it is "alien to nature'. They argue that forests in Chiang Mai have been continually degraded to the point that certain districts are like 'mountain desserts'. Dr. Anuchat Thananchai of the Faculty of Education at Chiang Mai University, and the head of the Rak (Love) Doi Suthep group. said, "Suthep-Pui National Park is one of the few remaining large intact forest areas which we need to conserve for future generations. Most others in the area have been destroyed so we need many parties to come together to conserve this forest."

Arguments that the cable car would destroy the aesthetic character of Chiang Mai were also prevalent with opponents running the campaign as well as with headmen and villagers throughout the four subdistricts. People felt that such a large, modern, built mega-structure was 'unnatural' and would destroy the beauty of the landscape and take away from the history and culture of the city fundamental to residents' feelings of place:

> "The cable car is out of place with the cultural and environmental capital of Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai is about slow living, about having a calm, peaceful life, therefore we should be developing ecotourism and community tourism. The cable car doesn't fit with the Chiang Mai lifestyle." Tatthaya Anusorrakit, Chiang Mai Link

Opponents want to preserve the somewhat nostalgic, idyllic image of the moral, rural thai countryside and the non-commercial values this represents (Haberkorn, 2011; Thongchai, 2008). Although the production of this aesthetic nature and traditional culture is partly meant to attract tourists, opponents are critical and suspicious of big business ventures, and only small scale ecotourism and cultural tourism is considered an appropriate fit for the province. This is both be-

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cause of the perceived unsustainability of mass tourism projects and because locals feel that all of the benefits in those kinds of ventures accrue to wealthy elites and not to local people who are in need of sustainable development options.

While some degree of 'wilderness' thinking came out in arguments against construction, opponents also face a frustrating double standard that allows government to develop within parks but severely punishes civilians for cutting a single tree. "People cutting the trees in the park are criminals, but the government can do it without any guilt," said Duangtip, headman of Nong Khwai village 5. The government has free reign to allow mega-projects within parks despite strict regulations against construction in class 1 watershed forests, while local communities have no access rights to any forest products and must bear the greatest burden in the production of wilderness for tourism. Opponents argue that if national parks are truly places that the government has been charged to defend against encroachment, then they should follow their own directives and reject the cable car. Many felt that it was ludicrous and hypocritical for the military government to be demolishing private resorts or structures encroaching on parks throughout the country while considering this proposal by Pinkgkanakorn in Doi Suthep-Pui.

Responding to public pushback against disturbing the watershed forest, proponents offered mitigation measures and assurances that construction of the cable car would cut the fewest trees possible. Opponents were concerned about the need for access roads to bring in equipment and construction workers, along with the areas of forest that would need to be felled for the poles and the stations, so proponents announced that they would use helicopters to deliver all of the construction materials and workers instead. While this was admittedly an exceedingly costly and untested option, in the EIA, brochures, media spots, and during presentations in public meetings,

Tesco and the PDA boasted that minimal harm will be done to the forest - that poles are not too sizeable and disturbance will be kept to a minimum through advanced technology. Some local leaders and villagers dismissed the opponents worried about environmental impact as 'backwards' 'conservatives' who 'want to make Thailand go backwards, not forwards' (Various interviews 2014-2015). Proponents also dismissed the opposition saying the only people that oppose this are academics and NGOs, "and the NGO people oppose everything," said Plodprasop. Proponents also drew on public sentiment that Chiang Mai's destination brand revolves around natural and cultural attractions to promote the cable car. For example, in a promotional video about the cable car, proponents advertise that it allows for an intimate experience with nature, especially areas that are inaccessible by car, and that having a bird's eye view of the forest is a unique way for passengers to connect with wilderness.

The possibility of producing wilderness for commercial tourism relies upon the continued restriction of indigenous communities activities' within parks (which, as I explained in Chapter 3, does not depart starkly from the 'wilderness' ethic), but the Hmong community in Doi Pui will actually benefit economically from the project as they have been permitted to remain living inside the park, unlike First Nations in Jasper. However the other Hmong village within the park, Ban Khun Chiang Kian, is more remote and will not likely benefit. Villagers there remain barred from practicing traditional livelihoods and have few development options, so most feel ignored and abandoned by the park.

Although the EIA presented the appearance of collective agreement on the importance (or lack thereof) of deforestation and environmental disturbance, deforestation was one of the key

issues unifying otherwise disparate parties in the struggle against the cable car in the movement being built outside of official channels.

National Nature

Nationalism, specifically national development and national identity, featured prominently in arguments for and against. Despite the likelihood that the cable car would not make back the investment and would likely need to be subsidized by the government for decades, much like the Night Safari and the Chiang Mai Convention Centre, proponents and many local respondents felt that the cable car was absolutely necessary for 'national development'. Proponents advertised the cable car as something that would bring Thailand up to 'international standards', a phrase that became a serious fixation for many interview respondents. The idea that Thailand needs to catch up and boast technology to rival nations in the Global North was a common argument in favour of development:

> "We have to lift up the standards of development in Thailand. Other countries have cable cars, Vietnam has cable cars, but Thailand? We have none. We have to match the other developed countries." Pani, Headman in Mae Hia Subdistrict

> "It helps us to reach international standards, other countries have cable cars so we should also have this technology." Panapai, Head of Welfare Office, Suthep Subdistrict

> "It's a modern form of transportation so it will make our country look good. We'll look better than Ethiopia, for example, which doesn't offer much choice in terms of transportation." Thawatchai, Headman in Mae Hia Subdistrict

Proponents did an excellent job tapping into the public's sense of anxiety around falling short of international expectations. Many agreed and felt very deeply that Thailand needed the cable car to enhance its national image, to appear more 'developed'.

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On the other hand, opponents argued that Doi Suthep temple is such a well-known and sacred place that it belongs to the Thai nation, not just to people in Chiang Mai. They argued as well that national parks belong to the nation, and anything that that would defile these national treasures (both parks and the temple) is an affront to the people of Thailand who collectively own these spaces. Like in Jasper, opponents and local people also took issue with the fact that likely only wealthy travelers would be able to enjoy the cable car, it's not for the majority of Thai people:

> "Poor people will never have a chance to experience the cable car, it'll only be rich people that can go up and see everything from a bird's-eye view. It's a rich person's toy, because the cost of going up there won't work for most people." Duangtip, Headman in Nong Khwai Subdistrict

Opponents felt that benefits would accrue mainly to Pingkanakorn and people in their network and that development opportunities for the majority of Thai people would be limited, challenging the idea that this would truly bring 'national development'.

Additionally, opponents argued that Chiang Mai's identity revolved around natural attractions and northern Lanna culture, and that these were the things that brought northern Thais pride; these were the things that attracted international attention. In this way some opponents understood the national identity of northern Thais, and at times of Thailand in general, as set apart from other nations because of the lack of garish modern technology. Northern slow living and natural/cultural marvels were considered threatened by ostentatious mechanization and thus so was national pride. Opponents created noise around the notion that the cable car was antithetical to Chiang Mai's identity, which helped to broaden their movement and enroll allies in the affected villages.

Sacred Site

When the cable car idea was proposed in the 1980s and again in the early 2000s, religious concerns were at the forefront of protest movements alongside environmental concerns and concerns around privatization. The original route for the cable car would have gone up directly above the road leading to Doi Suthep temple, starting from the statue of the venerated monk Kuba Siwichai at the base of the mountain. This was considered blasphemy on two counts. Firstly it would disrespect Kuba Siwichai and take away from people's feelings of place, and most importantly the fact that any structure would be spatially higher than the temple itself was considered sacrilege. Because of the persistent backlash against bringing the cable car directly above Kuba Siwichai's statue and Doi Suthep Temple, the PDA decided this time to plan a route around the other side of the mountain that brought tourists to Doi Pui and one other lookout location. While these stations are still higher in elevation than Doi Suthep temple, deliberately going around and away from Doi Suthep temple seems to have neutralized much of the public resistance to the cable car on religious grounds, however opposition based on the sacredness of the site still remains:

> "Doi Suthep is also sacred ground, the cable car might slowly change the way of life here and the spiritual beliefs of people in the area. The road up to Doi Suthep was a sacred route taken by Kuba Siwichai, it's like a pilgrimage road, if we build the cable car up there it could reduce the value of the idea of this road." Daycha Niamkun, elder in Suthep Subdistrict

> "I don't know much about the project, but I don't support it, mainly for spiritual and cultural reasons. The Doi Suthep temple is sacred and the forest around the area should be protected. Chiang Mai is listed to become a World Heritage area, and building a cable car up that sacred place would totally contradict this." Villager in Suthep Subdistrict

For many, the sacredness of the space ties into the importance of Doi Suthep in the popular imaginary of Chiang Mai and feeds into national pride. Opponents tapped into this in their organizing, for example holding up signs at events that read (in Thai, translated into English here) "The cable car is soulless, it destroys our spiritual path" and "Doi Suthep is not just a mountain to us."

One of the biggest differences between previous protests and the controversy of 2014 is that in the past environmentalist monks made up a significant part of the opposition while more recently they've been all but absent. I asked members of the opposition why this might be, and people felt that the times and local values are changing, and that now the monks and temple administration are in support of (or neutral to) the project because of the potential for increased tourism profits:

> "It'll be more business and more benefits from tourists. Now you can see Doi Suthep has become all about business." Dr. Somikat Chaipiboon, Maejo University

Interestingly, the head of the Doi Suthep temple administration began in opposition to the project, but when I contacted him for an interview he was extremely uncomfortable talking about the issue. He told my research assistant on the phone that he would only talk in general terms and present both sides but would not like to share his personal opinion. He wanted to meet near the national park office, so we suggested a coffee shop across the street, but on arrival he wanted us to meet inside the park office itself, which we felt was a sort of power move to make us feel as though we should watch what we ask and what we say. He arrived with an assistant who did nothing but discretely take photographs of myself and Pim on his camera phone and then promptly left and stood outside of the meeting room. It was a truly bizarre experience and we could only surmise that he had been pressured to temper his public opinion on the matter.

Like with environmental arguments, the religious one was used by proponents as merely another reason why opponents were 'backwards' 'conservatives', holding on to silly traditions and blocking 'national progress'. Plodprasop Suraswadi said:

> "They said if we built the cable car, or we built some structure above the temple, above the Buddha relics, that would disrespect it. When the planes fly over-- every plane, every flight, flies over Doi Suthep. Is that something against the Buddha relics? If you go above Doi Suthep, to Paris. Every building in Paris including the toilets are also above Doi Suthep. If we go even further up, a lot of hill tribe people, ten thousand of them, their bedrooms, their toilets, their gardens, whatever, are all above Doi Suthep. These people disrespect Doi Suthep? No! No. This is why I don't like [NGOs/opponents]. They're foolish people."

Although Paris is not higher in elevation than Doi Suthep, the idea that the religious argument was largely invalid or less important than the potential for economic development gained traction with local people in Chiang Mai, particularly since the route was deliberately changed and there would be no station directly by Doi Suthep temple. By taking this approach, proponents can claim that they've resolved the issue, and that they too care about sacredness of the temple. This underlying point of 'agreement' allowed for the dismissal of the argument as irrational within official channels, however opponents continued to make noise around the issue in their movement building.

Political Economies of Conservation

The Thai case is interesting because unlike in Canada, the private sector is officially prohibited from developing in parks, and in fact private resorts that encroach on park space have been fined and demolished by the Thai government over the years, particularly by the new military government trying to demonstrate the value of their reign (Chanathit and Tumnukasetchai,

2015). However, newly formed quasi-private agencies like the Pingkanakorn Development

Agency can be granted permission to build any number of attractions within parks.

> "I think that the invasion of the private sector in national parks is coming in the form of newly established organizations. This kind of organization, created under special laws, allows government bodies and the private sector to cooperate, like the Pingnakorn Development Agency. The private sector's involvement in these organizations is kind of hidden." -Prayat, Community Rights Advocacy Network

The PDA receives a yearly budget from the government to support their business ventures, but

they retain all of the revenues from their projects, none goes back to the Finance Ministry. According to Plodprasop Suraswadi, there is a push from the central government to have the PDA

be more self-sustaining, though at the moment they still rely heavily on government funds to

subsidize their enterprise.

Although the PDA is not a fully private company, most respondents in Chiang Mai perceive it to be. Because of this, the debate around whether national parks or other social services

and public goods should be managed publicly or privately is also salient here:

> "National parks are common goods, belonging to the people and they're to be governed by the government, not the private sector." Singkham Nunti, Chairman of Nakhon Lanna Transportation

> "They try to take advantage of the national parks everywhere in Thailand. The cable car is a case of the private sector trying to take advantage."Dr. Attachak Sattayanurak, Chiang Mai University

> "I feel like the private sector is a small group with a lot of money, they're a powerful minority that could control these resources, which is not good." Phisit Kasi, Vice-Mayor of Mae Hia Subdistrict

The majority of people also understood the role of parks themselves as places where authorities

are charged to enforce laws against any private person or company 'invading' the area and using

it for personal or commercial gain.

Those that are clearer on the fact that the PDA is a government agency still resent the fact that they could be granted approval to break park rules. As well, aside from thoughts on Pingkanakorn itself, many remain suspicious of mega projects in Thailand and of big business in general, understanding these as mostly exploitative endeavours where the majority of benefits do not accrue to local people and yet local people face the greatest environmental costs of development:

> "At the village scale the benefits will be very few. I doubt that people will get benefits here because it's just like the Night Safari. They used to promise that there would be careers and this and that for local villages, but actually there's been none." Surached Thakumma, Headman in Suthep Subdistrict

> "If small projects are implemented then communities in general will benefit, but if it's a mega-project, mega millions, then it's the big corporations who will benefit." Wakana Seehom, Northern Development Foundation

This anti-(neoliberal)capitalist feature of Thai nationalism (Thongchai, 2008) and environmentalism (Forsyth, 2003a) differs from Jasper, where hegemony is more closely aligned with neoliberalism. Because the private sector has less involvement in parks by law, the private tourism lobby also isn't nearly as strong and is less publicly accepted than in Jasper.

In fact, not only is there less of a push from the private sector to protect their revenue streams, but Thai conservation laws that prohibit private development mean that the national park itself would not receive any monetary benefits from the construction of the cable car:

> "It's against the National Parks Act to build this structure in a conserved area, so the cable car would have to be withdrawn from the national park. So if that moment comes, it won't be the responsibility or under the authority of the national park anymore, so none of the income will go to the park. The national park will not receive any benefits because the money from the cable car will go back to the Pingkanakorn Development Agency." Amporn Panmongkol, Head of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park

Doi Suthep-Pui National Park is one of the few parks that do not collect entrance fees, as it is so close to Chiang Mai and so many people enter and leave each day visiting Doi Suthep temple. If the cable car were built and exempted from the park and declared a special economic zone, then the PDA would be exempt from paying any tax on the land as well. From the park's perspective in this case, the cable car would bring no benefits, only challenges related to managing increased tourism and ecological integrity. Doi Suthep-Pui is not mandated to increase visitation each year, as there is no pressure (or possibility) to recoup costs through tourism here.

As the cable car would link the Night Safari with other points of interest and tourist attractions in Doi Suthep-Pui, many consider the proposal a ploy to make more money for the PDA and for networks of people close to Plodprasop himself. The PDA paid 10 million baht to Tesco Ltd. to conduct the environmental assessment. Tesco receives 100% of the PDA's work, and some have charged Plodprasop of corruption, claiming that his close friends and family members and people close to Thaksin are/were Tesco shareholders, which Plodprasop vehemently denied. Unfortunately I wasn't able to access this information so the links between Tesco and the PDA remain obscure:

> "I think that this cable car might not really be happening. It might just be a monkey play, just so they can ask for the budget to do the study, the EIA report and the public hearing. It's just another way to ask for money from the government but they don't really aim to actually build it. Just so they could give money to Tesco and to themselves. Because they did this in 2005 too, they spent over 40 million baht already in this kind of process. So they'll do the same performance now." Prayat, Community Rights Advocacy Network

Plodprasop admitted to me that the cable car would not make back the investment for a very long time. He said that the point was for local development, increasing opportunities for local communities to sell goods and services to tourists, and 'national development' in terms of

'international standards'. He expected that the government would subsidize this just like the other ventures run by the PDA. Publicly, the PDA framed the cable car as important for local economic and national development, and did not admit or discuss much of anything relating to the budget. People in Chiang Mai felt that there was not enough transparency around the budget, how much would the cable car cost, and how benefits would be shared. Despite this opacity, many felt that the cable car would lose money just like the Night Safari, and that this would likely be the ultimate reason why the cable car would be scrapped:

> "First of all, I don't think the cable car will have any benefits. The money they receive every day as the daily income will go back to PDA. They will deduct money for management, upkeep, etc., and the balance will be negative." Tatthaya Anusorakit, Chiang Mai Link

> "I think the chance of this cable car being built is small, because I think this project can't break even in terms of budget. This project needs a lot of money to run. The Night Safari is losing profits for sure, so building this would increase the PDA's negative profits. " Teeramon Bua-ngam, Prachatham News

In this way the cable car departs starkly from the development proposals in Jasper, where budgetary pressures could actually be redressed, not exacerbated, by private development.

Critics also thought perhaps the military government would not look favourably on a project started by people in Thaksin's network. However, the PDA was well connected to the budget committee:

> "First we request it from the office of the Prime Minister, and if that office approves, then it goes to the office of the national budget. But one of the people on Pingkanakorn's Board is also on the national budget board, so there's a high chance that our requests will be successful." Tritsadee Chutiwong, Vice Director of Pingkanakorn

This information, which could clearly be construed as a major conflict of interest, was withheld from the public. Overall, however, conservation law, politics and budgetary issues were allies of

the opposition. The general distaste and distrust of mega-projects and big business also operated as a sort of anti-neoliberal governmentality mobilized from below. Mixed with a relative lack of austerity politics at the state level in terms of cuts to conservation spending, the conditions here appeared relatively less favourable to development.

Strategies to Enroll Allies

As this issue has come up periodically since the 1980s, some of the opponents have been fighting the cable car idea for decades and have been developing and fine-tuning various arguments in an attempt to enroll more allies. While the religious aspect to the opposition has lost some steam and environmentalist monks are no longer on the front lines, new arguments about budget issues, national identity and the lack of transparency around public-private partnerships in the PDA and public consultation have gained traction with local people in Chiang Mai:

> "We've been developing our argument over time. It started with a focus on environmental impacts, then grew to include more specific points about things like safety, for example Doi Suthep mountain and temple couldn't bear the weight of so many tourists up there. It then developed to include the argument that it won't be worth it economically to invest this kind of money, there won't be a good return, and ultimately to discussions around transparency around the decision to build this cable car." Tatthaya Anusorrakit, Chiang Mai Link

Opponents have been flexible and attentive to which issues resonate most with a broad audience.

The main actors involved in the opposition movement are various civil society groups, each with their own focus, that form an informal alliance:

> "It's more of an informal group. It's a loose organization, we don't have a structure really. Sometimes we get together and discuss things but it's not formal, based around certain issues." Anuchat Thananchai, Chiang May University and Rak Doi Suthep

According to Prayat from the Community Rights Advocacy Network, each group has their own function or role in public education. Prayat, for example, shares information on why he's against organizations like the PDA, where there is corporate-government co-operation but very little transparency. Others share why the EIA was not holistic, why local people will likely not benefit much, etc. This kind of 'public education' is central to the strategy of the opposition. Opponents hope that after hearing these various arguments, people will be inspired to join public meetings and speak up against the project, stressing the importance of having boots on the ground and not simply writing letters or participating in the movement via online petitions or social media.

The very first public meeting was held on November 26th, 2013, with foreign cable car companies also in attendance. At that time, some representatives from civil society spoke up against the project, as well as the head of the Doi Suthep Temple Administration, who later changed his tune. On February 4th, 2014, the Rak Doi Suthep group along with various allies in civil society submitted an open letter to the former Governor denouncing the project, and held a press conference to publicize their concerns. On July 18th 2014 the network of civil society groups came together outside of city hall in Chiang Mai to protest the cable car. They delivered a petition and two more open letters to the newly appointed Governor of Chiang Mai, one written by the Rak Doi Suthep group in alliance with the rest of the network and one by the Community Rights Advocacy Network. They also sent copies to the NCPO. The Community Rights Advocacy Network letter started by implying foul play with the EIA, since Dr. Sammakkeee Boonyawat of Kasetsart University who conducted the EIA was a 'protege' of Plodprasop, studying in the same faculty where Plodprasop was senior. It went on to outline the supposed links between

Tesco, the PDA, Plodprasop and Thaksin. The letter by the Rak Doi Suthep group outlines all of the arguments discussed previously.

The network of opponents also put up posters around town, and held them up at public events and press releases like the one outside of city hall:

Figure 7.0 - Cable Car Protest, July 2014

The posters decry the cable car as a threat to the spiritual and wilderness value of Doi Suthep, the official group logo saying "The people of Chiang Mai don't want the cable car." Opponents also produced flyers and stickers to be handed out and appended in visible places around the city to raise awareness.

Some of the challenges facing opponents were similar to those faced by opponents in Jasper, such as the fact that everyone has full-time jobs and thus organizing or meeting together in person is difficult and can be quite taxing in addition to a full work week. However there were additional challenges here with respect to the repressive military government and the deep division between red and yellow shirts:

> "The political transformation has made it hard to build a movement. Even though there was a plan to increase local participation, this has been postponed because of the

military coup." Prayat, Community Rights Advocacy Network

"Compared to in the 1980s and 2005, it's harder to get people out to protest now. This time the conflict between red and yellow is really deep, so it's difficult to mobilize people." Dr. Attachak Sattayanurak, Chiang Mai University

The military government shut down the Facebook page for Chiang Mai Link, because they were discussing politics and the coup as well as the cable car:

"Chiang Mai Link's page was also talking about the transformation of our political system, so the page was taken out of the system. Now I don't really have a channel to speak out. But I allowed that page to be taken down because I think the media isn't playing a big role in decision-making in this country. The real power of the people is shown when they actually appear, they should be there at the public meetings to make the movement strong, not just going about it online" Tatthaya Anusorrakit, Chiang Mai Link

Others felt that they had to tread carefully with what they were sharing, and consciously tried to position Doi Suthep Temple as a unifier, a point of local pride that could bring together red and yellow shirts despite political divisions.

Despite the challenges, opponents were largely steadfast and not overly intimidated by the junta. The Rak Doi Suthep and Rak Mae Ping groups in particular have made connections with local and national media. They've been interviewed and produced a TV spot on The Nation, and see media outreach as a productive place to focus their attention:

"From social media it extends to the media in Bangkok as well, national media. This movement has made it to all the TV channels and newspapers and now we have close contacts in the media. If something happens instead of using social media only we go right to the media." Sakda Darawan, Rak Mae Ping

The opposition also receives contributions from supporters, including skills and services such as design work for the banners and stickers they've used to publicize the issue around Chiang Mai. Donations of money, time and skills have allowed the movement to gain as much publicity and traction as it has.

Environmental Assessment and Public Consultation

Because the cable car would cut through class 1 watershed forest, which is strictly prohibited, the project is considered high-impact and thus an EIA is necessary. The study was conducted by Tesco Ltd. in conjunction with researchers from Kasetsart University and spanned August 2013 to June 2014, 360 days in total. Public engagement is mandated through the EIA process, and so in addition to the initial informational session held in November, 2013, there were four public hearings held in each of the four affected subdistricts (Ban Pong on Februrary 8th, 2014, Mae Hia on February 9th, 2014, Suthep also on February 9th, 2014, and Nong Khwai on February 11th, 2014). There was a final public hearing open to everyone on October 16th, 2014. Additionally, about 500 questionnaires were given out to people across Chiang Mai, although how respondents were chosen remains unclear.

Opponents critiqued the fact that the EIA was not holistic enough, it largely presented the positives associated with the project and many felt that not all potential impacts were covered. There was a lot of general distrust for what was presented. The Mayor of Nong Khwai asserted, "It hasn't presented all of the facts." Similar to Jasper, opponents were alarmed by the way much of the report read like promotional material for the cable car and the PDA, and questioned the conflict of interest involved in the PDA hiring a private company in their network to conduct the study.

Anti-political Strategies

Proponents here similarly employed strategies to contain dissent and reduce the public's role in decision-making within official channels, although with less of an emphasis on orchestrat-

ing consensus around neoliberal rationality. Opponents here were, however, far more effective in

the practice of politics beyond consultation, which I will explore later in this chapter.

Public Not Informed

A well-informed public is vital for meaningful public engagement and political debate

(Ferree et al., 2002). A poll conducted by researchers at Maejo University found that the majority

of people in Chiang Mai were completely uninformed about the proposal and even fewer had

actually accessed the EIA report.

> "70% of respondents didn't know about this, because the local government never
> advertises what they want to do. They just held small meetings with people who live near
> where the cable car will be. They only talked with people around there, but people who
> live farther from the centre of the cable car don't know." Dr. Somikat Chaipiboon, Maejo
> University

From my own experience interviewing people throughout the four subdistricts, mayors and

headmen tended to know about the project, although many still had not seen the EIA, whereas

most regular villagers knew very little about it:

> "There needs to be more public outreach because whoever is in charge of public
> relations so far has been really incompetent. There are still many people who don't know
> anything about it. If people aren't informed they can't have power in decision-making."
> Surached Thakumma, Headman in Suthep Subdistrict

> "I want to see the EIA. I've asked several times to see it but they say it's not ready or
> available for us to see yet. There are too many secrets. Even though there is a
> regulation about providing information to the public and holding open public hearings, in
> practice there's no use." Daycha Niamkun, elder in Suthep Subdistrict

Most people in the Hmong village of Doi Pui were aware of the project, as one of the stops

would bring tourists to their village, although most people had not seen the EIA. The headman of

Doi Pui had seen it but agreed with the general consensus that it was not a holistic report and

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many potential impacts were left out. It seems the majority of people did not know about the cable car in Khun Chang Kian. The headman knew about it and had seen the EIA but said that the language was too technical for him to comprehend, so he was unable to give an opinion on its merit.

When the public is not thoroughly informed about a project, public hearings become a rather meaningless exercise, particularly when so few had actually seen, read and understood the EIA report. The hearings were mainly populated by leaders and specific stakeholders and only sparsely by villagers. Many felt that the hearings weren't well publicized:

> "They've gotten smarter about holding public hearings, in a bad sense. For example this kind of public hearing should be clear about what will be presented and what will be expected from the participants. Last time, in 2005, they made it clear what the topic of the public hearing would be, what would be discussed and what they wanted to hear about from the public. This time they made a very unclear announcement so people were kind of getting lost. What do they want? Did they come to inform us or did they come to get feedback from the people? That kind of thing changed. They've gotten smarter about navigating around the laws." Prayat, Community Rights Advocacy Network

The potency of public critique, debate and general engagement in the decision-making process is diminished when public actors don't have access to all necessary information. Without adequate and accessible project information, political debate is curtailed and usurped by technocratic management. Not adequately publicizing public hearings also reduces opportunity for public engagement.

Staged Public Consultations

Depoliticization often entails staging consensus as a means of glossing over or evacuating conflict from public space (Fletcher, 2014; Swyngedouw, 2010). Villagers were excluded from

meaningful participation through the 'staged' nature of public hearings. The hearings were domi-

nated by selected speakers, with only a short time for open Q&A at the end:

> "In my opinion the public hearing didn't invite everyone that should have been there. They invited only specific groups who were pro this project." Amporn Panmongkol, Head of Doi Suthep-Pui Park

> "There's corruption in the process because the one who organizes the meetings brings in people who support it, maybe bribes people or threatens them... So the general reaction during these kinds of meetings tends to be more supportive." Surached Thakumma, Headman in Suthep Subdistrict

For example, transportation in Chiang Mai is done largely through red truck (taxi) drivers, and

this is currently how most tourists travel up to Doi Suthep temple along the winding road leading

from Kuba Siwichai's statue. The red truck drivers, represented by Nakhon Lanna Transporta-

tion, were thus firmly in opposition to the cable car as they saw their livelihoods threatened.

However, this important stakeholder group was not given an opportunity to speak up against the

project at the public hearing:

> "Around 10 taxi drivers were there, but we didn't speak. We didn't have a chance to speak up, because the people who got to speak in that meeting were selected. It's supposed to be open floor, but the people who were selected were those that had an agenda, and they were scheduled to speak at certain times. So of course they say it's open floor, but the people who went there already knew they had to say something to support this project." Singkham Nunti, Chairman of Nakhon Lanna Transportation

The fact that public actors opposed to the project were unable to speak in a forum meant to en-

gage the public is troubling. Like in Jasper, many felt that the public hearings were not con-

ducive to true open debate but were more like 'open houses' that simply shared information.

Tesco Ltd. was meant to be an impartial facilitator of the environmental study and public en-

gagement, but instead appeared to be acting as a proponent and designating which actors would

speak and which voices would be silenced. Thus a range of people were brought into the process but in acutely depoliticized ways.

Additionally, opponents claim that other tactics were used to reduce the number of public actors that could attend, and thus further remove political debate from the public sphere, such as changing the public hearing location at the last minute. "There are many people who are against this project that just give up because of these kind of tactics," said Dr. Anuchat Thananchai of CMU and Rak Doi Suthep.

Speaking to villagers it was clear that they didn't believe they had much of a role in decision-making, that only leaders were able to speak at these sorts of events:

> "I think the Subdistrict head and maybe the headmen will be involved, only the selected ones. Overall the villagers won't be very involved in the decision-making." Villager in Village 1, Suthep Subdistrict

> "I want to be involved with the decision-making, but what really happens is.. the only people actually involved are the heads of the villages." Villager in Ban Too Pong Village

Some leaders told me that this was just the "nature of the people", to let leaders speak for them even if they aren't representing their views, however several villagers lamented not being more involved in the process, and not feeling as though they were well informed. Many of the authorities who were granted permission to speak had also been wooed with an all-expenses paid trip to Langkawi, Malaysia, where part of the trip involved taking a cable car up a mountain.

When only selected speakers are granted the majority of air time at public hearings, the public's ability to influence decision-making is extremely limited. Selecting speakers controls the discourse in the public sphere and relegates political debate elsewhere, outside of official chan-

nels. The reports submitted to the Governor regarding the tenor of the public hearings thus gave the impression of general public support whilst opposed public actors were silenced.

'Rule of Experts'

Like in Jasper, public engagement was structured through the EIA process, and as the official report produced by Tesco stated that the disturbance to the environment would only be an issue during construction, and would be offset by potential positive economic development, opponents' questions and philosophical/political objections were largely dismissed. Because opponents were able to create noise around the deforestation issue outside of consultation channels, proponents stressed in all correspondence that the route chosen (out of four possible routes) would involve the least harm to the class 1 watershed forest. Similar to Jasper, the EIA and hearings framed discussion around how to reduce environmental harm as much as possible, not to open debate around whether the project should go forward in the first place:

> "At first, the information they gave said that the cable car would only be 4 to 6km. However it developed to now be 10 to 12 km to 'reduce the impact to the environment'. My thought is that it shouldn't be there at all, and then there would be no impact to the environment!" Tatthaya Anusorrakit, Chiang Mai Link

Again, mitigation was suggested to acquiesce opponents rather than opening debate on whether the project should go forward within the national park.

There was also great concern around the fact that Tesco is such a close partner of the PDA and that the exact links between the two organizations aren't transparent. Of course there could be a conflict of interest when any private company is hired by the proponents to conduct an EIA, but the close partnership between Tesco and the PDA was extremely concerning to pub-

lic actors, particularly since the majority of respondents felt that the EIA omitted a great deal of potential impacts:

> "The defects or flaws of a project aren't going to be presented in this kind of a process in Thailand, because proponents keep hiring people in their networks to conduct the EIA studies. In this report for example, Tesco, the people who have a stake in building the cable car, are the same group who are doing the EIA." Prayat, Community Rights Advocacy Network

Speaking in general terms about the conflict of interest, Anuchat Thananchai told me, "There is no transparency because the proponent pays for the EIA. I'm very ashamed of this, I'm ashamed to admit that this is the practice in Thailand but I have to speak up against it." When I explained that it happened in Canada as well, he was shocked and further disheartened.

Although many felt that the report was not holistic and omitted important impacts, the onus was on local people to prove otherwise by bringing up new scientific evidence to refute the EIA's claims or to add to the study, a very narrow window of opportunity. Further, with little opportunity to speak at public hearings, the EIA stood as the final word on the merits and drawbacks of construction, containing dissent and presenting the appearance of collective agreement.

Formalities and Foregone Conclusions

With such a narrow window of opportunity to influence decision-making via consultation mechanisms, many respondents felt as though proponents were simply going through with public hearings to satisfy their legal requirement, but that the public had very little power or visibility in these channels. As the company conducting the EIA was so closely associated with the proponents, many felt as though the decision to go ahead had already been made:

> "They just do it to satisfy the law, it's like a ritual." Sakda Darawan, Rak Mae Ping Group

Certainly the staged nature of the consultations with selected attendees and speakers gives one the impression that Tesco was acting as a proponent and were interested in giving only the most minimal of air time to the general public.

Dr. Somikat Chaipiboon, who lead the team conducting the province-wide poll at Maejo University, said:

> "I think the mistake they made with this project is they decided first, after they decided everything already they showed the project to the people and held public hearings, so when the people disagreed but the government still wants to do it.. they just fight each other. A lot of problems are created in Thailand because of this, projects are decided on first and then after that they talk to the people. They never start with the people." Dr. Somikat Chaipiboon, Maejo University

As the poll demonstrated, the majority of respondents were completely uninformed about the project. Fewer had seen the EIA, and few were able to attend or speak at public hearings. Transparency around the process and how the final decision would be made was thus a salient concern for opponents who did not feel as though meaningful, open public debate was being sought:

> "There is no transparency of the whole process, normal people can't see how this whole project is going to be working and who is paying for what. There's no transparency around the public consultation process and who will make the decision." Teeramon Bua-ngam, Prachatham News

Legally proponents had to host public hearings, but the degree to which public concerns would be weighted and influence the final decision was unclear to most respondents.

Through interviews with proponents I discovered that the final decision would be left to the Cabinet, a top-down and rather undemocratic approach. Having not been present at any of the public hearings, the Cabinet would base their decision on the EIA and reports produced by proponents on the nature of public comment at the hearings, which was reduced through various antipolitical strategies. As many opposed stakeholders were unable to speak, the information shared

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with the Cabinet would not reflect the full breadth of the opposition, erasing dissenting voices from the decision-making process.

The Practice of Politics

Interestingly, despite these clear strategies to disenfranchise public actors, opponents in Chiang Mai felt that they had considerable influence over decision-making, but only outside of official consultation channels. While opponents were dismayed by antipolitical strategies reducing the potency of their critique, most felt that if a big enough social movement could be created around an issue, then the government would surely listen, even if only to protect their own image or deflect charges of corruption:

> "It depends on how many people are involved in the movement. If there's a big movement, the public can influence decisions." Duangtip, Headman in Nong Khwai Subdistrict

> "Citizens can have a big influence on decision-making if there is a social movement started up by the people who care about this issue, if they gather people." Prayat, Community Rights Advocacy Network

> "I'm not sure about the military regime. But if we have many people the military will side with us. Like many cases about the forest here, when we start to demonstrate, the military joins us and says okay, we'll do what you want. But if we have 20 people the military won't care... Most of us understand that if we want to win, we'll need many feet to walk on the street." Dr. Attachak Sattayanurak, Chiang Mai University

Opponents stressed the need for boots on the ground rather than online work or even letters and petitions which can easily be ignored.

In this way, opponents bring political debate back into public space, working to undo the suturing of the political by la politique or the 'police' (Swyngedouw, 2010). Thus despite a more openly repressive government and weaker consultation mechanisms, public actors in Chiang Mai

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feel relatively empowered. The practice of politics outside official channels here combats efforts made to narrow and contain political contestation and co-opt, marginalize or exclude social forces from institutionalized decision-making.

The Role of Political Economy

In addition to the practice of politics outside consultation, the political economic circumstances of this case were clear allies of the opponents, in stark contrast with the situation in Jasper. The national park would gain zero benefits from the cable car, in fact the head of the park was concerned about the increased challenges it would pose for park management. The law barring private and/or mega-development in parks means that the cable car would need to be exempted from the park and thus none of the revenue would belong to the park. Most importantly, the central government would not receive any percentage of gross revenue, and in fact would be asked to provide the budget of nearly a billion baht and potentially to continue subsidizing the operation for years to come. Further, as mentioned, some felt that perhaps the military government wouldn't be partial to a project started by Thaksin's right hand man. Many opponents felt that consultation would not impact the final decision nearly as much as political and economic issues:

> "The national park never listens, and they will not. The factors that will suspend, postpone or eliminate this cable car are the budget, like the investment will not be worth it, and the political issues behind it, because this project was proposed in the Thaksin regime." Tatthaya Anusorrakit, Chiang Mai Link

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The Governor of Chiang Mai was quoted saying, "The final decision will be made based on the budget and economic worth of building this project and also if it agrees with the government policy right now."

Since federal funding to parks has been consistent or increasing, and since the private sector has not been granted much headway into parks, there is no pressing political economic incentive to develop. Unlike in Jasper where private development was a means to recoup costs under state-led neoliberalisation, development here would be costly with likely no return. Austerity politics and neoliberal governmentality here have been incomplete and openly contested, and thus the political economic conditions proved largely unfavourable to development.

Conclusion

Bureaucratic power/knowledge, although ostensibly top-down in a repressive and centralized government such as Thailand's, still requires public assent to legitimate the authority to carry out certain policy actions (Forsyth and Walker, 2014; Matthews, 2011). The PDA, in partnership with Tesco Ltd, employed various antipolitical strategies aimed at controlling the discourse and containing and minimizing dissent as much as possible within official public channels, attempting to produce the appearance of consensual decision-making. Although proponents endeavoured to 'orchestrate' consent (Fletcher, 2014) via institutionalized consultation mechanisms, civil society worked to bring political debate visibly back into the public sphere through public organizing. While few had any real confidence in the consultation process, many still felt that the 'voice of the majority' would certainly triumph if a substantial enough social movement could be created around an issue, feeling that opponents have considerable power to force deci-

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sions in this way. This case demonstrates the power of the people to deny public assent to bu-

reaucratic knowledge, disrupting the roll-out of top-down projects. Additionally, I have argued

that the political economy of conservation in Thailand did not incentivize development as it did

in Jasper. Park law barring private development and/or mega-projects, particularly in class 1 wa-

tershed forest, combined with steady park funding and the fact that the cable car was not likely to

produce a great return on investment for decades at least were all strong disincentives for con-

struction, as was the friction between the junta and Thaksin's network. This case demonstrates

that political economy and associated governmentalities combined with the relational agency of

all actants involved collectively contribute to the ascendancy and stabilization of certain knowl-

edge claims, authorizing certain policy and management options at the expense of others. The

way these elements coalesced in each case allowed movements to be successful in Chiang Mai

while (perhaps surprisingly) unsuccessful in Jasper.

Chapter 6
Discussion

The aim of the comparative case study approach has been to explore how the neoliberalisation of conservation unfolds in context-specific ways, and examine the relationship between context-specific political economies of conservation and depoliticization. Bringing the two cases into conversation with one another can enhance our understandings of political economies of conservation, theories of settler-colonialism, anti- and post-politics, and consultation and protest. The diverging experiences bring up a number of questions, not all of which can be fully answered within the scope of this project: what kinds of political, land and market governance arrangements (or political economies of conservation) open space for the practice of politics?; what difference does settler-colonialism make?; to what extent do new tourism attractions challenge the colonial human/nature dualism?; what difference does a country's socioeconomic status make?; and why do we see such similar truth claims being advanced by opponents in both cases, and similar strategies advanced by proponents to contain dissent?

The first, regarding political economies of conservation, is a hefty one. The Jasper case demonstrates that austerity politics in particular are a major determinant of the relative success of strategies of depoliticization. A political economy of conservation that welcomes private land rents and business operation in parks can lead to a disproportionate augmentation of the private sector's influence in conservation during times of austerity. The Agency Act, which turned the parks department into a 'special agency' —basically a company, headed by a CEO— tied the financial sustainability of parks to their ability to increase revenues from tourism and private land rents in the face of austerity measures. Dwindling appropriations thus made visitation and rev-

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enue generation a pressing issue, leading to the recent mandate to increase visitation by 2% per year, in part by creating new and exciting tourism offerings in hopes of attracting different demographics. In such a climate, public consultation increasingly takes the form of 'open houses' instead of public hearings, where information is absorbed by a passive audience who are invited to comment privately. Open political debate and dissensus are foreclosed and a series of post-political strategies conceal and contain challenges to the rationality of austerity and a privatized conservation governance. In short, a system that relies on parks self-financing through tourism revenue generation is vulnerable to austerity-related restructuring where the power exerted by private developers is augmented (see also Higgins-Desbioles, 2011). As demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4, austerity politics in such a situation renders controversies around how parks should be run, by whom and for whom, post-political.

The Doi Suthep-Pui case demonstrates that a lack of austerity measures/pressure to self-fund through private partnerships may prove more conducive to social movement success. The neoliberalisation of conservation in Thailand has proceeded mainly in terms of the increasing encouragement of individualized entrepreneurship for people living within or near parks, not in terms of austerity-related restructuring where park funding is coming mainly from private revenues. The illegality of private operators within parks and the nature of the Pingkanakorn Development Agency meant that both the park and the central government would not receive many benefits from the cable car, only challenges and expenses. As parks are publicly funded, there is also no mandate for parks to increase visitation yearly. Speaking with authorities in Doi Suthep-Pui and Doi Inthanon parks, advertising or devising new partnerships and avenues for revenue generation were not priorities for which they expended many resources. The financial stake in

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private development and management of services is thus a major issue separating the two cases, and the main reason that the outcomes of the two struggles differed.

Why has Thailand not subjected the parks department to substantial rounds of budget cuts? Does this make their experience less 'neoliberal'? These are both rather open-ended questions. I suggest that Thailand's developmental past (Hill et al., 2011) and the confrontational political divisions in Thai society (Glassman et al., 2008) have contributed to the relative lack of austerity with respect to national parks. Neoliberalisation in Thailand has been contradictory and incomplete in general, where policies have encouraged participation in capitalism through individual entrepreneurship while simultaneously expanding the state's role in regulating the national economy and providing social welfare. The country's developmental history placed a great deal of control with central authorities, and forests were spaces through which the Thai state has exerted it's sovereignty through strict fortress style conservation (Vandergeest, 1996). The Royal Forestry Department has been historically hostile to ceding territorial control (Chusak, 1994). It's quite possible that the newly formed Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation and the central authorities have been hesitant to cede this control as well, and thus have not gone the route of austerity measures and an associated push for private revenue generation. This reluctance to cede centralized control has likely only been further cemented by the military coup.

Although depoliticization was disrupted in Thailand, the Thai case also cautions us against the pitfalls of overly centralized management. Although the Thai park system bars private operators from developing within parks, 'big men' at the top can always get around these rules, such as through semi-private government agencies. In this context, power rests at the top and there is little downward accountability for decision-makers. This is exaggerated by the fact that

Thailand is under military rule where democracy has been suspended more broadly. Because consultation is increasingly devolved to private proponents in this neoliberal era, proponents in Chiang Mai similarly employed strategies to depoliticize and push through development, but the unique political economy of conservation in Thailand proved to be an ally of the opponents. The military government's authority, while oppressive and heavy-handed, is similarly tenuous and broadly contested, and they are continually behooved to legitimate their rule (Interview with Dr. Attachak Sattayanurak, Chiang Mai University). The complexities of the Thai system facilitated the practice of politics, but only *outside* of official consultation channels, with other political and economic factors (eg. the Thaksin connection, the budget, etc.) ultimately leading to the project's abandonment. Without this unique political economic context, it is uncertain whether depoliticization would have been successful.

Related to the question of emancipatory political economies of conservation, we can add: what kinds of political and market governance arrangements would enable a decolonized conservation practice? And relatedly, to what extent is settler-colonialism relevant to the outcomes of these controversies? Given Jasper's history of complete expulsion of Indigenous peoples for the benefit of white settlers and settler corporations, in many regards Canada's settler-colonial past matters significantly. Settler-colonialism is first and foremost about the acquisition of land and territory (Coulthard, 2014; LeFevre, 2015). The newly formed Canadian government under Sir John A MacDonald was intent on expanding their territory westward with the help of the Canadian Pacific Railway company (Bella, 1987). The early parks in Canada were established as tourism hubs for CPR passengers, where 'wilderness' was created through the eviction of Indigenous nations to made space for commercial development (Binnema and Niemi, 2006;

Campbell, 2011). This act of colonial territorialization, arguably of 'primitive accumulation' and/ or 'accumulation by dispossession' (Coulthard, 2014: Harvey, 2004), set the stage for the presence and power of private interests in the mountain parks who would be turned to in times of austerity. Canada's unique political economy of conservation, then, is very much tied up in settler-colonialism.

Settler-colonialism is also clearly of utmost importance in relation to the anti-politics of Indigenous consultation. The politics of 'recognition' including the paternalistic framework for the Duty to Consult grew out of the settler-colonists racist denial of indigenous sovereignty and systems of law upon contact (Borrows, 2011; Coulthard, 2014). Although the Duty to Consult in some ways represents Canada's understanding of responsibility towards Indigenous nations, "justifiable infringement" has too often than not made this a mechanism for legitimizing decisions that serve Canada's financial interests, which revolve mainly around control of natural resources for extraction or tourism purposes. Chapter 4 outlined how financial interest (particularly in times of austerity) combined with colonial power dynamics rendered Indigenous consultation on the Glacier Skywalk and Maligne Tours developments anti-political. First Nations' struggles are also invisibilized in the eyes of the settler population living in Jasper due to the continued alienation of First Nations from their land bases in the park and their lack of access rights. This invisibilization stems from the problematic Treaty processes that contained and invisibilized First Nations for European settlement and capital accumulation (Alfred, 2005; Youdelis, 2016). Jasper residents are not fully aware of Parks Canada's responsibilities towards First Nations, nor are they privy to information on whether park authorities are meeting those requirements. Interestingly, Jasper's recent decision to allow the Simpcw First Nation to conduct a small, contained

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traditional hunt in park boundaries has prompted some backlash and discomfort from settler residents of Jasper and surrounding areas (Proulx, 2017). While conservation groups in Jasper are happy to align themselves with Indigenous nations when they feel it's strategic, the deeply colonial notion that traditional livelihoods harm nature while modern capitalist townsites are benign is alive and well with the residents of Jasper as well as with park authorities. It would be very difficult to say that settler-colonialism did not matter here.

Theories of settler-colonial conservation argue that it warps our understandings of nature-cultures (Braun, 2002), acts as a tool of primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2014), and secures territory for the national interest at the expense of first peoples (MacLaren, 2007). What difference does it make that Thailand is not a settler-colony? As I've explained, the Thai system has colonial roots despite Thailand never being formally colonized. The Thai forest system was heavily influenced by British ways of knowing and managing forests, and the protected area system was based on British and U.S. models of wildlife and nature conservation (Vandergeest, 1996; Vandergeest and Peluso, 2006). The colonial understanding of the human/nature dualism fed into Thailand's heavy-handed and top-down 'fortress' style conservation where traditional livelihoods (eg. swidden agriculture) were vilified and conservation became primarily about securing territory against encroachment (Vandergeest, 1996; Roth, 2004; Youdelis, 2013). The treatment of ethnic minorities living in forests mirrors the treatment of First Nations in Canada, where many communities were expelled from parks, and those who were permitted to stay had to change their livelihoods significantly to be in line with what was considered "civilized" and compatible with colonial-style conservation (Leblond, 2010; Thongchai, 2000). The Royal Forestry Department first expelled ethnic minorities from

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forests to make way for commercial teak extraction, which again could loosely be understood as a mechanism for primitive accumulation. Thus the dynamics between the ruling Thai elite, land management and ethnic minorities has been similar to a settler-colonial experience without settler-colonialism.

Since there was no settlement, however, the expulsion and restriction of ethnic minorities in protected areas had more to do controlling territory to protect nature (which was the RFD's way to legitimize its existence and power). The Thai state also used these spaces to "civilize" forest dwelling communities and stave off threats of communist indoctrination (Roth, 2004), not to make way for colonial settlement or commercial tourism for settlers. Thus many ethnic minority communities were in fact allowed to remain in place, so long as they adopted more 'acceptable' forms of agriculture and embraced state-sanctioned entrepreneurialism to meet livelihood needs (Youdelis, 2013). By contrast, Indigenous nations have never been permitted to take up residence in the mountain parks in Canada despite growing settler populations in the Banff and Jasper townsites. The Thai system is therefore interesting in that on the one hand they have recognized that people living in forests can be compatible with conservation, however they've strictly laid out exactly how one must live in order to be considered environmentally benign. The park department's focus on territorial control and reform of local minorities has given strength to the fortress-style system, which developed largely absent of private tourism operators. Protecting the parks from 'encroachment', be that from private persons living within or surrounding forests or from private businesses, is now the *raison d'être* of the Thai park system. One might say that the centrality of the central government and the relative lack of austerity politics in conservation thus stems from this unique history of conservation, where settlement and associated settler-fo-

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cused businesses were absent.

The lack of settler-colonialism in Thailand also means that the state has no particular responsibility for ethnic minorities; no duty to consult or accommodate. Despite this, many Hmong residents of Doi Pui feel considerably connected to park authorities and that they have influence in decision-making that directly impacts their community, something not observed in Indigenous communities in Jasper. Doi Pui is a highly visible community, however, as one of the main tourist attractions in the area. Tourists often visit Doi Suthep Temple and then make a stop in Doi Pui for shopping (the entire village is set up as as an array of shops selling local handicrafts, food, etc.). The other Hmong village within the park, Khun Chiang Kian, is far less visible. Tourism is nearly absent there as the village is more remote. Community members in Khun Chiang Kian feel completely left out of decision-making with the park and complain that it's very difficult to meet livelihood needs under strict park rules and supervision. Despite Canada having a Duty to Consult, First Nations in the Jasper and Banff area are not faring much better than ethnic minorities in Khun Chiang Kian. Many face economic hardships and are not benefitting from any of the tourism activity in the park, and they are similarly not properly consulted unless they explicitly seek out park authorities. Thus in terms of understandings of nature, land management and treatment of local peoples, there are many similarities in both sites despite different histories with colonialism. The main difference is the financial stake of the parks departments, which can be said to have been influenced to some extent by each country's history with/without settler-colonialism.

Related to colonial histories of park management is the human/nature dualism inherent in systems based around 'wilderness' thinking (Cronon, 1996). Although proponents in Canada ar-

gued that their new attractions would help us move us beyond 'wilderness'-style management, I've argued (in Chapters 3 and 5) that in many ways such attractions replicate and reinforce colonial management. Wilderness in Canada was produced for commercial tourism for well-off settlers through violence to Indigenous peoples and their land-based lifeways, and the new mass tourism offerings proposed in Jasper do little to change this. What is perhaps changing is the white, male associations with wilderness adventurers historically typified in the Canadian parks system (Sandilands et al., 2005). Although there has been no social science data to suggest or confirm whether new attractions are bringing in new Canadians and urban youth —or how this private strategy compares to public programs like Learn to Camp— Parks Canada's awareness of the importance of making parks inclusive to different demographics is a welcomed departure from earlier practice. However, the political economy of conservation and austerity politics in Canada have also contributed to this push to reach new demographics. As mentioned, the Agency Act combined with the fact that private operators have been grandfathered into the mountain parks augments the importance of tourism revenues in times of austerity. Dwindling visitation combined with dwindling appropriations is thus a serious problem for parks needing to make up their yearly budget. Parks Canada's big push for inclusion of new Canadians and urban youth was (and remains) tied to their anxiety around their need to increase visitation and revenues more generally. As well, although the whiteness of the Canadian wilderness may be being targeted for change, the racist production of wilderness through the continued alienation of First Nations from their land bases continues to benefit middle-class (although perhaps not white, male) set-tlers and visitors from abroad. Traditional livelihoods remain vilified while commercial tourism for those with the money to access it is deemed a departure from 'wilderness' thinking.

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In Thailand, the situation is similar, although it is actually the ethnic minorities who populate the park. Traditional livelihoods are similarly vilified and ethnic minorities must meet livelihood needs in strict state-circumscribed ways to produce a very particular image of nature and wilderness. One main difference is that while wilderness here is similarly produced for tourism to some extent, the political economy of Thai conservation is not such that would be susceptible to crises of visitation, and there is no similar push to increase visitation yearly or to reach different demographics. The parks department here is not explicitly seeking to advance commercial tourism through public-private partnerships, but rather another semi-private government agency is seeking to take advantage of the production of this picturesque image of wilderness for their own gain under the guise of 'national development'.

Consistent with Thai-style neoliberalisation, 'development' according to the Pingkanakorn Development Agency (PDA) means that local people might have increased opportunities to sell handicrafts or engage in other forms of individualized entrepreneurship near the the cable car stations. Opponents argue that the cable car would be out of reach for the average Thai person, and would be marketed mainly to wealthy and foreign visitors, likely from China as Chinese tourism in Chiang Mai has been exploding in recent years (Jarusupawat, 2013). Thus there are many similarities between the two cases in terms of the production of wilderness through the racialization of local peoples and the restriction of their traditional livelihoods, and that new attractions would largely allow well-off travellers to experience 'wilderness' in a particular state-sanctioned way. The motivations for each proposal differ, however. Private proponents in Canada were motivated by dwindling revenues and Parks Canada's openness to such proposals was born out of structural necessity. The PDA in Thailand was motivated by the prospect of fame and for-

tune (subsidized by the central government), and purportedly by the prospect of bringing economic development to the tambons around Chiang Mai. Doi Suthep-Pui park had little to no motivation to support the project.

The issue of development in Thailand, related to the country's socioeconomic standing as a low-income and 'developing' state, is one of the reasons why I felt anti-politics was an appropriate frame. The theory of anti-politics was developed in relation to development discourse and practice (Ferguson, 1994), whereas post-politics developed out of French political philosophers' inquiries into the nature of society and 'the political'/'the police' (Marchart, 2007; Rancière, 1998). While the strategies and political aims of both can be analogous, the post-politicization of conservation involves elevating neoliberal rationality beyond critique (Fletcher, 2015; Swyngedouw, 2011), which was rather absent in the Thai case. Whereas anti-politics is well-suited for neoliberal political economies (Buscher, 2010), anti-political strategies do not necessarily involve the post-political orchestration of consensus around neoliberal rationality. Rather, anti-politics contains challenges to the status quo and obscures the political and economic causes of a given conservation/development problem, and consequently can prescribe solutions that exaggerate instead of remedy the problem (see Nadasdy, 2005).

In the Doi Suthep-Pui case, the cable car was presented to local residents as an opportunity for development, but, in true anti-political fashion, this 'solution' worked to obscure the structural causes of underdevelopment and thus proposed a project where the PDA would amass the majority of the benefits and individualized entrepreneurs would be responsible for their own development by potentially seizing opportunities to sell local handicrafts. The key word here is "potentially". Most opponents felt strongly that the cable car would not change the material reali-

ties of local people, and thus the anti-politics of consultation here sought to reinforce existing hierarchies. One could argue that perhaps there was an attempt to orchestrate a kind of neoliberal consensus through promoting an understanding of 'development' as individualized entrepreneurship, and through shaming opponents for being too 'backwards' to understand that economic development means progress. However such discourses aimed at conditioning individuals to see themselves as entrepreneurs, rather than at orchestrating consensus around the neoliberal restructuring of Thailand's political economy of conservation itself. In other words, 'there is no alternative' thinking around park privatization did not factor whatsoever into proponents' anti-political strategies. Absent austerity politics and with neoliberal rationality more openly contested (Thongchai, 2008), these strategies proved unsuccessful. I have therefore suggested that austerity politics, as a specific mechanism of neoliberalisation, influences the degree to which post-politicization is successful. Or, in other words, neoliberalisation and moves towards privatization lend themselves to depoliticization and streamlining of the approval process.

I therefore felt that post-politics was the most relevant frame for the case of public consultation in Jasper. The structural pressure to devolve tourism management to the private sector and the associated elevation of that structural pressure beyond public debate is emblematic of post-politicization. Post-political strategies explicitly discounted political objections to neoliberalisation, opening space only for comments that would enhance mitigation measures or the quality of visitor experience. Although Indigenous consultation in Jasper was also impacted by the same structural pressure, I feel as though anti-politics is an appropriate frame for that chapter. The chapter builds off of Nadasdy's (2005) and Buscher's (2010) work looking at anti-politics in a colonial and neoliberal political economy, respectively, and demonstrates how anti-politics op-

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erates in a colonial neoliberal political economy. While Parks Canada's strategies to depoliticize development were influenced by austerity politics and neoliberal rationality, the anti-politics of Indigenous consultation was organized around creating the appearance of consent from First Nations and did not focus on orchestrating consensus around neoliberalisation per se. In some respects one might say that consensus was orchestrated through the omission of any discussion around budget issues or visitation, but predominantly anti-political strategies elevated colonial management structures beyond critique. This was of course influenced by neoliberalisation, but because First Nations in Jasper were essentially cut off from residents in the townsite the discourses around development between public and Indigenous consultation were quite different. As well, proponents and Parks Canada encouraged buy-in from Indigenous nations by offering the possibility of economic development through potential opportunities to sell crafts or perform traditional dances etc. These meagre offerings (which never did come to fruition in the case of the Skywalk) do not acknowledge the structural reasons for First Nations' alienation and underdevelopment, and thus the anti-politics of Indigenous consultation in Jasper reinforces and entrenches colonial-(neoliberal) capitalist inequalities and power dynamics. We can therefore consider post-politics a more specific and targeted form of anti-politics, which at once constructs and depoliticizes the 'free' market as the natural and preferred institution of resource allocation and social provisioning.

Lastly, despite differences in political economy, why is it that we see such similar controversies emerging in both the Global North and the Global South? The truth claims advanced by opponents in both cases were starkly similar, stemming from 'wilderness' ideology, modernist conceptions of nationalism, and an understanding of parks as sacred, common goods. This com-

monality may stem from the fact that opponents in both cases were largely middle class and urban/suburban environmentalists. The exception, of course, would be Indigenous opponents in Jasper, who also had some differing motivations for opposing the projects. But for middle-class environmentalists, appeals to protect a Romantic, untouched vision of nature in the forest largely rang true, as did the understanding of parks as belonging to the public at large (not, for example, to either the private sector or to Indigenous nations or ethnic minorities). The idea that humanity/ development/capitalism "encroaches" into and disturbs nature was prevalent in both cases, stemming from each site's experience with colonial fortress-style forest management. But a concern for keeping the parks accessible to all and an aversion to the profiteering for a select few were also prominent themes in both cases. These disparate experiences demonstrate that pressures on parks departments due to neoliberalisation and/or the impetus to capitalize on conservation are global phenomena, and that middle-class environmentalisms are, for better or for worse, starkly similar around the globe.

Perhaps an even more interesting question is why do we observe proponents in both cases employing correlative depoliticizing strategies in consultation? I would argue that both sites' devolution of much of the consultation processes to the private proponents themselves contributes to this. This devolution can also be understood as 'neoliberal' to some extent. Environmental assessments and consultation are expensive, and public departments are considered less efficient (particularly in the Canadian case where the cash-strapped parks are looking for any and all ways to cut expenditures), so it is expected that if a private proponent wishes to submit an application, then they should be responsible for funding and conducting the assessment and any other aspects of consultation that the parks department deems appropriate. As mentioned, respondents in

Jasper described the Skywalk consultations more so as 'open houses' where Brewster and Parks Canada officials were presenting project information and fielding questions. Brewster and Maligne Tours were also in charge of producing their own assessment reports to share with the public. Although Parks Canada oversaw this process, former staff argued that Jasper simply lacks the capacity and resources to ensure that all of the information presented is accurate and up-to-date, once again thanks to successive rounds of austerity. In Chiang Mai, the PDA and Tesco ran the assessment and consultation process entirely, including public hearings and one major survey. Should the parks department, which has no particular stake in development, have run consultation, perhaps strategies such as selecting speakers and excluding opponents would not have been as prevalent.

There are no doubt other compelling questions that arise from looking at these cases together. Why and how has Thailand maintained public funding for parks whereas Canada has not? What are the longterm implications of austerity politics for the viability of the parks system? These questions have far-reaching implications, and, although beyond the scope of this project, could help inform political praxis that moves away from localized single-issue campaigns and starts to take aim at the broader processes that are shaping the post-politicization of conservation governance. In the next short concluding chapter, I'll outline in more detail some of the implications of this study and summarize the answers to my two main research questions: 1) How do social activism and conservation policy co-evolve?, and 2) How does the increasing inclusion of private stakeholders shape public and Indigenous participation in conservation governance?

Chapter 7
Conclusion

This dissertation explored the co-evolution of social activism and conservation practice in the context of neoliberal rescaling in two distinct socio-economic and geographical settings. Given that critical scholarship is increasingly drawing connections between neoliberalisation and the emergence of "a post-political or post-democratic socio-spatial configuration" (Swyngedouw, 2011: 370) —and given that there is a broad but concerted trend towards the neoliberalisation of conservation globally— this research sought to enunciate the implications of the connections between neoliberalisation and depoliticization in conservation zones. Specifically, I explored the degree to which local citizens and Indigenous nations could participate democratically in decision-making around the privatization of national park tourism services (and around how parks are managed and funded more generally).

Looking at two different controversies around private development and management of park services in two different political economic settings, we can draw several conclusions about the relationship between neoliberalisation and depoliticization. Devolving public consultation and engagement to private proponents of development can elicit the use of anti-political strategies to contain and disavow dissent and streamline the approval process. In both cases, the profit motive drove proponents to utilize strategies such as keeping pertinent information from citizens and Indigenous actors, co-opting and disciplining dissent, black-box decision-making, and deferring to state-sanctioned 'experts' to minimize the opportunity for public engagement and to relegate political debate beyond the public sphere. The devolution of consultation to private proponents resonates with a 'neoliberal' rhetoric that sees governments as inefficient entities that

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should limit public spending. In both cases this led proponents to attempt to orchestrate consent by limiting the space for political dissensus.

However, as neoliberalisation is a multi-faceted and path-dependent process, the divergences in the political economies of conservation in each case produced diverging outcomes. The Glacier Skywalk and the overnight tent cabins and other attractions at Maligne Lake were approved in Jasper despite overwhelming discontent and pushback, while the cable car project was shelved for the third time in Chiang Mai despite the power and notoriety of the private proponents. Ultimately I argue that the stark differences in each site's histories and experiences with neoliberalisation account for this discrepancy. In Canada, the neoliberalisation of conservation has proceeded at the federal level, growing out of Canada's history as a settler-colony where conservation was a mechanism of territorialization and primitive accumulation (Braun, 2002; Coulthard, 2014). Parks were (and continue to be) tourism destinations for wealthy settlers, and private operators have been conducting business in the mountain parks since their inception.

In Thailand, I see the neoliberalisation of conservation operating largely at local scales and not as evidently at the federal level. Neoliberal conservation interventions vary from park to park, and even from village to village within parks (Roth, 2008; Youdelis, 2013). The majority are aimed at creating markets for environmental services or at providing increased opportunity for entrepreneurship for ethnic minorities living within conservation zones. The localized and park-specific neoliberal projects thus do not produce the kind of system-wide structural pressure to devolve conservation services to the private sector.

Additionally, the discourses around neoliberalisation were distinct between the two cases. In Jasper, 'there is no alternative' thinking both stemmed from and was reinforced by federal aus-

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terity politics that cut funding for protected areas over several years from the 1990s onwards. This narrative factored prominently into the truth claims advanced by proponents in Jasper. In Maligne Tours' conceptual proposal, the company was especially bold in their assertion that the proposed attractions could generate revenue for Jasper Park to make up for funding lost in successive rounds of budget cuts. Opponents would also lament that it appeared there really was no alternative. During public consultation, park managers employed several strategies to elevate the politics of austerity and the issue of park funding beyond debate, effectively taking private funding and management of park services for granted. This was not the case in Thailand, where the country's developmental and populist past combined with local citizens' mistrust of big business did not inspire the same kind of 'there is no alternative' thinking. The lack of structural pressure in terms of austerity politics similarly did not inspire similar discourses or associated post-political strategies. Thus the ways in which, and the scales at which, neoliberalisation has played out in relation to each site's specific histories, institutions, and on-the-ground engagements with conservation have been markedly distinct, and have contributed to the diverging outcomes explored in this dissertation.

As one particular component of neoliberalisation, I have argued that austerity politics play a pivotal role in depoliticizing public and Indigenous participation and engagement with conservation governance. Following scholars who argue the post-politicization of the public sphere converges with processes of neoliberalisation (Fletcher, 2014; Swyngedouw, 2010; Zizek, 1999), I argue that the politics of austerity create the structural conditions for the post-politicization of consultation, reducing democratic oversight of environmental governance more broadly. Austerity politics contribute to the orchestration of a post-political 'there is no alternative' dis-

course that accepts private development and management of park services as the best and only viable option. Strategies to discipline and co-opt dissent and predetermine outcomes serve to suture space for dissensus and debate and orchestrate (the appearance of) this post-political "consensus". Agonistic politics are thus replaced by "technocratic questions of cost-benefit ratios from which political considerations are largely effaced" (Fletcher, 2014: 330). As mentioned in Chapter 3, this may hold ecological implications, as certain environmental knowledges are privileged above others. That is, as ecological concerns are backgrounded while budgetary issues and revenue generation are foregrounded.

Additionally, much of the literature on post-politics is theoretical with scant grounded studies (Beveridge, 2016), and there is little work that explores the relationship between austerity politics and post-politicization. As austerity politics are becoming normalized around the globe, it is vital that conservation scholars and practitioners explore these connections empirically and not just theoretically. By revealing the empirical details of how strategies of depoliticization are enacted and confronted in both cases, it allows concerned citizens or scholar-activists to be alert to the strategies employed to orchestrate consensus and thus to shape their resistance strategies accordingly. While participation in institutionalized consultation processes may not be empowering, drawing attention to the broader political economic processes themselves and the suite of practices that stem from them might offer new ways to organize resistance outside of official channels, taking aim at the system driving these changes and not the localized changes themselves. An empirical understanding of the ways in which austerity politics and the post-political orchestration of consensus are intimately linked is thus important analytically, to improve our understanding of how certain logics gain currency and stabilize over others in conservation poli-

cy, but also practically and politically in our quest for alternative and emancipatory political economies of conservation.

These cases demonstrate that such alternatives are imperative. Neoliberalisation, in theory, endeavours to decentralize management and enrol a wider network of actors into participation. Although it may be the case that a greater number of stakeholders can participate, different participants are enrolled in the process in uneven ways. Those with the ability to generate capital (or those that support capital generation) are prioritized, while those without are enrolled as contributors but within narrowly prescribed parameters (see also Ong, 2006). As demonstrated, this becomes exaggerated in times of austerity. Public actors in both cases were invited to comment —for instance, to suggest changes that could improve the implementation of a given project— but were not given space to bring political or philosophical debate into the public sphere, and were certainly not given space to debate the appropriateness of the neoliberalisation of conservation itself. Several respondents in both cases indicated that they no longer wished to participate in such consultation processes, which felt to many to be completely pro forma. Nurturing this growing apathy is post-political in itself, further minimizing the role that local and Indigenous actors are expected to have in democratic environmental governance. As explained in Chapter 3, this case thus has implications for our understanding of the role of consultation in neoliberal conservation. Lest we be lured into thinking that neoliberal modes of conservation governance lead to more participatory and effective public engagement, this case demonstrates that engagement within a neoliberal framework can be pernicious as it serves to disenfranchise public actors to lubricate 'painful-but-necessary' private sector development, leading to a level of distrust among public actors that can deter them from future engagement. Should conservationists desire

stronger public participation and engagement, they need to be attentive to the terms of that participation and the results of their engagement strategies.

Despite the growing cynicism of opponents, their successes (big or small) in both cases underscore that depoliticization and neoliberalisation are neither inevitable nor absolute. The tenacity of civil society and the unique political economy of conservation in Thailand disrupted the success of the privatization/anti-political project. Similarly, although austerity contributed to the post-politicization of conservation governance in Canada, public protest was able to frustrate the rollout of the neoliberal project. Although overnight accommodations were green-lighted at Maligne Lake, Maligne Tours was not able to build their luxury hotel, which was the cornerstone of their proposal. These two cases thus demonstrate that conservation practice is a continuous site of struggle around the production, circulation and application of various intersecting knowledge claims which give authority to certain policy options while foreclosing alternatives (Forsyth & Walker, 2014; Jasanoff, 2004; Matthews, 2011). Conservation authority is not absolute but is performatively reproduced through struggle, and arrived at through the relational agency of all actants involved, including non-human animals, laws, planning documents, media, political economic policies, etc. Despite the power and pressure exerted by private interests in a neoliberal political economy, conservation authority is halting and and always open to be taken in a different direction. Conservation policy as a struggle for the ascendancy of particular truth claims is shaped through interaction with environmental activism, and vice versa.

This study has demonstrated that political economy (tied to colonialism) and the politics of participatory environmental governance are intimately intertwined and contribute to our understanding of how and why certain claims gain currency over others and stabilize into policy.

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Austerity politics can augment the power exerted by private interests over public and Indigenous actors, neutralizing the import of public and Indigenous participation. This is especially so in a colonial neoliberal political economy where the continued alienation of Indigenous peoples from their lands is what facilitates ongoing colonial-capitalist accumulation. Where the interests of parks departments and private operators align, local and Indigenous participation weakens. It is important to understand how political economy and anti- and post-politics coalesce in this way if our aim is to challenge and politicize neoliberal ideology in conservation practice. The unsteady nature of conservation authority should empower us to see neoliberal conservation as a precarious achievement, and inspire emancipatory political action with an understanding that there are *always* prospects for alternative sustainabilities.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview questions were tailored for each particular respondent as I interviewed a wide cross-section of people in varying positions (private companies, park authorities, environmental organizations, local residents, etc.). The following are some sample questions for people in each of these categories.

Questions for Private Business Owners in Jasper (eg. for the President of Brewster Travel)

Background

1) You recently took over as President of Brewster from Michael Hannan. Please describe your job role and responsibilities.

2) Why did you choose to start working with Brewster? Tell me a bit about yourself, education, etc.

Conservation

1) What do you think is(are) the role(s) of national parks? In your opinion, has the role of national parks changed over the last few decades?

2) A lot has been written on the dual mandate of National Parks in Canada (ecological integrity and visitor experience), how do you see this dual mandate? Is there a good balance in Jasper National Park? Does the balance between the two need to be changed?

3) Are national parks important to you? Why or why not?

4) What is your understanding of the role of the private sector in parks? Has your opinion changed in your time working with Brewster?

5) How does the Glacier Skywalk relate to the park's conservation goals?

6) The 2001 National Parks Act states ecological integrity is Parks Canada's first priority. Do you believe that the Glacier Skywalk is in accordance with this agenda?

7) In your opinion, how does the Glacier Skywalk help people to connect with nature?

8) How would you respond to people who claim the Glacier Skywalk will set a precedent for further private tourism development in Jasper?

9) How do you respond to UNESCO's draft report that lists the Glacier Skywalk as a 'high threat' for Jasper National Park?

10) How do you respond to public concerns regarding the length and breadth of the environmental assessment study? Do you feel the GS will impact wildlife in the area?

11) Opponents have argued that the Glacier Skywalk is not in keeping with the Jasper Management Plan, which directs that only projects that require a minimum of built facilities will be considered. How would you respond to this?

12) Brewster is also funding the Wildlife Guardian Program for 5 years, can you tell me a bit about this program?

Logistics

1) How does the partnership between Parks Canada and Brewster Travel operate?

2) How long is your current lease contract with Parks Canada? What are the conditions for renewal? The GS was a new lease?

3) Does Parks Canada receive a percentage of the Glacier Skywalk revenues? If yes, what percentage? What percentage goes to the Crown versus Jasper park?

4) Are there limits to the size and number of attractions that Brewster can develop within the park? How are these limits determined?

5) You also sit on the AMPPE Board of Directors along with other CEOs of tourism operators in Jasper. Can you explain AMPPE's relationship with Parks Canada? To what extent are AMPPE board of directors involved in park decision-making? (AMPPE encourages parks to value visitor experience as an equal part of park mandate)

6) Explain to me the process through which the Glacier Walkway got approved. To your knowledge, was there a lot of debate internal to Parks Canada? Who were you dealing with primarily?

7) The media has been running stories claiming that Greg Fenton requested more time to deliberate on the decision, but then Minister of the Environment Peter Kent stepped in to make the final decision. Is this an accurate assessment? Please explain how the final decision on the Glacier Walkway was made.

8) Opponents argue that Peter Kent stepped in in part due to the fact that Brewster sent a lobbyist to Ottawa. To what extent do you think this influenced the decision?

9) The media has been running stories about budget cuts to Parks Canada over recent years. To what extent do Brewster's operations in the park help to mitigate this fiscal situation?

10) What social science evidence did you use to determine that visitors to Jasper wanted an attraction like the Glacier Skywalk? What evidence is there to support that the Skywalk will attract new Canadians and urban youth?

11) Do you measure visitor experience at your attractions? What criteria are used to assess whether you have increased understanding, appreciation and enjoyment?

Advertising

1) How did you go about advertising the Glacier Walkway?

2) What strategies or tools did Brewster employ to inform people of the merits of the development? What obstacles did you face?

Public Consultation / Opposition

1) Please explain the public response leading up to the approval of the Glacier Walkway.

2) How much public input did you receive? How many feedback letters and comments at public meetings did Parks Canada receive?

3) Approximately what percentage of public input was in support of the projects versus in opposition to the projects? (Global TV Poll on should they build the Skywalk, 78% said no)

4) Did residents have a chance to vote on whether the project should be built at all? Why or why not? (Is there a difference between an open house and a public hearing?)

5) What do you think were/are the main concerns of opponents?

6) Please explain how Parks Canada and Brewster weighed public concerns against both agencies' understandings of the merits of the projects.

7) Do you feel as though the public was meaningfully involved in the decision-making process?

8) Have opponents' concerns been addressed in the planning and development of these attractions, and if so, how?

9) Opponents requested information from ATIP, asking for all correspondence between Brewster and senior park management prior to the approval of the Glacier Skywalk. ATIP granted this request but before the information was made public, Brewster sued Parks Canada over the release of that information. Can you tell me why Brewster felt they needed to take such an action to stop the public from accessing that information?

12) Please explain to me how Indigenous engagement proceeded. How many members of each community were included in the deliberation process?

13) How did each different Indigenous nation respond to the proposal to build the Glacier Walkway?

14) Approximately what percentage of those consulted were in support of the project, how many were opposed, and how many were indifferent?

15) Were there any concerns voiced by different Indigenous nations, and if so, what were they?

16) Were Indigenous nations offered employment opportunities at the Glacier Skywalk?

17) Do you feel that Indigenous communities were meaningfully included in the decision-making process?

10) How do you understand citizens' an Indigenous communities' roles in park decision-making?

11) Do you foresee further public-private partnerships for tourism development in Jasper in the next 5-10 years?

Questions for the Pingkanakorn Development Agency (eg. for Plodprasop Suraswadi, father of the cable car idea)

Background

1) Please tell me a bit about yourself and education background.

2) Are you still active in the Pheu Thai party? Are you now starting your own party?

3) How long have you worked with the Pingnakorn Development Agency (PDA)? Please explain your current role and responsibilities.

4) What are the goals of the PDA?

5) How does the PDA get its funding?

6) Are the Night Safari or International Convention Centre private businesses, or government owned? Are the benefits from those meant to support the PDA or do they go back to the central govt?

Conservation

1) What do you think is(are) the role(s) of national parks?

2) What do you think is the role of tourism and the private sector within protected areas?

3) What are your reasons for proposing this cable car?

4) What do you think are the social, economic and environmental implications of building the cable car?

Benefits

1) How will the cable car help boost tourism in your opinion?

2) Who will receive the majority of the benefits of the cable car? How will benefits be shared/used?

Public Consultation

1) Please explain to me how public consultation on the cable car has operated.

2) Please explain the public response to the cable car at public hearings so far.

3) The cable car was proposed twice before, in the 1980s and around 2006. What obstacles are you facing in trying to build the cable car this time?

4) Do you think you have a better chance of building the cable car now than in 2006, why or why not?

5) Do you feel as though the public is/will be meaningfully involved in the decision-making process?

6) How will the final decision on the cable car be made?

7) The PDA works closely with Tesco – Do members of the PDA also work for Tesco? Your wife and son are major shareholders in Tesco, is that correct?

8) Are the Night Safari and International Convention Centre making a profit or are they currently being subsidized by the govt?

Questions for Park Officials in Jasper

Background

1) Please tell me a bit about yourself, your education background, how you got involved with PC, current role/responsibilities

Conservation

1) What do you think is(are) the role(s) of national parks? Has the role changed in recent decades?

2) How do you see the balance between ecological integrity and visitor experience in Jasper National Park? Do you think the balance needs to be changed?

3) How do you understand the private sector's role in protected areas? Has your opinion changed in your time with Parks Canada?

4) Has park policy changed over the last several years to allow for increased tourism development? Has policy been altered to allow for more partnerships with private sector actors?

5) Do you feel it is important to support the development of these two tourist attractions, and if so, why?

6) In terms of the Maligne tent cabins, how do you respond to opponents who say that this should not be considered because the management plan and Parks Canada's 2007 policy state there should be no new land released for outlying commercial accommodations? What are the implications of altering those guidelines?

7) Can the park management plan be amended without consultation?

8) Is Jasper management concerned about the possible effects of overnight guests on the endangered caribou population, which PC identifies as the most pressing conservation issue in the Maligne Valey?

9) Are you confident in the Environmental Assessment process in general? Do you feel there may be a conflict of interest having proponents pay for EAs?

Logistics

1) Does Parks Canada receive a percentage of the revenues from each tourist site? If yes, what percentage (if you are able to divulge this)? Does the gross from each lease go to the Crown or to Jasper park?

2) Explain to me the process through which the Glacier Walkway got approved. Was there a lot of debate internal to Parks Canada?

3) Who had final say over whether the Glacier Walkway should be built? Did the decision come from Jasper National Park or from the Ministry of the Environment?

4) Explain to me the process through which the decision on the Maligne Tours Hotel is being made. Is there a lot of debate internal to Parks Canada? Who will make the final decision on the Maligne Tours Hotel?

5) To what extent did budget cuts to Parks Canada and/or the need to increase visitor numbers contribute to the decision to build the Glacier Walkway? To what extent did these contribute to Parks Canada's willingness to consider the Maligne Tours Hotel?

6) What other challenges have you faced due to budget cuts, if any?

7) What social science evidence is there that visitors to Jasper, particularly new Canadians and urban youth, want attractions like the Glacier Walkway and Maligne Hotel?

8) Does PC have specific criteria to evaluate whether new attractions are succeeding in connecting people to nature or increasing visitor experience in the park?

Public Consultation / Opposition

1) Please explain the public response leading up to the approval of the Glacier Walkway. Please explain the public response received thus far for the Maligne Hotel.

2) How much public input did you receive for each project?

3) Approximately what percentage of public input was in support of the projects versus in opposition to the projects?

4) Please explain how Parks Canada weighed public concerns against the agency's understanding of the merits of the projects.

5) Is PC obligated to make decisions based on public feedback? Are public comment submissions a matter of public record?

6) Do you feel as though the public was meaningfully involved in the decision-making processes?

7) How do you understand citizens' roles in park decision-making?

8) Has the public consultation process changed over the last few decades, and if so, how?

Indigenous Consultation

1) Please explain how the consultation processes with Indigenous communities operated. How many members of each community were included in the deliberation process for each site? Were these mainly Elders groups or political leaders?

2) Please explain the responses received by different Indigenous communities – what % were in favour versus in opposition? What were some of the main concerns?

3) Were employment opportunities promised to Indigenous communities, were these fulfilled?

4) The reports written by PC and Brewster mention that Indigenous groups were consulted but give little information about what was said or how concerns were addressed. What is PC's obligation in terms of ensuring the consultation process is satisfactory to Indigenous communities and sharing their comments with the public?

5) How do you understand Indigenous communities' roles in park decision-making?

Questions for Park Officials in Doi Suthep-Pui

Background

1) Please tell me a bit about yourself, your education background, how you got involved with Parks, current role/responsibilities.

2) Please describe local park responsibilities. Do you report direction to the Chiang Mai office or the National Office? How much autonomy do local parks have in decision-making within the park?

3) What authority/Ministry controls the Night Safari?

Conservation

1) What do you think is(are) the role(s) of national parks? Has the role changed in recent decades?

2) How would you describe the role of tourism in parks? The private sector?

3) How do you see the balance between ecological integrity and visitor experience in Doi Suthep-Pui national park? Do you think the balance needs to be changed?

4) Has park policy changed over the last several years to allow for increased tourism development? Has policy been altered to allow for more partnerships with private sector actors?

5) Does park policy allow for this kind of development in a park? In class 1 watershed forest?

6) Do you support or oppose the development of the cable car and for what reasons?

7) What impacts might the cable car have on wildlife and vegetation? Conservation concerns?

8) What are the implications for taxi drivers in the city? For religious groups?

9) Are you confident in the Environmental Assessment process in Thailand? Do you think there may be a conflict of interest in that private proponents pay for EAs?

10) Did you have any concerns with the EA for the cable car?

Logistics

1) Would the Parks Dept receive a percentage of the revenues from the cable car? If yes, what percentage (if you are able to divulge this)? Does the gross go to the federal level or to Doi Suthep park?

2) Would the cable car operators pay land rent to parks? Would they pay tax?

3) Has visitation to the park been increasing or decreasing over the last decade?

4) Will the cable car attract greater numbers to the park in your opinion? What challenges might this present for park management?

5) Have there been budget cuts to parks in the last few years?

6) Would the benefits mainly accrue to the Pingkanakorn Development Agency? To villagers?

Public Consultation / Opposition

1) What was the parks department's role in public consultations?

2) Please explain the public response so far on the cable car.

3) How much public input did you receive?

4) Approximately what percentage of public input was in support of the projects versus in opposition to the projects?

5) Who makes the final decision- the Cabinet? What is the Parks Dept role in decision-making?

6) Do you feel as though the public has been meaningfully involved in the decision-making processes?

7) How do you understand citizens' roles in park decision-making?

8) Has the public consultation process changed over the last few decades, and if so, how?

Aboriginal Consultation

1) Are Hmong communities to be consulted with on the cable car as well? Why or why not?

2) Is parks obliged to consult with indigenous communities within parks when making park decisions?

3) To what extent are indigenous communities participating in park decision-making/management?

4) What implications might the cable car have for the Hmong communities?

Questions for Environmental Organizations in Jasper (eg. for the Jasper Environmental Association)

Background

1) How long have you worked with the Jasper Environmental Association? Please explain your current role and responsibilities. Background, education, etc.

2) Why did you choose to get involved with the JEA? How many members are there?

Conservation

1) What do you think is(are) the role(s) of national parks?

2) A lot has been written on the dual mandate of National Parks in Canada (ecological integrity and visitor experience), how do you see this dual mandate? Is there a good balance? Does the balance between the two need to be changed?

3) Are there benefits of private tourism services for conservation?

4) In your opinion, has the role of national parks changed over the last few decades?

5) To your knowledge, have there been changes to park policy to allow for greater private involvement?

6) What is your understanding of the role of the private sector in parks? Has your opinion changed in your time working with the JEA?

7) Main concerns with Maligne Tours' hotel? With the Glacier Skywalk?

8) Parks Canada, Brewster and Maligne Tours argue that these new attractions will help visitors to better connect with nature. Do you agree with this argument, why or why not?

9) To your knowledge, has UNESCO been informed about the proposal to construct the Maligne Hotel?

10) Your organization has argued that the 2010 management plan and Parks Canada's 2007 OCA policy state that no new outlying commercial accommodations should be considered. In your opinion, why is Jasper considering the Maligne Tours proposal despite this?

11) Do you believe the hotel will have an impact on the endangered caribou herd in the area? On the harlequin duck population? On the grizzly population? (Evidence?)

12) Did you have any concerns with the ecological assessment for the Glacier Skywalk, and if so, what were they?

13) Do you feel confident in the environmental assessment process in Canada, why or why not?

Visitor Experience

1) Do you believe it is important to attract new Canadians and urban youth to parks? Why or why not?

2) Do you believe it is important for Parks Canada to take steps to improve visitor experience in the park, why or why not?

3) Do you believe it is important to create more attractions for differently abled visitors in parks, why or why not?

4) In your opinion, will the Glacier Skywalk and the Maligne Hotel succeed in attracting new Canadians and urban youth, as are the stated target markets for these attractions?

5) In your opinion, will the Glacier Skywalk and Maligne Hotel improve visitor experience for differently abled visitors?

6) In your opinion, will the Glacier Skywalk help to reduce traffic accidents around the corner where the lookout has been built?

7) Has Parks Canada and/or Brewster and Maligne Tours demonstrated evidence that the Glacier Walkway and the Maligne Hotel will attract new Canadians, urban youth, and/or disabled visitors? What evidence have they shown?

8) How would you respond to people who argue that private tourism and visitor experience have always been present within parks, and particularly Jasper, such as the Marmot Basin ski hill and Brewster's ice coaches?

9) Do you think there has been an increase in private involvement in parks in the last 5-10 years, or is this a continuation of previous models of conservation practice?

10) The media has been running stories about recent budget cuts to Parks Canada. In your opinion, to what extent did budget cuts to Parks Canada and/or the need to increase visitor numbers contribute to the decision to build the Glacier Skywalk? To what extent did these contribute to Parks Canada's willingness to consider the Maligne Tours Hotel?

Public Opposition/Consultation

1) What strategies or tools did you/your organization use to reach people and inform them of the issues you took with the attractions?

2) How did you organize your campaign against the each proposal?

3) What tools/strategies were available to you? What obstacles did you face?

4) Please explain to me how public consultation on the two developments operated.

5) Please explain the public response leading up to the approval of the Glacier Walkway. Please explain the public response thus far for the Maligne Hotel.

6) Approximately what percentage of public input was in support of the projects versus in opposition to the projects?

7) Does it matter to you that Brewster Corporation is owned by Viad, an American tourism company? Does it make any difference to you that Maligne Tours is a Canadian-owned company?

8) Who/which groups came out in support of the projects?

9) Were there people/groups who should have been consulted but were not informed or included in the process?

10) How did Parks Canada weigh public concerns against the agency's understanding of the merits of the projects?

11) Have opponents' concerns been addressed in the planning and development of these attractions, and if so, how?

12) Do you feel as though the public was meaningfully involved in the decision-making process for the Glacier Skywalk?

13) Do you think that members of the public and Maligne Tours will have an equal ability to influence the decision on the hotel?

14) Were you satisfied with the way public consultation was sought? Why or why not? If not, how could it be improved in your opinion?

15) How do you understand citizens' roles in park decision-making? What do you think citizens' roles should be?

16) To your knowledge, has the public consultation process changed over the last few decades, and if so, how?

17) Do you foresee further private-public partnerships in Jasper in the next 5-10 years?

Questions for Environmental Organizations in Chiang Mai (eg. for Anuchat Thananchai, head of Rak Doi Suthep)

Background

1) Tell me a bit about yourself, your education etc. How long have you worked with the Rak Doi Suthep Group? What are the group's goals?

Conservation

1) What do you think is(are) the role(s) of national parks? In your opinion, has the role of national parks changed over the last few decades?

2) Can you tell me a bit about the cable car controversy? The idea was first proposed in the 1980s and again around 2006 but was shelved due to protest. Before it was a private company to fund/run the service, now it's a semi-private government agency? What role will private business have/ what companies are involved?

3) Did the cable car have a Thaksin connection in previous years (2006)? Did that have any bearing on the nature of the opposition?

4) To your knowledge, have there been changes to park policy to allow for greater private involvement?

5) What is your understanding of the role of the private sector in parks?

6) Please explain the reasons why you are opposed to the cable car project.

7) What impacts do you believe these projects will have on wildlife?

8) What implications might the cable car project have for taxi drivers in Chiang Mai? Religious implications?

9) To your knowledge, does park policy allow for this kind of development within a national park?

10) Did you have any concerns with the ecological assessment for the cable car, and if so, what were they?

11) Do you feel confident in the environmental assessment process in Thailand, why or why not?

Visitor Experience

1) Proponents argue that the cable car will help reduce accidents and pollution along the road to Doi Suthep. Do you agree with this argument, why or why not?

2) Do you believe it is important to attract more visitors to parks? Why or why not? Will the cable car help boost tourism?

3) Will the cable car help people who are disabled or elderly to reach the sites in the park?

4) Do you think there has been an increase in private involvement/tourism development in parks in the last 5-10 years, or is this a continuation of previous models of conservation practice?

5) To your knowledge, have there been any budget cuts to the parks department in the last few years?

Public Opposition/Consultation

1) How did you organize your campaign against the cable car? Did you coordinate with any other organizations? If so, which ones?

2) What obstacles did you face?

3) Please explain to me how public consultation on the cable car operated.

4) Please explain the public response to the cable car at public consultation meetings

5) Approximately what percentage of public input was in support of the projects versus in opposition to the projects?

6) Who/which groups are the main opponents of the project?

7) Who/which groups came out in support of the project?

8) Were there people/groups who should have been consulted but were not informed or included in the process?

9) Do you feel as though the public is/will be meaningfully involved in the decision-making process?

10) Who will make the final decision on the cable car?

11) Were you satisfied with the way public consultation was sought? Why or why not? If not, how could it be improved in your opinion?

12) How do you understand citizens' roles in park decision-making? What do you think citizens' roles should be?

13) To your knowledge, has the public consultation process changed over the last few decades, and if so, how?

14) Are parks people obliged to consult with the indigenous communities living in the park?

15) Are there other contacts you can share for people protesting/opposing the project?

Questions for local residents in each site followed the same structure (Background, Conservation, Visitor Experience, and Public Consultation), although did not ask questions specific to organizations or private businesses. Emphasis was placed more on the degree to which they felt meaningfully involved in decision-making processes.

Appendix B: List of Interviewees

Jasper

Alan Latourelle (Former Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada)

Alison Woodley (Director of CPAWS, National Level)

Art Jackson (Alpine Art Eco Tours)

Barry Robinson (Lawyer at EcoJustice)

Ben Gadd (Former Parks Canada Interpreter, Naturalist)

Bob Covey (Editor of the Jasper Local)

Brian Rode (Management at Marmot Basin Ski Hill)

Danielle Pendlebury (CPAWS Northern Alberta)

Dave McKenna (President of Brewster Travel)

Descendent of John Moberly A

Descendent of John Moberly B

Donald Flook (Canadian Wildlife Service)

George Mercer (Former Jasper Warden and Wildlife Specialist)

Graeme Pole (Author and Naturalist)

Grant Potter (Former Business Liaison with Parks Canada)

Greg Fenton (Former Superintendent of Jasper National Park)

Ian Urquhart (University of Alberta)

Jill Seaton (Jasper Environmental Association)

John McKay (Liberal Environment Critic)

John Ogilvy (SkyTram Engineer)

Karsten Heuer (Yellowstone 2 Yukon)

Katie Worobec (Tourism Jasper)

Kelly Sloan (CPAWS Northern Alberta)

Kevin Van Tighem (Former Superintendent of Banff)

Kim Wallace (Jasper School Teacher and Rally Organizer)

Loni Klettl (Former Olympian, Jasper Trail Alliance)

Marc LeBlanc (Local Business Owner)

Michael Wasuita (Owner of Pine Bungalows)

Monika Schaefer (Former Jasper Warden)

Mrs. Ogilvy (Longtime Resident of Jasper)

Nicole Veerman (Former Editor of the Fitzhugh)

Nik Lopoukhine (Former Director General of Parks Canada, IUCN)

Parks Canada Visitor Experience Manager in Jasper

Pat Crowley (Manager of Maligne Tours)

Pattie Pavlov (Jasper Chamber of Commerce)

Paulette and Volker (Owners of Maligne Canyon Hostel)

Peter Duck (Former Master Interpreter for Parks Canada, Bow Valley Naturalists)

Respondent from Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation

Respondent from Aseniwuche Winewak Nation

Respondent from Confederation of Treaty Six Nations

Respondent from Kelly Lake First Nation

Respondent from Mountain Cree Band

Respondent from Samson Cree Nation

Respondent from Stoney Nakoda Nation

Respondent from Sucker Creek First Nation

Respondent from Upper Athabasca Elders Council

Sean Nichols (Alberta Wilderness Association)

Senior Land Use Manager in Jasper National Park

Stephen Woodley (Former Chief Ecosystem Scientist for Parks Canada, IUCN)

Terry Winkler (Former Jasper Warden)

Doi Suthep-Pui

Adul Islam (Tesco Ltd.)

Amporn Panmongkol (Head of Doi Suthep-Pui National Park)

Anonymous Villager (Ban Too Pong)

Anonymous Villager (Khun Chang Kian)

Anonymous Villager (Khun Chang Kian)

Anonymous Villager (Khun Chang Kian)

Anonymous Villager (Mae Hia Nai)

Anonymous Villager (Mae Hia Nai)

Anonymous Villager (Suthep Subdistrict)

Anonymous Villager (Suthep Subdistrict)

Dr. Anuchat Thananchai (Rak Doi Suthep)

Sakda Darawan (Rak Mae Ping)

Daycha Niamkun (Villager, Suthep Subdistrict)

Dr. Attachak Sattayanurak (Chiang Mai University)

Dropop Sayan (Farmer's Group in Ban Doi Pui)

Duangtip (Headman in Nong Khwai Subdistrict)

General Mithila (Mayor of Nong Khwai Subdistrict)

Governor of Chiang Mai

Gwa Han (Villager in Ban Too Pong)

Jansom (Villager in Mae Hia Nai)

Yang Yin Goon (Headman of Khun Chang Kian)

Kamonrath (Headman in Suthep Subdistrict)

Khajon (Headman in Suthep Subdistrict)

Mae Tapan (Headman of Ban Doi Pui)

Monk in Suthep Subdistrict

Nawalat (Villager in Mae Hia Nai)

Nopporn and Pani (Headman and Assistant in Mae Hia District)

P'Ya (Villager in Ban Too Pong)

Dr. Paiboon Hengsuwan (Chiang Mai University)

Panapai (Head of Welfare Office in Suthep Subdistrict)

Phisit Kasikorn (Vice-Mayor of Mae Hia Subdistrict)

Pira (Villager in Ban Doi Pui)

Plodprasop Suraswadi (Pingkanakorn Development Agency, Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Royal Forestry Department, Pheu Thai Party)

Praphan Janta (Headman in Mae Hia Subdistrict)

Prayat (Community Rights Advocacy Network)

Dr. Sammakkee Boonyawat (Kasetsart University, Environmental Assessment)

Singkham Nunti (Chairman of Lanna Transportation)

Dr. Somikat Chaipiboon (Responsible for Maejo University Poll)

Searched Thakumma (Headman in Suthep Subdisctrict)

Tatthaya Anusorrakit (Chiang May Link NGO)

Teeramon Bua-ngam (Journalist with Prachatham News)

Temple Administration for Doi Suthep Temple

Tha Luangjai (Headman of the Headmen in Nong Khwai Subdistrict)

Thawatchai (Headman in Mae Hia Subdistrict)

Tritsadee Chutiwongsa (Vice-Director of Pingkanakorn Development Agency)

Wa Lam Tong (Villager in Ban Doi Pui)

Wakana Seehorn (Northern Development Foundation NGO)

Wee Lai (Villager in Ban Doi Pui)

Wisoot Buachoom (Tourism Authority of Thailand)

Yinyot (Former Headman of Ban Doi Pui)

Appendix C: Open Letter from Former Parks Canada Bosses to Minister of the Environment, Leona Aglukkaq

April 9, 2014

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
Minister of the Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Re: Maligne Tours proposal for overnight accommodation at Maligne Lake, Jasper National Park

Dear Minister:

As former senior national park staff, we are writing to strongly urge you to take a stand now that will safeguard Canada's national parks for years to come. Please reject the proposal by Maligne Tours for a hotel resort at Maligne Lake in Jasper National Park, part of the UNESCO Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site.

Approving overnight accommodation at the Maligne Lake would contravene a Parks Canada policy designed specifically to limit development in the mountain national parks, and could open the floodgates to more commercial development, putting the ecological integrity of the mountain parks and quality of park visitor experiences at risk.

It is our view that the Canadian people, Jasper and other national park ecosystems and Parks Canada have nothing to gain and plenty to lose if this development is approved.

Currently only day use is allowed at Maligne Lake. Maligne Tours' proposed resort contravenes Parks Canada's 2007 policy that prohibits any new commercial accommodations outside park town sites and places clear negotiated limits on all existing "outlying commercial accommodations". This policy was developed after significant study by an expert panel and considerable public dialogue. It is a principled response to a widely-held view among a large majority of Canadians - as shown repeatedly in public opinion polling and management plan consultations - that nature protection and public enjoyment need to be protected against commercial development in our national parks. In our considered view, making an exception to this policy would undermine the entire policy foundation for controlling commercial development in our national parks. As such, it would be a betrayal of the public trust and a repudiation of what Canadians have consistently shown they expect of those entrusted with the care of their national treasures.

There is no doubt that other businesses and corporations would use the approval of this proposal as a precedent to try and secure new developments and expansions elsewhere, and that Parks Canada would be compromised in its ability to argue that these proposed developments contra-

vene policy. The Maligne Tours' proposal is a very real "thin edge of the wedge" that could jeopardize the natural values of our national parks that Canadians have entrusted the federal government to protect on their behalf.

Further, the Maligne resort proposal is inconsistent with your legislative requirement under the Canada National Parks Act and the Parks Canada Agency Act to prioritize ecological integrity in park management decisions, as well as your responsibilities under the Species at Risk Act. The Maligne Valley is home to a Threatened Southern Mountain caribou herd that has declined precipitously in the past 15 years from more than 60 to just 5 animals. This endangered herd requires less disturbance, not more, if there is to be any chance for its survival and recovery.

Were it to proceed, the proposed Maligne Lake hotel development would extend the time of day that visitors and hotel staff use the area and its access road from daytime to 24 hour use. More staff and accommodation would be needed at the lake to service the hotel, leading to more wildlife disturbance. Losing just one caribou on the road because of increased traffic at dawn or dusk, or during the night, could be the final "nail in the coffin" for this herd. The northern end of Maligne Lake is also important habitat for grizzly bears and harlequin ducks, both sensitive species which could be harmed by the expanded activity that would result from overnight accommodation at the lake.

At a broader scale, the incremental commercial development that would result from allowing this precedent-setting contravention of park policy would threaten the ecological integrity of all of our Rocky Mountain national parks by enabling more development in sensitive ecosystems critical for the survival and movement of wildlife.

Any development proposal that could add risk to the well-being of vulnerable species in national parks is inconsistent with the requirement to maintain or restore ecological integrity as a first priority in park management decisions.

The Maligne resort proposal is being considered by Parks Canada on claims that it could improve visitor experience. A survey of Maligne Lake visitors showed 99% were satisfied with their visit, which raises the question whether the proposed development would in fact address the 1% that were not fully satisfied, and if so, if it is worth the risks noted above. Fundamentally, Parks Canada surveys show that Canadians are attracted to national parks for their wildlife and pristine natural beauty and not for built developments, regardless of whether they are tasteful, green or rustic.

In our view, the resort development at Maligne Lake and the anticipated subsequent incremental development would corrupt the natural beauty of Maligne Lake and of our parks. The question is whether you want to be known as the Minister who stood up for, and protected our national parks for Canadians, now and in the future?
Jasper is part of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site which Parks Canada is entrusted to protect on behalf of Canadians and the global community. As you know, World Her-

itage is a very special designation given by the United Nations to places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and, as such, are to be protected by the responsible State Party for the global community to appreciate and enjoy, now and in the future. We have a global responsibility to ensure Jasper's natural values are not compromised.

As the local Jasper Fitzhugh newspaper noted in a recent editorial:

Policies exist for a reason. They are there to shape what is and is not acceptable. They are there to guide governments through tough decisions. And they are there to ensure fairness and due process…

…Parks' policies are in place to limit the growth of our town and park to ensure the protection of our wild spaces and wildlife. If the agency is planning to hold true to its mandate of protection and maintenance of ecological integrity, exceptions to longstanding policies on limited development are not an option.

We agree. National Parks are ultimately about natural heritage and future generations. We strongly urge you to stand up for the long term public interest and legacy by telling Maligne Tours that their operation is, and will always be, a day-use facility that serves the visiting public, not a private resort that excludes the public, contributes to the final loss of the Maligne caribou herd and fills a peaceful place with disturbance, noise and memory of broken promises.

We would be pleased to discuss this important matter with you, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Nikita Lopoukhine Former Director General, National Parks, Parks Canada Former Chair, World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN

Stephen Woodley, PhD Former Chief Ecosystem Scientist, Parks Canada

Kevin Van Tighem Former Superintendent, Banff National Park, Parks Canada