

## **The Pacification Logics of Critical Infrastructure Resilience**

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My work examines the emergence of "resilience" discourse in Canada's national security policy as a framework for securing critical infrastructures. In this work, I am situating this national security policy shift in within the context of colonial and capitalist logics of accumulation.

Focusing on the Canadian context of extractive resource industries, the aim of this work is to consider a) whether and how security practices are changing, and b) the implications for resistance movements, particularly Indigenous peoples' self-determination.

This term, "critical infrastructures" generally refers to not only physical assets and facilities, but also processes, systems, technologies, networks, and services that are considered "vital" or essential to the life of the population, economy, government, and therefore to the nation-state. Since the 1990s, "critical infrastructure" has become the main object of national security in Canada, as in other countries.

Like many other places, much of Canada's critical infrastructure (approximately 85%) is privately owned or operated, especially in certain sectors such as energy and utilities.

From the early 2000s until 2012, Canada's critical infrastructure security strategy has focussed on building partnerships with private owners, operators, and industry associations—such as, for example, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. The objective of these relationships is primarily to increase information and intelligence sharing between government, law enforcement, intelligence agencies, and industry about infrastructure threats and risks.

Since 2014, the Canadian government has increasingly aimed to expand these partnerships beyond information and intelligence sharing, to encourage increased private investment in infrastructure with the goal of building "resilience". Private investment is promoted as a national security strategy.

With Canada's adoption of this "resilience" approach, critical infrastructure security strategy increasingly emphasizes pre-emptive strategies that capitalize on the *possibilities* of future risks.

Rather than defend existing infrastructures from identifiable risks, resilience logic uses *imagined future* threats as a basis for enhancing infrastructures in the present time. The aim is to pre-empt possible disruptions to desirable *future* circulations, for example, of oil and gas. Rather than something to be avoided or prevented, the possibility that future disruptions will have catastrophic effects—on existing and imagined infrastructures—is turned into new opportunities for accumulation.

This framing or logic is evident in security strategy documents that I have obtained through freedom of information requests. These documents describe resilience strategies – that is, ongoing infrastructural investments – as beneficial to corporate interests and to “stimulating economic growth”. Again, this is not an economic plan, but is part of national security strategy.

While it seems “new” to the realm of national security and infrastructure protection, the pre-emptive anticipatory logic of resilience has a longer genealogy as a feature of accumulation logics and of settler colonialism’s imaginative geographies.

As Mark Neocleous has stated, “resilience is becoming one of the key ideological tropes underpinning the war of accumulation”. I want to emphasize this as “infrastructural war”, drawing on Stephen Graham’s work, that at the root is waged on land against Indigenous peoples’ self-determination. I’m interested in the pacification work of “infrastructural power”, drawing on insights of Michael Mann, Keller Easterling, Laleh Khalili, and Eyal Weizman among others.

While infrastructures are “vital” to the bio-political life of the population, economy, and state, they are also necropolitical, taking life through the physical violence, dispossession, criminalization and incarceration employed in the process of building and securing those infrastructures. Furthermore, with the capacity to constrict the circulation of food, clean water, health care, and mobility, infrastructural necropower operates by “letting die” through what Lauren Berlant describes as “slow death”.

The anticipatory dimension of infrastructure starts with territorialisation and spatial reordering by emptying out, compartmentalizing, and carving out spaces of circulation. In the colonial context, infrastructural projects begin as visions of desirable future spaces of non-indigenous settlement and economic activities underpinned by the materiality of things like railways, roads, electricity transmission grids and pipelines.

In this space, Indigenous presence and jurisdiction is part of a “threat -o-genic” landscape (to use Joseph Masco’s term) — or, the ‘milieu’ of circulation, to draw on Foucault. This presence has been an enduring source of uncertainty and anxiety for the settler state and flows of global capital via infrastructures.

As experienced in places around the world, criminalization and surveillance have been key pacification strategies to “manage” potential disruptions and clear the way for these infrastructural circulations. The framing of critical infrastructures as “vital” to the population and national interest is a powerful means of depoliticizing these criminalization and surveillance practices.

The critical infrastructure “resilience” vision in Canada’s national security policy presents another means of managing the uncertainties posed by political, environmental, Indigenous resistance movements – to turn the disruption into opportunities for new forms of accumulation. There are at least three ways:

One, is that infrastructural resilience is premised on constantly assessing, improving, renewing, and enhancing them. This fosters the growth of distinct

industries and services such as logistics, auditing and consultation services, and the standards industry. It also generates circulation through the continuous drive for improvement as new kinds of potential risk emerge.

Two, resilience practices generate new forms of financialized capital – infrastructure as desirable investments, and new financial instruments such as “flow-through shares” in the resource/mining sector that allow project proponents to mitigate risks related to their projects while investors profit through tax credits. All possible without a shovel in the ground.

Third, government commitments create opportunities and guarantees for investment. In Canada the federal government has continually opened existing and future infrastructural projects to private investment and ownership as part of a long-term economic growth strategy. In 2017, the Canada Infrastructure Bank was created and will provide more subsidies and opportunities for public-private partnerships, and direct private ownership. Or, the government might just buy a project as happened this summer with the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project from Kinder Morgan. This occurred after Kinder Morgan threatened to pull their investment in the face of massive Indigenous, environmental and municipal opposition.

Importantly, underlying this resilience approach, the security assemblage continues to play a crucial role – in greater collaboration with industry.

To give one example, I acquired a copy of a “strategic analysis” produced by Canada’s national police force (the Royal Canadian Mounted Police). This document focuses on the province of British Columbia on the west coast, and the “emerging industry” of natural gas pipelines and coastal liquefied natural gas terminals.

The document describes several projects at various stages of materialization, including some at a proposal phase. It identifies the projected economic benefits, and degree of opposition; it also discusses the current and *future* economic contributions of the province’s gas industry as a whole.

At the end, there is an appendix with three maps of “undiscovered resource estimates”, existing markets, and *future* Asian markets for expansion, which is a key driver of Canada’s national program of intensified extractivism.

This analysis, like others I have seen, are interesting because there is little attention to specific “criminal” threats (as would be expected in an intelligence analysis), and because they contain an underlying assumption that this expansion of the oil and gas industries is inevitable, and this future must be secured in the present through pre-emptive measures.

To close, I want to consider the implications of continuities and discontinuities of these anticipatory logics of critical infrastructure “resilience” for colonial governance and the role of the national security assemblage in pacifying Indigenous self-determination. In turn, how can Indigenous and environmental justice movements strategize against this security logic that capitalizes on movements’ disruptive capacity.