

# THE OPEN VEINS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Anthropology in Our Backyards Speaker Series

Hosted by the Department of Anthropology, UNBC

Dr. Marieka Sax, Postdoctoral Fellow & CIRC Research Lead, UNBC

November 6, 2018



# OUTLINE

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1. The research project
2. A big picture framing
3. The northern BC context
4. Benefits & burdens
5. Conclusion



Hospital Beach, Kitimat, BC, July 2018 (photo M. Sax)



# THE RESEARCH PROJECT

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“Buzz, Boom, and Bust: A comparative case study of the gendered impacts of the speculative phase of resource development in New Brunswick and British Columbia” (2018-20)



<https://www.edwardburtynsky.com/projects/photographs/oil>

# Why this research?

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- Knowledge gaps
  - “Buzz phase”
  - Export-oriented communities along the commodity chain
  - Intersections of social location and power
- Local data for social impact assessment, better policy and planning decisions
- To enhance resiliency, mitigate conflict, and support evidence-based solutions tailored to local contexts



# A BIG PICTURE FRAMING

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- Resource extraction
- Canadian export staples
- Global shifts
- Direct effects and wider impacts



<https://business.financialpost.com/news/one-of-north-americas-top-plays-why-the-montney-is-canadas-answer-to-u-s-shale>

# What's so natural about resource extraction?

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- A physical process that removes natural resources from their immediate context, transforming them into useful raw materials
- A political-economic process of expanding value and power through the identification, capture, control, and commodification of nature

# Canadian export staples

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- Before: fur, gold, cod, wheat, timber
- Now: minerals, oil, natural gas, and other energy products



# Global shifts in production and management

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- Shift in destination for raw materials
  - Asia replacing Europe & United States
- Shift in ownership and management structures
  - Foreign ownership replacing Canadian investment
  - Capital & technology replacing labour



# Direct effects and wider impacts

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Construction of infrastructure (wells, pipelines, work sites)

Disturbance of natural habitat

Water use, waste water disposal, water contamination

Flaring and gas seepage, compromised air quality

Increased traffic, noise, nighttime lighting

Jobs in industry and supporting sectors

Tax revenue and lease payments

Rapid rise in population

Increased housing demand and costs

Pressure on social and health services

# THE NORTHERN BC CONTEXT

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- Livelihood, lifestyle, and the good life
- Liquefied Natural Gas
- LNG in BC
- “LNG Canada”
- The processing facility and export terminal



<https://www.unbc.ca/image-galleries/950/northern-bc-scenery>



# Livelihood, lifestyle, and the good life

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- The way you earn income
- A way or style of living
- A life worth living

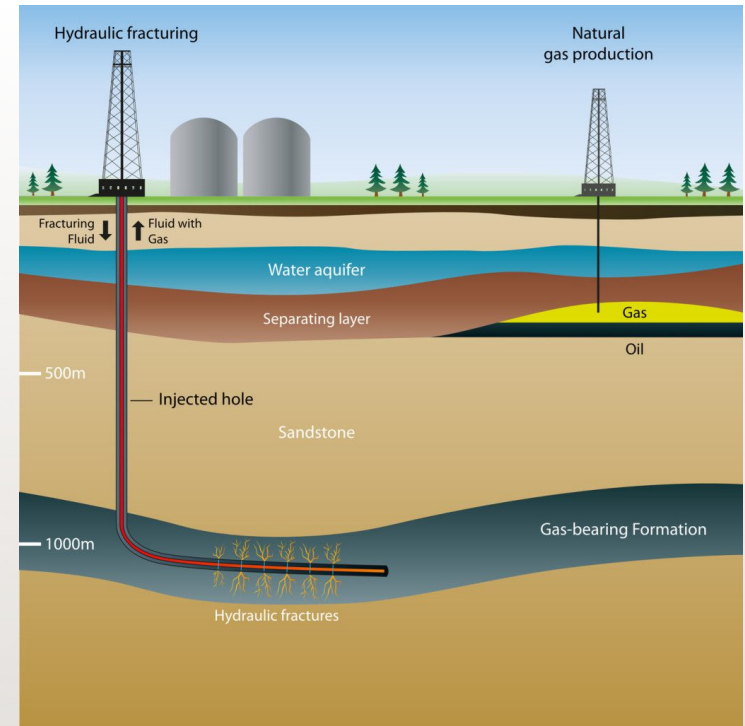


<https://globalnews.ca/news/2393592/laid-off-oil-and-gas-workers-confront-evolving-job-hunt-where-competition-is-steep/>



# Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

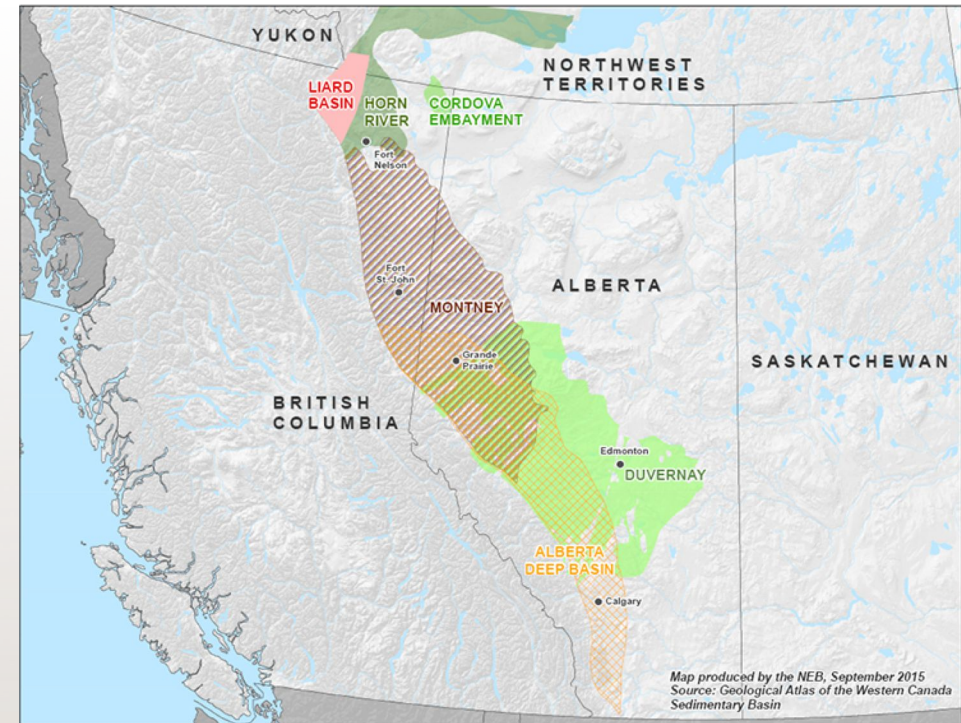
- Natural gas production has increased globally every year since 2009
- Production largely driven by “unconventional” natural gas development
- LNG is natural gas that has been treated and super-cooled to liquid form for transport



<http://www.oilpatchcopywriter.com/hydraulic-fracking/>

# LNG in BC

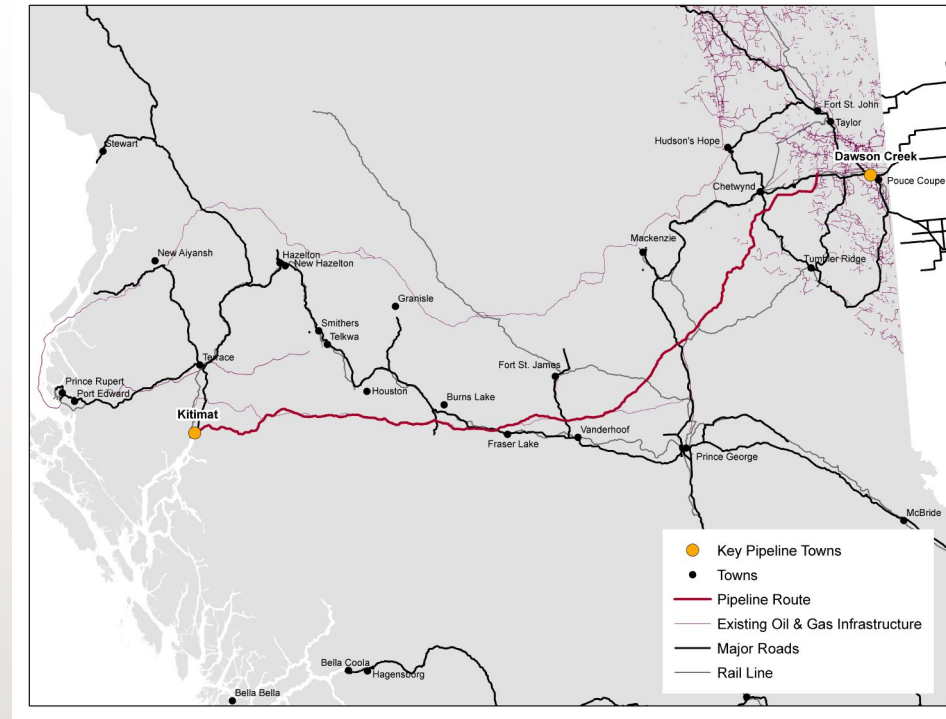
- Most of Canada's natural gas is produced in BC, AB, & SK
- Over half of BC's natural gas reserves and current production comes from the Montney unconventional gas play



<https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/nrg/sttstc/ntrlgs/rprt/2017lngmrkt/cndsIngIndscp-eng.html?&wbdisable=true>

# “LNG Canada” promises

- 7,500 jobs during construction; 800 jobs during operation
- \$94 million in municipal & regional taxes during construction; \$1.6 billion in annual provincial revenues during operation
- \$8 billion in goods & services during construction; \$200 million annually during operation



Prepared for CIRC by Aita Bezzola, September 2018



# The processing facility and export terminal

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- Kitimat, BC (pop. 6,400 in 2016)
- Unceded traditional territory of the Haisla First Nation
- Situated on an inlet of the Douglas Channel
- Which offers access to the Pacific Ocean and Asia



Looking towards Douglas Channel, Kitimat, BC, July 2018 (photo M. Sax)



# BENEFITS & BURDENS

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- Scale, time, domain
- Social location



<https://www.edwardburtynsky.com/projects/photographs/oil>

## Scale

- International shareholders
- National & regional governments
- Municipalities & communities
- Individuals

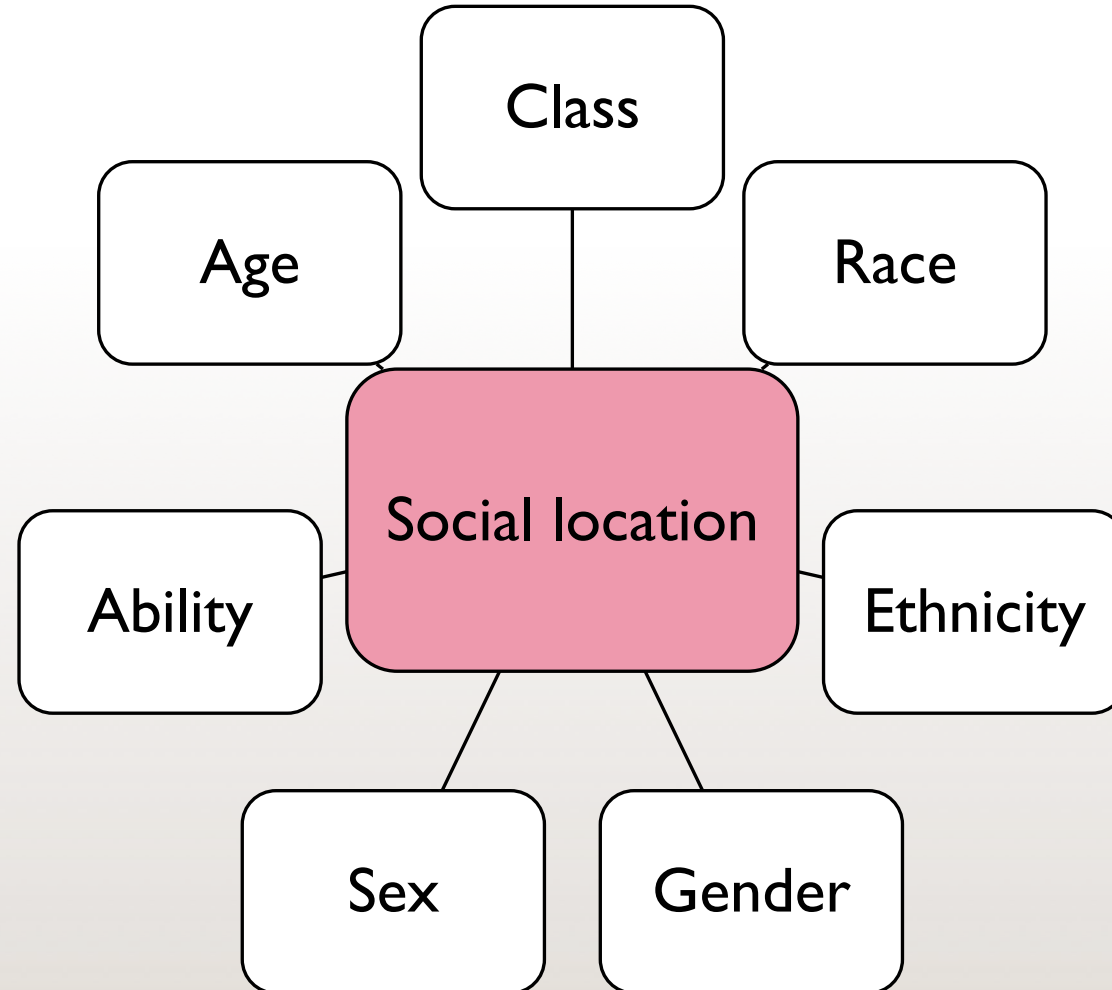
## Time

- Life-cycle of single project
- Accumulation of multiple projects throughout region over many more decades

## Domain

- Economy
- Environment
- Human health
- Society
- Holistic view across domains





# CONCLUSION

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Stop sign, Smithers, BC, July 2018 (photo M. Sax)

# THANKS

## Department of Anthropology & Research Supporters

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CIRC  
The Cumulative Impacts  
Research Consortium



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

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