Protest as More-than-human Diplomatic Assemblage: Interrogating the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s Diplomatic Relations with the Public and the U.S. Government

WSGL2
2018

Word Count: 11991
Supervisor: Dr Alan Ingram

This research dissertation is submitted for the MSc in Environment, Politics and Society at University College London.
Abstract

Interest in the diplomatic practices of indigenous peoples has been growing in recent years (Beier, 2007; 2009a). However, to date, this research has remained rooted in conventional understandings of diplomacy, seeing it as a form of negotiation between two distinct polities. This research seeks to address this limitation. By drawing upon material diplomacy and popular geopolitics literatures, it shall move towards an understanding of indigenous diplomacy as assembled, emergent and relational. Specifically, it shall focus on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST) of North America and their efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline, which they argued obscured their right to self-determination. A key aspect of their campaign involved a protest outside the White House in Washington D.C. This protest is articulated as a form of diplomatic practice where the SRST performed their indigenous nationality and sovereign rights to the U.S. State to assert their right to an official diplomatic meeting with the President. This research shall critically interrogate the composition of this diplomatic encounter, exploring it’s build up, realisation and demise through online and offline spheres. This encounter did not only involve two polities; multiple foreign publics and non-human actants were integral to its realisation. As such, the encounter will be shown as an assemblage of assemblages composed of myriad relations between governmental/public, human/nonhuman, online/offline and material/discursive elements. Lastly, the disassembling or ‘de-actualisation’ of this diplomatic event is considered. This research is based upon a combined methodology, including a systematic review of contextual documents, analysis of videos and images, and manual mining of social media posts made by the SRST and the public before the protest. These posts were both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. The conclusion makes theoretical observations about the impact of social media on the diplomatic arena and the importance of academic attention therein.

Word Count: 11991
I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Alan Ingram, for his academic guidance and support in my writing of this work. I am also grateful to my friends and family for their encouragement and interest in my research.
Appendices 4: Table of Raw Data (Truncated) ................................................................. 82
Appendix 5: Video Ethnography Data ............................................................................. 84
List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Standing Rock ................................................................. 8
Figure 2: Images of Native Dress ............................................................. 25
Figure 3: Images of Signs at Protest ....................................................... 26
Figure 4: Image of Tipis on the Washington Mall ................................... 27
Figure 5: Image of Tipi Meeting .............................................................. 29
Figure 6: General Assembly Meeting at the UN ..................................... 29
Figure 7: Standing Rock Instagram Post of Madelaine Petsch ................ 31
Figure 8: Frequency of Posts Made by Individuals and Organisations .... 32
Figure 9: Frequency of Hashtags Grouped by Theme ............................ 34
Figure 10: Images by Theme ................................................................. 35
Figure 11: Images of Tipis and Washington Monument ......................... 35
Figure 12: Diagram of SRST - Public Diplomatic Relations .................... 37
Figure 13: Diagram of SRST - Public – U.S. Government Diplomatic Relations .......... 38
Figure 14: SRST – Public – U.S. Government More-than-human Diplomatic Relations ...... 40
Figure 15: Followers against Reposts for the Most and Least Reposted Posts ............... 41
Figure 16: Posting against Average Reposts of Most and Least Frequent Posters ............. 42
Figure 17: Frequency of Hashtag Themes in Most and Least Reposted Posts ................ 43
Figure 18: Number of Reposts against Posts Containing Picture ............... 44
Figure 19: Number of Posts Collected on Instagram 24hrs before the March ............. 45
Figure 20: Images of Travel to the March ................................................. 46
Figure 21: Images of Signs Made for the March ........................................ 46
Introduction
Traditionally, diplomacy has been regarded as a state-based activity enacted by ‘diplomats’
to realise their state’s interests (Barston, 2014; Cohen, 1991). However, recently, scholars
have been attending to what has been called ‘new’ or ‘non-state’ diplomacy, broadening the
actors and practices understood to be ‘diplomatic’ (Sending et al., 2011). Of interest here is
the growing attention to the diplomatic tactics of indigenous peoples (see Beier, 2007). While
work in this domain has been noteworthy, the predominant focus has been upon the
interactions between indigenous communities and other governments (Smith & Wilson,
2009; Carlson, 2009; Franke, 2009). Here, diplomacy continues to be envisioned as a form of
negotiation between two polities and thus has failed to provide a radical departure from
traditional conceptualisations of diplomacy. This is problematic as many indigenous peoples
cannot engage in formal diplomatic practices. Often being economically marginalised and
limited in human resources, gaining formal diplomatic skills can be unachievable (McConnell,
2017). Even if indigenous peoples could formally engage with another polity, they may be
refused such an invitation and forced to resort to ‘alternative’ methods of negotiation.

This was clearly the case for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST), who are the focus of my
research. The SRST are a Native American tribe who live within the Standing Rock Sioux
Reservation (see Figure 1) on the border between North Dakota and South Dakota in the
U.S.A. (SRST, 2016a). Since 2015, they have struggled against the approval of the Dakota
Access Pipeline (DAPL), a crude oil pipeline which runs half a mile North of the SRST’s
reservation (DAPL, 2018). The pinnacle moment of their campaign involved a protest outside
the White House. Rather than being an example of conventional environmental activism, I
will show how this protest can be understood as a diplomatic encounter. Here, the SRST
performed their indigenous nationality and sovereign rights to the U.S. State thereby
asserting their right to an official diplomatic meeting. As such, they engaged in a form of pre-
negotiation with President Donald Trump. Rather than being a solo affair, I will show how this
diplomatic encounter was assembled by multiple actors, and thus move beyond the tendency
in indigenous diplomacy literature to focus on relations between two polities.

Firstly, I will consider the role of multiple public actors. I will show how the SRST engaged in
digital public diplomacy by encouraging various publics to protest with them. These publics
and the SRST built a common narrative and agenda online, before coming together in
Washington, D.C. to make demands of the U.S. Government. At this moment the SRST, multiple publics and the U.S. Government entered a multilateral diplomatic relationship. In this way, I will add to recent calls in popular geopolitics to explore the agency of the public in the construction of geopolitical narratives and affairs. Most importantly, I will move beyond conventional understandings of public diplomacy as a two-way exchange of information between a government and a public. Instead, I present a network of governmental and public polities engaging with one another through online and offline spaces.

Secondly, I will consider the importance of non-human actants. I will show how this multilateral diplomatic encounter was not an exclusively human affair but assembled through nonhuman relations. Here, I will draw upon materiality literatures. Critical of an overt focus on social constructionism (Whatmore, 2006), these works have sought to recognise non-human agency and dissolve the bifurcation between human and nonhuman (Whatmore, 2011; Anderson & Wylie, 2009; Bakker & Bridge, 2006; Bennett, 2004; Thrift, 2007; Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005). Specifically, I will draw upon assemblage theory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; DeLanda, 2006) to present the Washington diplomatic encounter as an assemblage of assemblages composed of myriad relations between governmental/public, activist/diplomatic, human/nonhuman, online/offline, material/discursive, technical/embodied, and virtual/non-virtual elements.

My research was based upon a combination of different methods. I first completed a systematic review of newspaper articles, policy documents, court cases and websites relating to the SRST and their battle against the pipeline to build my contextual understanding of the Washington protest and the SRST’s relationship with the U.S. Government. I then analysed videos and images of the Washington protest, unpacking the symbolism and materiality of the event. Much of my research involved collecting social media posts made by ‘the public’ and the SRST before the event. These were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the relations between the SRST, the public, the U.S. Government and nonhuman elements.
My dissertation will use the following structure. I will first review and critique the relevant literature, moving through non-state and indigenous diplomacy research, popular geopolitics and digital diplomacy scholarship, through to work on material geopolitics and more-than-human diplomacy. I will then detail my methodology, before turning to my analysis which is comprised of five main sections. The first section conceptualises the SRST as a distinct polity within the U.S.A., outlines why their opposition to the DAPL was related to self-determination, and introduces the Washington protest. The next three sections consider the protest as a diplomatic encounter, each adding an additional level of complexity to the previous section by introducing a new set of ‘actors’. In this way, the second analysis section details how the SRST engaged in a form of pre-negotiation with the U.S. Government through the Washington protest. The third section considers how the public became involved in this diplomatic encounter, and the fourth interrogates the means through which both the event and its online
build-up were enabled by nonhuman agency. In the fifth section, I reflect on how this event was ‘de-actualised’ by the U.S. Government. Lastly, in the conclusion, I provide some theoretical and methodological remarks about this research and suggestions for future investigations.
Literature Review
Towards Indigenous Diplomacy

Traditionally, diplomacy has been regarded as a negotiating activity exclusive to sovereign states, which is used to realise foreign policy objectives and resolve geopolitical issues in a peaceful manner (Sending, et al., 2011; Barston, 2014; Berridge, 2015; Chatterjee, 2010; Bull, 1997). The practitioners of such negotiations are understood to be official ‘diplomats’ - formally qualified individuals endowed with skills of communication, fostering goodwill, presenting intentions and bargaining (Berridge, 2015). These diplomats act as official representatives of the state, working to guarantee their state’s objectives (Constantinou, 1996; Sending, et al., 2011; Berridge, 2015). While these practices have a much longer history (see Hamilton & Langhorne, 2010), they were first described as ‘diplomatic’ in 1796 when Edmund Burk, a British parliamentarian, proposed the term (Berridge, 2015). Ever since, this understanding of diplomacy has been common across popular, policy and academic spheres (Constantinou, 2016).

However, diplomacy is no longer seen as exclusive to states (Barston, 2014; Constantinou & Der Derian, 2010; Dittmer & McConnell, 2016; Constantinou, 2016). Many scholars see a radically changed diplomatic field involving ‘new’ non-state actors (McConnell & Dittmer, 2018; Christmas, 2012). Meanwhile, others acknowledge a longer history of non-state diplomacy (Sending et al., 2011; Henders & Young, 2016; Beier, 2009a; 2009b). Here, the state-centric view is understood as a dominant framing of diplomacy which has obscured alternatives (Beier, 2009a). Indeed, Constantinou (1996) interrogates the means through which Hans Holbein’s painting, ‘The Ambassadors’, has become emblematic of diplomacy; drawing on Foucault’s (1966) concept of ‘epistemes’, he highlights how diplomatic knowledges are socially constructed, thus making conceptual space for different ways of enacting diplomacy. Crucially, across these works, diplomacy becomes seen as any form of negotiation across difference (Dittmer & McConnell, 2016; Cornago, 2013; Der Derian, 1987; although see Costa, 2007). As Constantinou (2016, p. 25) reminds, “any encounter with otherness can be potentially diplomatized”. This means that diplomacy is no longer exclusive to professional statecraft but can simply involve “a means of getting one’s way, presenting the case for something or promoting the interests of someone” (Constantinou, 2016, p. 24).
Accordingly, diplomacy is uprooted from conventional sites of diplomacy to include new spaces, such as the home and the work-place (Henders & Young, 2016; Constantinou, 2016).

In this vein, a multiplicity of diplomatic actors have been identified, including lawyers; economists (Sending, et al., 2011); religious leaders (Megoran, 2010); NGO’s (Han & Yang, 2017; Betsill & Corell, 2008); cities (Acuto, 2013); Overseas Territories (Adler-Nissen & Gad, 2013; McConnell & Dittmer, 2018); and members of the Unrecognised Nations and Peoples Organisation (McConnell, 2017). Others have attended to ‘paradiplomacy’ which considers how sub-national, regional or local governments can enact foreign policy (Aguirre, 1999; Aldecoa & Keating, 1999; Mamadouh & van der Wusten, 2016; Keating, 1999; Cornago, 1999; 2009). McConnell et al. (2012) used Bhabha’s notion of mimicry to suggest that the Tibetan Government in Exile mimics state-based practices of diplomacy, only to remain unrecognised as legitimate by the international community. Of interest here is scholarship engaging with the diplomatic practices of indigenous peoples. The term ‘indigenous diplomacy’ was coined by Marshall Beier (2009a; also see Beirer, 2007) to emphasise indigenous peoples’ negotiation strategies as a distinct form of non-state diplomacy. While any non-state actors’ views may conflict with those of the state, divisions are often far greater for indigenous people. This is because they usually have deeply spiritual relationships with land which are irreconcilable with the logic of territoriality that has come to define state sovereignty (Beier, 2009a; also see Soguk, 2009). In this way, indigenous people tend to be fundamentally opposed to the logics of the settler state in which they live, rendering them in a position of liminality (see McConnell, 2017), being neither entirely inside nor outside the state. As such, Beier (2009a) maintains that any negotiations between the settler state and indigenous peoples, as distinct polities, should be seen as diplomatic.

Many others have studied indigenous diplomacy and, like Beier (2007; 2009a), such studies remain rooted in conventional understandings of diplomacy, seeing it as a formal activity which takes place between governments (see Smith & Wilson, 2009; Carlson, 2009; Franke, 2009)). Wilson (2007) explores the multilateral diplomatic practices used at the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) and thus moves beyond a two-polity focus. Yet, the ICC is composed of functions such as general assembly meetings, voting on representatives, developing long-term policies and meeting with international organisations like the United...
Nations and Arctic Council. Thus, the emphasis remains upon formal diplomacy. Such an analysis is worthwhile for providing examples of indigenous peoples behaving in similar ways to states in order to successfully further their interests. However, limiting analysis to such accounts is problematic given that formal, ‘state-like’ practices of diplomacy are often unachievable for many indigenous peoples (McConnell, 2017). It also, arguably, reinstates the hegemony of state-based diplomacy by ignoring alternatives.

Meanwhile, other scholars have engaged with a broader understanding of indigenous diplomacy. Foley, et al. (2013) explore the ‘embassy’ assembled by Aboriginal Australians outside the Australian Parliament building using tents, signs and an umbrella. Others outline how indigenous peoples use embarrassment (Lackenbauer & Cooper, 2007), story-telling, ceremonies, oral traditions, feasting (Simpson, 2013), love and cosmology (Costa, 2007) to further their interests and create peaceful relations. Diettrich (2017) describes how tribes of the Chuuk State in Micronesia use chants to restore peace between different communities, demonstrating how music, dance and performance can be diplomatic. These works therefore expand understandings of diplomacy by attending to alternative forms of negotiation. However, many of these studies are historical and thus contemporary ‘alternative’ indigenous diplomacy remains understudied. Moreover, these works generally present indigenous diplomacy as radically dissimilar to state-based diplomacy, which reinforces their binary opposition. Again, these works focus upon how indigenous peoples relate to indigenous or settler governments. Therefore, how indigenous peoples might relate to members of a foreign public to further their interests remains unexplored. Lastly, these accounts concentrate on narratives and description and provide little analysis of the role of materiality in indigenous diplomacy. I therefore seek to combine indigenous diplomacy literature with two other broad areas of scholarship: popular geopolitics and materiality literatures.

Public Agency in Popular Geopolitics & Digital Diplomacy

Critical geopolitical scholars, since the 1980s, have explored how the international arena, rather than being ontologically given, is constructed through realms of power that mobilise particular discourses (Daldy, 1991; Ó Tuathail, 1994; Ó Tuathail et al., 2006; Dodds, et al., 2012). Popular geopolitics, a subset of critical geopolitics, developed as scholars thought
research had been biased towards elite geopolitical discourses and needed grounding in the everyday lives of the public (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). Accordingly, scholars turned to explore the role of popular culture and mass media in the construction of geopolitical realities and geographical imaginations (Ó Tuathail, 2006; Saunders, 2017). Here, various media have been studied including journals (Sharp, 2000); comics (Dittmer, 2005); cinemas (Power & Crampton, 2007); cartoons (Dodds, 2007); and newspapers (McFarlane & Hay, 2003). Scholars now assert that these works render the public mere recipients of geopolitical discourses, rather than agents of their construction (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008; Dittmer & Gray, 2010). In this light, attention has turned to the ways the public interpret and shape ‘the geopolitical’ in popular culture mediums, including films (Dittmer & Dodds, 2013), newspapers (Woon, 2014) and video games (Bos, 2018). However, there remain few studies of the relationships between the public, social media and geopolitics (Saunders, 2017), especially concerning diplomacy.

An interesting point of comparison, therefore, is a broad literature from outside geopolitics exploring the use of social media for diplomatic ends. This has been termed ‘digital diplomacies’ (Bjola & Holmes, 2015; Bjola, 2016); ‘cyber-diplomacy’ (Barston, 2014) or ‘twiplomacy’ (Dumčiuvienė, 2016). Usually, these works attend to online governmental relations with publics or ‘digital public diplomacy’ (Kampf, et al., 2015; although see Duncome, 2017). Public diplomacy is normally defined as a (state) “government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas…institutions…culture…national goals and current policies” (Tuch, 1990, p. 3). Traditionally, public diplomacy occurred through newspapers and radios (Pamment, 2013). Now, governments engage with domestic publics (Kampf, et al., 2015); foreign publics (Melissen & de Keulenaar, 2017); and diasporas (Bravo, 2012) through social media. Due to the ability to ‘follow’, ‘like’, ‘retweet’ and ‘comment’ on posts, the public can speak back to the government. As such, scholars have viewed digital public diplomacy as a dialogue between governments and publics (Ross, 2011; Pamment, 2013) – thus presenting the public as active diplomatic agents. Most of this scholarship, however, is written to help state governments use digital diplomacy most effectively (see Strauß, et al., 2015; Kampf, et al., 2015). There is therefore little critical analysis into the use of digital diplomacy, the power relations at play or the motives behind actions. Furthermore, the emphasis remains on how states perform digital diplomacy, leaving non-state actors unconsidered.
Geopolitical scholars, Pinkerton & Benwell (2014) offer an important piece of scholarship in this regard. Combining efforts from popular geopolitics with ‘new’ media and diplomacy studies, they explore the sovereignty dispute of the Falkland Islands. They describe how Falkland Island citizens use social media to communicate their geopolitical views in what the authors term “citizen statecraft” (P.13). Here, social media allows the citizens to move beyond listening to the U.K. or Argentina claim sovereignty over the Islands and instead allows them to amplify their opinions. They suggest this demonstrates a form of diplomatic practice, where marginal, non-state actors are able to exert geopolitical agency. However, the ways in which the technologies underpinning social media may influence the diplomatic relations remains undeveloped in this work. Elsewhere, popular geopolitics has been critiqued for neglecting materiality (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008; Dittmer & Gray, 2010) and thus I turn to materiality scholarship for ways forward.

More-than-human Diplomatic Assemblages

Material analyses have been slow to mature in critical geopolitics, perhaps due to concern of returning to environmental determinism (Squire, 2015; Dittmer, 2014a), yet recent years have seen some developments (Bryan, 2018). Scholars have attended to nonhuman agency in sovereignty disputes (Squire, 2015); model UN simulations (Dittmer, 2014b); pipeline controversies (Barry, 2013b); climate change (Dalby, 2013); the disruption of airspace (Adey, et al., 2011); war memorials (Waterton & Dittmer, 2014); sea terrain (Squire, 2016), territory (Bridge, 2013; Slesinger, 2018) and, recently, diplomacy. For example, Dittmer (2017;2016), using assemblage theory, moves away from seeing diplomacy as a form of communication between two distinct polities, and instead suggests that diplomatic encounters are convergences of assemblages (Dittmer, 2017). Diplomacy, he contends, is more-than-human, being composed through material and discursive flows of media, objects, bodies and practices. He studies the importance of paper in relation to the British Foreign Office in the 19th century (Dittmer, 2016) and the ways that the U.S. and British Intelligence services interact through more-than-human communication methods (Dittmer, 2017). However, he focuses on the assembling of state diplomatic practices, rather than those of non-states. McConnell & Dittmer (2018), conversely, study the materiality of British Overseas Territories
(OT). While they focus on marginal non-state actors, their research is informed by interviews with British OT representatives and analysis of official policy documents. Therefore, it remains rooted in ‘official’ discourses and actors, rather than spaces of popular culture. Furthermore, neither Dittmer (2016;2017) nor McConnell and Dittmer (2018) explore the role of the public within these diplomatic assemblages – a limitation I seek to address.

My research is guided by assemblage theory as developed by Deleuze & Guattari (1987) and popularised in Geography by DeLanda (2006). Before moving forwards, the following section offers a summary of the main aspects of assemblages. Assemblages are composed of “relations of exteriority” (DeLanda, 2006, p. 10), meaning that each element within the assemblage remains distinct and is not defined by its relations with other elements (DeLanda, 2006; Dittmer, 2017). Equally, these relations mean that assemblages are worth more than the sum of their individual elements (Dittmer, 2014a; Waterton & Dittmer, 2014). Elements within assemblages can have material and discursive qualities (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011; Dittmer 2014a; 2017). Here, “there is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world), the field of representation (the book) and the field of subjectivity (the author)”, instead assemblages are composed of elements from these different realms (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25). This means that the traditional separations between immaterial/material, representation/real, mind/body are broken down (Dittmer, 2014a). Since assemblages are part of a wider web of other assemblages, new elements can leave and join assemblages at any time. Additionally, each element within the assemblage is also an assemblage within its own right (DeLanda, 2006). This multiplicity of relations means that assemblages are complex, emergent systems susceptible to change and evolution. Indeed, as new elements join or leave, assemblages can territorialise (become impermeable, homogenised and delineated), and de-territorialise (become open, chaotic, and porous) (DeLanda, 2006). The introduction or removal of elements in these ways can also change the material or semiotic meaning of the assemblage through processes of coding and decoding (DeLanda, 2006; Dittmer, 2014a; 2017).

Elements of assemblages can be virtual in the sense that they have not yet been, or may never be, ‘realised’ as non-virtual aspects of the assemblage (Waterton & Dittmer, 2014). In other words, assemblages have both capacities (what it might be able to do in the future),
properties (what it does do in the present) and tendencies (the processes which determine which capacities are most likely to become properties) (Dittmer, 2014a; Waterton & Dittmer, 2014). These futuristic virtual elements, or capacities, can still impact the present assemblage in the same way that memories of the past can influence human behaviours. In this sense, they are ‘real’ (Waterton & Dittmer, 2014) . Due to the multiplicity of capacities an assemblage can have, it has many possible futures, or what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call ‘lines of flight’. When virtual elements become non-virtual, processes of deterritorialization/territorialisation and coding/decoding can occur. Perhaps most importantly, agency within assemblages is understood to be relational and emergent, being distributed across all elements of the assemblage and co-produced through their relations. All elements, whether nonhuman or human, have the capacity to ‘act’ and affect change (Waterton & Dittmer, 2014).

Research Questions
Considering the gaps in the literature which I have identified, I have worked to answer the following research questions:

1. In what ways can the SRST be conceptualised as a distinct polity?
2. How do the SRST engage in diplomatic relations with the public and the U.S. state?
3. How is diplomacy assembled across online and offline spheres?
Methodology

My research was based upon a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. I focused on the SRST because of their significant historic and contemporary marginalisation in the U.S.A., their extensive media coverage, and the need to update academic research on the tribe which has remained historical in focus (see Green, 2000). I specifically chose to explore the Washington protest, viewing it as the climax of the SRST’s campaign against the DAPL. To begin, I drew inspiration from Ingram (2008) and completed a systematic review of newspaper articles, policy documents, court cases and archived websites which were relevant to the SRST’s history and campaign. Here, I sought to gain contextual insights into the decisions, sentiments and events which preceded and followed the Washington protest. I also thematically analysed pictures of the event from online articles and completed a virtual ethnographic analysis of videos of the protest from YouTube, which depicted “version[s] of [the] event as it happen[ed]” (Hindmarsh, 2008, p. n/a; Hine, 2000).

Subsequently, I studied the use of social media. I first focused on Standing Rock’s official Twitter, Instagram and Facebook pages. The existence of fake social media pages impersonating the SRST has been noted elsewhere (Kaplan, 2018). Thus, I sought to verify the legitimacy of the pages I used by comparing the number and identity of ‘followers’ (e.g. tribal leaders and members), page ‘bio’ and the posts themselves against the SRST’s official websites. Once verified, I analysed posts within one month of the protest, focusing on the ways the SRST presented themselves and appealed to different public audiences. In total I collected 53 of these posts which were saved in a word file and labelled with a unique post identifier (e.g. <AB>). Later, these were analysed using a discourse analysis approach.

I then considered how the SRST’s views and diplomatic tactics were taken up, responded to and re-configured through ‘public’ interactions on social media. There are few guidelines over sample-size in both social media and assemblage research (Dittmer, 2014a; Snelson, 2013). I limited my analysis to posts made on Twitter and Instagram in the 24hrs before the protest because of the volume of posts therein. I focused on two social media sites to counter any site-specific behaviours and add to new internet research using multi-site methods (see Highfield & Leaver, 2015). I selected Twitter rather than Facebook because of its focus on politics and events. Twitter asks users “What’s happening?”, whereas Facebook asks, “What’s on your mind?”, reflecting its emphasis on opinions (Kampf, et al., 2015, p. 335). I used
Instagram to compliment this data because its focus on imagery could provide different insights. Also, few studies have been conducted on Instagram (Highfield & Leaver, 2015) - a limitation which I wished to respond to. Both Instagram and Twitter had an abundance of relevant posts along with simple privacy settings, where profiles were either public or private (Highfield & Leaver, 2015). Equally, they both use hashtags and other complimentary systems allowing for comparison (Highfield & Leaver, 2015). Unlike Facebook, Twitter and Instagram both provide the option of limiting searches by date, meaning they were more suitable for manual data mining.

Following Rose (2016), I tracked hashtags to collect posts. I followed three hashtags, ‘#consentnotconsultation’, ‘#takethemeeting’ and ‘#nativenationsrise’ as these were created by SRST when first advertising the Washington protest. The frequent uses of these hashtags on both sites meant they were suitable for my research. I focused on original posts rather than reposts to ensure consistency in my sample (see Highfield & Leaver, 2015). Like Strauß, et al. (2015), I took a screenshot of each post in case any were later removed. I located the timestamp for each post and used a Unix timestamp converter to standardise all posts in Universal Time Converted (UTC). Once I collected these posts (423 in total) I labelled them and any images with unique identifiers. I then sequenced them chronologically and compiled a database of all posts and their relevant data including: a unique post identifier (e.g. <100>), time of post, hashtags used, textual content, unique image identifier (e.g. P100), location (e.g. Twitter or Instagram), post creator, number of reposts, likes, views and the URL.

I then used Excel to create graphs, looking for associations, patterns and correlations between different variables. In some instances, I considered all 423 posts, and in others I explored posts with most and least responses. I examined hashtags and images by coding them thematically using a content analysis approach, a strategy used elsewhere (see Strauß, et al., 2015; Kampf, et al., 2015; Rose, 2001). I then completed a virtual ethnography of any video posts aiming to provide a thick description of events (Hine, 2000; 2008). I subsequently analysed the most common picture themes, following Rose (2016), attending to perspective, scale, composition, content, and symbolism. I completed a discourse analysis of the textual content of posts, coding by theme, and repeating the analysis in several iterative phases. By using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods I worked to explore the semiotic and material aspects of the assemblage in offline and online spheres.
Throughout my research process I have kept the following propositions in mind. Firstly, that to study assemblages one should follow inductive rather than deductive reasoning (see Barry, 2013a; Bellanova & Duez, 2012; Slesinger, 2018; Anderson & McFarlane, 2011). I thus worked to keep an open mind about my research. Secondly, that one can never capture the entirety of an assemblage but rather “attempt to capture snapshots of a constantly developing situation in the hope that it can... illuminate the central features and interconnections in international relations” (Cudworth & Hobden, 2011, p. 75). Lastly, that when one studies an assemblage they become a part of it, influencing the results (Dittmer, 2017). In this way, my positionality as an English, white, female student should be acknowledged (see England, 2010; Rose, 1993; 1997) and this written narrative recognised as a partial and situated account (Haraway, 1991).

In terms of ethical considerations, there is little consensus over how to enact ethical research online (Rose, 2016). It is thought that gaining consent from individuals in most online research is unnecessary if posts are made publicly available and the research matter is impersonal (see (Tsuria, et al., 2017; Wheeler, 2017; Rose, 2016; Moreno, et al., 2013). However, social media posts are rarely intended for research use (Rose, 2016) and so in respect for their privacy I have anonymised individuals. In all instances when I have used photographs, I have blurred any identifiable faces, following Highfield and Leaver (2015). All posts saved on my computer will be deleted at the end of the dissertation process.
The SRST, the DAPL and the U.S. – Indigenous Rights to Self-determination

The SRST - a distinct polity

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe can be conceptualised as a distinct polity within the U.S.A. for three main reasons. Firstly, the SRST are estranged from the settler state because of fundamental historic and contemporary philosophical divides. Before European colonisation, the SRST lived within an extensive area of land across South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, Wyoming and Nebraska (SRST, 2016a). Due to an understanding of land being sacred and incompatible with ownership, they lived a nomadic lifestyle guided by principles of transversality. During European colonisation this lifestyle was interpreted as ‘backwards’ and ‘primitive’; the land was thought unclaimed, ‘permitting’ the European settlers to create their ‘own’ territory (Soguk, 2009). Today, most federally recognised Native Americans live within reservations (demarcated territories) which are radically incompatible with their ancestral beliefs (see Beier, 2009a; Soguk, 2009). Indeed, the spiritual connections with land remain strong: as the SRST (2016d) remind, “the land is an important part of the Lakota/Dakota people’s lives”. These different conceptualisations of land create a fundamental divide between the U.S. state and the SRST (see Poole, 2004). Here, the SRST appear as “a culturally distinctive [group] that find[s] [itself] engulfed by [the] settler societ[y]” (Anaya, 2004, p. 3). This has left them “aliens within their own land” (Foley, et al., 2013, p. xxv), unable to fully realise their cultural, spiritual and ancestral beliefs. The state cannot meet these needs, and yet the SRST cannot overcome the state. Thus, the tribe occupy a liminal space, being neither fully inside nor outside the settler state (Beier, 2009a; McConnell, 2017; Bruynell, 2007).

Secondly, the SRST can be recognised as a unique body of “people with its own culture, history...way of life” and “traditional language” (SRST, 2016d). While American influences are apparent within the tribe (for example, American English is an official language (SRST, 2016d)), the tribe’s values, ceremonies, rituals, prayers, and recreational activities remain rooted in ancestral tradition. For example, the Lakota/Dakota languages are regularly used; the sacred ceremonies “brought by the White Buffalo Calf Woman” are still practiced; and “social activities such as powwows...are celebrated” (SRST, 2016d). Moreover, their website
tells the story of their people’s oppression since colonisation, suggesting a shared identity as marginalised peoples - a common source of identity formation for indigenous populations (see Anaya, 2004; Poole, 2004). In these ways, the SRST “comprise[s] [a] distinct communit[y] with a continuity of existence and identity that links them to the communities, tribes or nations of their ancestral past” (Anaya, 2004, p. 3).

Moreover, I suggest that these aspects contribute to their sense of being a “nation” (SRST, 2016a). As Poole (2004, p. 94) posits, “it is through culture, language, stories about land and history... modes of dress and communication, common rituals...that individuals form a sense of themselves belonging to a nation”. Fixing the definition of a ‘nation’ is problematic “because any definition will legitimate some claims and delegitimate others” (Calhoun, 1993, p. 216; also see Hosmer & Nesper, 2016). However, nations are (in part) “an imagined political community”, where prolific stories and symbols cause even isolated peoples to feel a shared sense of belonging to a distinctive whole (Anderson, 1991, p. 6; also see Smith, 2001; Hosmer & Nesper, 2016). While Anderson (1991) asserts the importance of the printing press and radio for creating a communal identity and memory in European nationalism, the collective sense of identity among the SRST appears related to the oral tradition, where the “tribal history” is passed down by “the Elders” (SRST, 2016d). Here, nationalism emerges through human networks of relation (see Kaufmann, 2017). I suggest that the materiality of cultural objects (such as native dress) and practices (such as the powwow) also allow this nationalist sentiment to emerge (see Balthazar, 2017).

Thirdly, and most importantly, the U.S.A has recognised the tribe as a “sovereign nation”, with their own territory, through the Fort Laramie treaties of 1851 and 1868 (SRST, 2016a). These treaties, “established the original boundaries of the Great Sioux Nation” and “recognised [their] rights as a sovereign government” (SRST, 2016d). The 1868 treaty replaced the 1851 treaty and maintained that the Great Sioux Reservation territory would be for the “absolute and undisturbed use and occupation of the Sioux nation” (SRST, 2016b). It gave the Sioux jurisdiction over all reservation lands and waterways (SRST 2016a); and affirmed that no land could be occupied by non-Indians without their consent (SRST 2016b). These treaty rights have since been violated (see Appendix 3), yet the SRST (2016a) maintain that these “binding documents” should “remain steadfast and just as applicable today”. At the same time, the SRST demonstrates self-government. They have their own constitution (SRST, 2016c) and a
tribal council, composed of elective representatives, to “[provide] leadership and administrative direction to the tribe” (SRST, 2016a). They aspire towards “self-sufficiency of all tribal members” (SRST, 2016c) and provide many of their own services, including schools, housing, water, domestic energy supplies and a telephone company (SRST, 2016d). In these ways, the SRST can be understood as a distinct political entity with the legal and technical means to practice self-government. However, they maintain that their ability to govern their people and territory has been compromised by the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

The Dakota Access Pipeline – a threat to self-determination

The DAPL is a North American crude oil pipeline launched by Dakota Access (a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Partners) in 2015 (DAPL, 2018). The pipeline crosses Lake Oahe, half a mile north of the SRST’s reservation. The SRST have been opposed to the pipeline’s construction here because it affects their ability to practice self-determination. Since 2007, indigenous peoples are recognised as having a right to self-determination under the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Franke, 2009). Self-determination is a broad (admittedly vague) term which is used to express a people’s right to plan their own political, economic, cultural and social future within contemporary socio-economic, environmental and geopolitical contexts (Murphy, 2004; Unrecognised Nations and People Organisation, 2018a). Often conflated with state secession, it can include a range of outcomes, with the emphasis being upon the people’s right to decide their future (see UNPO, 2018b; United Nations Association U.K, 2016; Tennant, 1994). For indigenous peoples, self-determination is often a desire to move beyond state domination and control, towards a relationship of “mutual recognition and respect” (Murphy, 2004, p. 274; also see Gilbert, 1993), and having “real power over their territories, peoples and resources” (ibid. p. 279).

The SRST, as indigenous peoples, theoretically have a right to self-determination. Yet the pipeline obscures this right in three main ways. Firstly, while the DAPL environmental assessment claimed oil spill risks were low, the SRST have been concerned about potential spills contaminating their water supply (SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al., 2017; Martinez, 2017; DAPL & SRST, 2014). They maintain that water is “vital to... the maintenance of a permanent Tribal Homeland for the members of the Standing Rock Nation” (SRST, 2017). An oil spill could cause catastrophic damage to their water with significant cultural, economic,
social and religious impacts for both current and future generations. Importantly, the pipeline obscures the SRST’s ability to practice water governance which they maintain is “an exercise of inherent sovereign power of [their] self-government” (SRST, 2017). Here, protecting their water supply is recognised as paramount. Thus, it is unimportant to the SRST whether contamination risks are low; they wish to govern their water. Secondly, the pipeline crosses the SRST’s spiritually and culturally important ancestral burial grounds. The 1992 amendment to the National Historic Preservation Act requires “federal agencies to consult with Indian tribes when they attach religious and cultural significance to a historic property regardless of the location of that property” (Meyer, 2016). Yet, the SRST maintain that they were not involved in any assessments of the land (SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al., 2017). Crucially, the burial grounds have since been destroyed (Earth Justice, 2017a), which the SRST claim has limited their ability to maintain their cultural and spiritual lineage (DAPL & SRST, 2014). Thirdly, the SRST asserts that the pipeline was built on unceded treaty territory and thus violates their treaty rights (St Louis Post-Dispatch, 2017; Martinez, 2017) (see Figure 1). The U.S. recognises Lake Oahe as federally owned (DAPL, 2018), referencing the 1889 Allotment Act as the most recent demarcation of the SRST’s territory (see Appendix 3). However, the SRST see the Allotment Act as an unlawful violation of the 1868 treaty (SRST, 2016a). Ultimately, the pipeline upsets the SRST’s ability to decide how their future resources, populations, cultures and territory will be governed, and thus prevents their self-determination.

Marching on Washington, D.C.

Since Lake Oahe is purportedly federally owned, Dakota Access needed an easement from the U.S. Army Corps to complete the pipeline (DAPL, 2018). Under the Obama Administration, the Justice, Army and Interior departments asked DAPL to voluntarily stop construction while they reviewed the tribe’s allegations (Department of Justice, 2016; Milman, 2016; Silvy, 2016; SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al., 2016a). Later, they withheld the easement until a full environmental assessment and tribal consultation had been completed (U.S. Army Corps, 2016). Yet, following the instructions of newly elected President Donald Trump (Trump, 2017) the federal government reaffirmed that risks to the tribe were minimal and thus granted the easement. Soon after, in June 2017, the pipeline became operational (The Gazette, 2018).
Fundamentally, as the U.S. Government had the decision-making power over the pipeline, the SRST had to engage with them to halt it.

After all other methods had failed (e.g. Camp Ocetti demonstrations (see Colonist, 2017) and ‘Tweeting’ Donald Trump (see @StandingRockST, 2017)), the SRST used social media to organise a series of events in the American Capital. These included a ‘Native Nations Camp’ on the Washington Mall, where Tipis were raised beneath the Washington Monument, and rallies at the Environmental Protection Agency and the Trump International Hotel (St Louis Post-Dispatch, 2017; The Real News Network, 2017). The finale of these events was a ‘Native Nations March’ which took place on the 10th March 2017 outside the White House.

A Diplomatic Encounter between the SRST and the U.S. Government

Protest as pre-negotiation

Rather than being a form of conventional activism, I contend that the Washington march was a form of pre-negotiation between the SRST and the U.S. State. Pre-negotiation is conventionally defined as the process through which polities come to an agreement that future, official diplomatic negotiations would be beneficial to them both (see Berridge, 2015).

A central motive for the SRST in holding the protest was to secure a meeting with the U.S. Government. As the Tribal Council highlights, “We are marching because we want the new President and our new Administration to #takethemeeting.” Moreover, it was clear that the protest was directed at the U.S. Government. Routledge (1996) asserts that social movements are almost exclusively directed at states. Yet the deliberate targeting of the government could not be clearer in this instance, since the protest occurred directly outside the White House. Since they were not welcomed into the ‘official’ diplomatic spaces of the Presidential building, the SRST remained outside, creating an ‘alternative’ space of diplomacy (see McConnell, 2017).

Here, the tribe used the protest to demonstrate to the U.S. Government why they deserved a meeting. The communicative role of protests has been considered elsewhere; social movements are understood as improvised or scripted performances which communicate the views of activists and allow alternative subjectivities, meanings and realities to emerge (Dawson, 2012; Juris, 2015). I suggest that the Washington protest was a performance of the SRST’s indigenous nationality and sovereign rights. Many wore native dress (see Figure 2). For
example, two men wore a “contemporary interpretation of traditional clothing of [their] ancestors” (Video 34, notes). The communicative power of clothing has long been noted (Benjamin, 1982; Wilson, 1985; Maffesoli, 1995; Entwistle, 2000), and here it conveyed indigenous culture, historic ties to the land, and nationality.

Figure 2: Images of Native Dress

Others danced and sang: “a man...jumps from foot to foot, spinning... matching the rhythm of a nearby drum and men singing ‘heyowah, heyowah!’” (video 34, notes). Song and dance are recognised as powerful tools of expression for marginalised communities (Dawson, 2012). These uses of music were manifestations of indigenous culture and “a conscious raising tool to a nation’s moral, political and social problems” (Makina, 2009, p. 221). Furthermore, most protesters carried signs, engraved with slogans such as “We exist, we resist, we rise”; “recognise indigenous peoples rights” or “indigenous sovereignty” (see Figure 3). Slogans, being concise, are highly effective communicative tools able to “lodge themselves in people’s conscious memories” (Downing, et al., 2001, p. 159). These signs asserted their indigenous status, their right to exist and their right to sovereignty. Equally, during the protest, Tipis stood upon the Washington Mall (see Figure 4). These Tipis were another illustration of indigenous culture, and their location on the Washington Mall evoked a territorial invasion that demanded recognition of the SRST’s historic ties to the land. Importantly, through these objects and practices the SRST communicated their national views, demands and aspirations to the U.S. State and thus, in negotiating across estrangement (see Constantinou, 2016), they engaged in diplomatic practice.
Figure 3: Images of Signs at Protest

Image b

Image c
Tipi meetings as pre-negotiation

Before the protest, Tipi meetings were held with sympathetic Senators, such as Bernie Sanders and Jeff Merkley, which can be read as another instance of pre-negotiation. Here, they discussed “how [they] can work together” (<280>), reflecting the meetings’ negotiation purposes. Figure 5 shows such a meeting: actors are gathered in a circle, heads turned whilst listening to a speaker. This image is evocative of UN meetings (Figure 6). However, differences are evident: the UN meeting occurs in a room furnished with ornate lights and large paintings, with guests seated around a circular table. The simpler Tipi, conversely, is sunlit and hosts a ring of cross-legged attendants sitting upon a carpet of grass. This meeting is thus reflective
of Bhabha’s (1994) hybrid. Indeed, the SRST appear to mimic state-based diplomatic practices, being “almost the same but not quite” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126). As Bilgrin (2008, p. 6) reflects, mimicry “may be a way of ‘doing’ world politics in a seemingly ‘similar’ yet unexpectedly ‘different’ way”. These meetings can be read as a performance of the SRST’s desired political status as a sovereign entity which diplomatically engages with U.S. federal officials.

Betwixt and between diplomacy & activism

Here, the practices of diplomacy were extended. Largely, the SRST’s desire for pre-negotiation rested on an ambition for self-determination and sovereignty. While diplomacy is often thought of as an activity enacted by the already sovereign, this example shows how non-state actors can use diplomacy with the hope of becoming sovereign. Further, at the protests, instead of relying on dialogue, as is common in state diplomacy, the SRST used embodied practices and visual symbols as communicative tools of negotiation. In contrast to ‘official’ diplomats, who are said to be endowed with tact, charisma and charm (Berridge, 2015), the SRST arrived, uninvited and undesired—akin to the Aboriginal Tent Embassy (see Foley, et al., 2013) – demanding recognition of their sovereignty and their right to a meeting. However, their pursuit—a meeting with the government—was akin to traditional understandings of diplomacy. Additionally, they held meetings with Senators, mimicking state-based practices of diplomacy. Overall, they dwelled between the spaces of the diplomat and the activist (see McConnell, 2017) and betwixt state and non-state diplomatic practices. They used ‘alternative’ diplomatic tactics to overcome their lack of access to those that are ‘official’, traditional and state-based, while also aspiring to engage in those very same, ‘out-of-reach’ practices. This unsettles ideas of indigenous diplomacy as always being the same as (see Wilson, 2007), or radically distinct from state-based diplomatic practices (see Costa, 2007; Diettrich, 2017). Instead, it suggests that indigenous diplomacy may be realised differently due to unequal power relations with the state. Here, the SRST were neither resistant to, nor absorbed within state-based diplomatic practice, unsettling the binary between indigenous and state-based diplomacy (see Sharp, 2013). Interestingly, the SRST also used digital public diplomacy—another state-like diplomatic tactic—which I shall now consider.
Diplomatic Relations between the SRST, the Public and the U.S. Government

Engaging with foreign ‘publics’

Before the Washington march, the SRST had been engaging with the publics of foreign nations through social media. Mostly, this involved regularly explaining their motives for the march.
For example, “We seek respect for our treaty rights: this includes consent over the fate of disputed lands” (Post <AC>); “it’s not a matter of if the pipeline breaks, but when” (<AM>). Here, the internet enabled a marginalised polity to mobilise support (Niezen, 2005). As such, social media was a “weapon of the weak” (Pinkerton & Benwell, 2014, p. 19), which allowed the SRST to present their national views, struggles and ambitions, while exerting geopolitical agency.

They also used social media to ask people to join them at the march. Here, they targeted “Native Relatives across Turtle Island [U.S.A.]”, asking them to “rise with [them]” (<AH>). They persuaded: “All differences aside, our priority since the beginning has been to defend our land and our right to clean water. We want all nations...to...join us in Washington... It is imperative for our children, for our future and for our Mother Earth” (<AT>). Here, they spoke to “all nations”, using the pronoun “our” to remind them of their shared historic and contemporary fights to protect their environments and communities. They asked these nations to put their “differences aside” and unite. This language is akin to ‘strategic essentialism’ where individual and cultural differences are overlooked in the hope of creating a pan-indigenous movement (Spivak, 1996).

At the same time, they appealed to the public of the settler state. They claimed that “we all have a role to play” (<AM>). Here, they made all actors responsible for their problem, whether they were citizens of settler or indigenous communities, members of governments or companies. They mobilised support through celebrities, such as American actress Madelaine Petsch (see Figure 7), to gain publicity among the American public. Rather than appealing to a shared history of marginalisation, they acknowledged a collective need to overcome environmental issues, maintaining that supporting indigenous people would help alleviate those problems. Indeed, they stated that “indigenous rights mean climate justice” (<BE>). Here, they appealed to the American public through popular culture and by aligning their ambitions with those of environmental activists.
By addressing other indigenous peoples and the American public in these ways, the SRST were engaging with the publics of foreign nations. Indeed, as a distinct polity within the U.S.A., the SSRT are estranged from the publics of other indigenous nations and the American public. Thus, conversing with these actors can be interpreted as digital public diplomacy; and another means of mimicking a ‘new’ state-based diplomatic practice (see Kampf, et al., 2015; Bjola & Holmes, 2015). However, the SRST were not simply communicating their “nation's ideas and ideals” (Tuch, 1990, p. 3) to gain acceptance among a foreign public, as public diplomacy is conventionally defined (see Roberts, 2007; Cull, 2008). Rather, the SRST were asking the public to join them at the march and realise the SRST’s national goals. Thus, they used public diplomacy to inform and engage these actors.
The online public response

A multiplicity of actors responded by conveying their support online. Many indigenous people posted including members of the North American Cheyenne (Post <394>) and Cherokee (<214>) tribes; “the indigenous peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon” (<59>); “Columbia’s U’wa indigenous people” (<222>); and “Brazil’s indigenous leaders” (<149>). They also received support from Europeans (<385>) and the U.S. public, such as Individual 215 - “an ignorant citizen” of America (<348>). U.S. Senators including Jeff Merkley (<280>) and Bernie Sanders also expressed support. Thus, members from various nationalities posted. While most supporters were individual citizens (see Figure 8), the SRST was backed by a range of national, transnational and global organisations such as Human Rights Watch (<249>), 350.org (<127>), We Keep the Beat (<78>); the American Jewish World Service (<196>), Friends Committee on National Legislation (<92>) and the United Church of Christ (<134>). These individual and collective actors are here conceptualised as members of multiple publics.

Figure 8: Frequency of Posts Made by Individuals and Organisations
These publics used social media to reveal their opinions about the SRST’s situation. For example, Individual 16 “stands” with the tribe because of the importance of safeguarding “Sites of Consciousness around the world [which]... preserve the stories and rights of indigenous people” (<18>). Others emphasised indigenous people’s “inherent rights” to protect “Unci Maka” (Grandmother Earth), water supplies (<191>), and their “future generations” (<180>, <365>, <5>). Several acknowledged a need to “support the sovereign rights of First Nations” (<261>, <316>), “honour the treaties” (<332>); and preserve the indigenous people’s right to existence – as Individual 215 describes, “[This is] a battle cry for... the literal right to exist” (<348>). These opinions mirrored the demands made on the SRST’s website and social media pages. This challenges Fenton and Barassi’s (2011) notion that messages underpinning political movements are contradicted when adopted by multiple actors online. Importantly, these actors “engage[d]...with the world of Statecraft” through social media (Pinkerton & Benwell, 2014, p. 18). In contrast to earlier popular geopolitics work (see Dittmer & Dodds, 2008), the public, in posting their opinions, were as active as the SRST in the construction of the geopolitical narratives surrounding the tribe.

An emerging narrative of indigenous rights

Indeed, a cohesive, unified narrative developed from this online network which asserted Standing Rock as an indigenous, sovereign nation with inherent rights to protect their environment, land, culture, current and future generations. While individual posters often focused on a specific aspect of Standing Rock’s plight, collectively, they mentioned the SRST’s main demands. From here, a discourse of the SRST’s rights, as an indigenous, sovereign nation, to self-determination emerged. This pattern was also seen in the most common hashtag themes. Given that hashtags develop socially, it takes time for a hashtag to become the defining tag for a given event (Highfield & Leaver, 2015). This means that a graph of individual hashtag use appears scattered. When hashtags are grouped by theme, a clear depiction of the important messages across social media can be seen. Indeed, Figure 9 shows that hashtags commonly referred to Standing Rock’s indigeneity and their indigenous rights, as well as their need to protect water and prevent the DAPL pipeline. By far, the most common hashtag theme reflected the SRST’s status as a Nation. Implicit within such assertions are beliefs of Standing Rock’s rights to sovereignty and self-determination.
Images were also central to the narrative that emerged. Figure 10 shows the most common image types across the 24hrs. The second most common photograph type was of a Tipi - a symbol of indigenous nationality and culture. The frequency of these pictures was thus another assertion of the nationality of Standing Rock. The most common picture type depicted a Tipi next to the Washington Monument (see Figure 11). Here, a symbol of the indigenous people’s nationality was compared against a symbol of the U.S.A.’s nationhood. In these photos, the Tipis, which were significantly smaller than the Washington Monument, were deliberately scaled to be the same size as, or larger than, the Washington Monument. I suggest this perspective was used to portray indigenous people’s claims to sovereignty and self-determination as being equally valid as those of the U.S.A.
Figure 10: Images by Theme

Figure 11: Images of Tipis and Washington Monument
Ultimately, in these ways, a similar narrative to the one performed at the march can be traced online. Here, too, the narrative reflected Standing Rock as an indigenous nation deserving full respect for their sovereign and indigenous rights to self-determination.

Networked public diplomacy

Importantly, while diplomacy has conventionally been regarded as communication between two distinct geopolitical entities (Dittmer, 2017), here, diplomatic relations occurred between multiple polities. Firstly, the SRST were not speaking to one public, but the publics of many foreign nations, as well as their own domestic public. While others have considered ways in which indigenous groups come together in pan-indigenous movements through diplomatic relations (see Wilson, 2007), here, the communication occurred over multiple borders of estrangement, bringing native/non-native, individual/organisation and government/public actors together into one movement. Secondly, these public actors not only engaged with the SRST, but spoke to each other, commenting on, reposting and liking each other’s posts. Rather than the SRST being the sole mobiliser for action, the public also encouraged others to support the SRST. For example, Human Rights Watch maintained that “Standing Rock’s next stand deserves our support” (<249>); and We Keep the Beat explained, “[SRST] are asking us all to learn and support” (<78>). An American citizen asked, “if you can [march], please – do” (<348>). These actors addressed their online followers and asked them to “support” SRST. In doing so, they expanded the network of people involved, mobilising more support. Thirdly, some directly posted to President Trump: “I stand with [Standing Rock] and I demand the law to be restored @realDonaldTrump” (<132>); “@RealDonaldTrump please #TakeTheMeeting” (<391>). Here, the public spoke for the SRST, asking the federal government to meet them and renew their sovereign rights. While scholars have explored how public diplomacy can be dialogic, the focus has remained on how social media allows a two-way exchange of geopolitical information (Ross, 2011; Pamment, 2013). In these instances, rather than an exchange of information between a government and a public; multiple publics were addressed who in turn addressed others across multiple borders of estrangement. This meant that communication flowed in multiple directions and actors were connected through multiple, networked relations (see Figure 12).
These networked diplomatic relations came to their climax at the Washington march. Here, the SRST stood amongst thousands of others, including members from 380 Native Nations, international and local organisations, and members of the U.S. public (Heim, 2017). As described earlier, this march can be understood as a form of pre-negotiation, where the SRST worked to demonstrate that they were deserving of an official meeting with the U.S. Government. Rather than being a solo affair, this act was co-produced with the public members who attended. Spurred by weeks of online communication, the SRST and public
members had come to share a unified message and common agenda that reasserted the right of the Standing Rock community and other native nations to self-determination. By collecting together in this way, they amplified the SRST’s voice to encourage recognition of indigenous rights and the necessity of a meeting with the President. Here, the SRST and these publics spoke together to demand more from the U.S. Government. Thus, rather than demonstrating another two-way relationship, the SRST, multiple publics and the U.S. Government were brought into a multilateral relationship with each other. This relationship is summarised in Figure 13. As shall now be demonstrated, however, this multilateral diplomacy was also composed through relations with nonhuman elements.

Figure 13: Diagram of SRST - Public – U.S. Government Diplomatic Relations
Assembling Diplomatic Encounters

Online diplomatic relations and nonhuman actants

The diplomatic encounters discussed thus far were not only human affairs but were enabled by nonhuman agency. While agency has conventionally been defined in humanist terms as the ability to act (see Giddens, 1984), the ‘posthuman turn’ has broadened this understanding. Now, scholars maintain that human agency is dependent upon nonhuman ‘actants’, which have their own agency (see Haraway, 1991; Braun & Whatmore, 2010; Squire, 2015; Dalby, 2013; Lorimer, 2006; Graham, 2010; Bellanova & Duez, 2012). As Waterton and Dittmer (2014, p. 125) remind, “non-human agents may lack the...consciousness of their human counterparts, but without their collaboration human agency is limited”. From this perspective, agency is no longer ontologically given, but seen as emergent from assemblages, developing through complex relations between nonhuman/human, semiotic/material, organic/inorganic, virtual/non-virtual elements (Whatmore, 2006; Whatmore, 2011; Braun, 2003; Lorimer, 2012). These assemblages are said to be characterised by a ‘flat’ ontology where agency is distributed (more-or-less) evenly across elements of the assemblage (Dittmer, 2017).

In this light, the online diplomatic relations which occurred between the SRST and public members were assembled in conjunction with nonhuman agency (see Figure 14). The ability to like, repost, share and comment on each other’s posts enabled the extensive, dialogic support network to develop and ultimately become a political movement with a common agenda. As Niezen (2005, p. 546) maintains, “the internet is able to give shape and substance to political relationships that might otherwise be only fleeting”. Moreover, hashtags played an active role in forming relations between people, their posts and political ideals. Most posts included at least one hashtag. When a user included a hashtag in their post, it became connected to others of the same topic or event. In this way, hashtags allowed communities to form, bringing those concerned with the same issue together and enabling them to respond to each other’s posts quickly and easily (see Highfield & Leaver, 2015). For example, some posts used hashtags which related to the Keystone pipeline, such as #noKXL (used 15 times). This pipeline transports oil from Canada to the U.S. and is challenged by Aboriginal Canadians and environmentalists. By using this hashtag alongside ones relating to the DAPL,
associations were made between the two movements, adding to both their online followers and political momentum.

Figure 14: SRST – Public – U.S. Government *More-than-human* Diplomatic Relations

Furthermore, social media are composed through “underlying infrastructures...such as algorithms” (Melissen & de Keulenaar, 2017, p. 295). These mechanisms influence which posts become most prevalent on people’s social media pages. On Instagram, algorithms determine how many people see a given post based on the post's immediate impact among a selected audience. If a post is successful amongst the initial audience, it is shown to more users. Both Instagram and Twitter use algorithms which rank posts in terms of relevance to users (Luck, 2018), in the sense that people “become trapped in a bubble of [their] self-declared preferences” (Thrift, 2014, p. 1263). What these algorithms mean is that the ability
for the SRST to reach and engage with public members through social media was mediated by nonhuman agency.

Moreover, these algorithms favour posts with more likes and reposts and acquiring such successes is influenced by nonhuman actants. Figure 15 shows there was little correlation between a poster’s online ‘following’ and their number of reposts, reflecting that a person’s popularity did not guarantee a successful post. Additionally, a user’s posting frequency did not influence their average number of reposts (Figure 16). This suggests that human effort was no assurance of gaining a strong post response. When comparing the themes across the most and least reposted posts (Figure 17), both unsuccessful and successful posts referred to similar issues, showing how the political message did not determine its response.

Figure 15: Followers against Reposts for the Ten Most and Ten Least Reposted Posts
Figure 16: Posting Frequency against Average Reposts for Ten Most and Ten Least Frequent Posters
However, posts which had a picture received far more reposts than those without (Figure 18). This reflects the affective quality of images which can induce human emotion and action (see Pinkerton & Benwell, 2014; Clough, 2008). Rather than being based on popularity, effort or sentiment, images seem more powerful determinants of a post’s success. While the user chose to attach a photo, any successful reposts were clearly a more-than-human achievement. Given that the algorithms show successful posts to larger audiences, an exponential feedback loop may have developed, causing such posts to become increasingly popular. In all, this shows that the popularity of a post, and its ability to influence people and
form diplomatic relations, was not only dependent upon human agency but also upon a web of technical infrastructures.

**Figure 18: Number of Reposts against Posts Containing Picture for Five Most and Five Least Reposted Posts**

Equally, the ability for people to use social media was dependent upon the materiality of their bodies and environments. People needed electronically charged homes, phones, laptops and internet, and were thus reliant on wide-scale material infrastructures of energy and communication (see Amin, 2014; Graham, 2010; Graham & Martin, 2001). At the same time, fingers typed messages and liked posts; eyes read and remembered; emotions registered and motivated. Using social media is an *embodied* practice. Figure 19 shows how posting peaked and fell around people’s sleep and work patterns, reflecting how using social media is not simply a discursive construct of people’s minds but dependent on their functioning bodies and homes. This upsets any notions of the ‘online’ being a place-less space separate to an ‘offline’ placed reality, and instead shows the interconnected nature of these two spheres (see Meek, 2013). Without social media and the technical and embodied practices enabling it, the relationships between the public and the SRST would not have assembled with a common narrative as they did.
Pre-negotiation as more-than-human

The Washington diplomatic encounter also emerged through many relations between nonhuman/human elements. Without the online networks outlined above, the protest may never have occurred or been much smaller and less politically unified. Further, the protest was assembled by webs of transport infrastructure: many had to travel to Washington in trains (<411>, <281>), cars (<157>, <147>), buses (<313>) and planes (<331>) (see Figure 20). The cultural symbols, clothing, and signs which people used at the march had material, affective qualities which allowed the semiotic values within the diplomatic performance of indigenous nationality and sovereign rights to emerge. Moreover, these items had to be sourced. Some “purchased” (<366>) items online and thus drew upon networks of production and consumption (<229>, <301>). Others made signs (see Figure 21) or created apparel by “sewing...my first ribbon skirt” (<170>) or “beading on the train” (<411>), becoming involved in networks of ancestral, embodied knowledge. Accordingly, the protest was reliant upon assemblages of resources, commodities and practices of craft. Equally, virtual elements, as described by Deleuze & Guattari (1987), influenced the diplomatic encounter. The public and the SRST believed in a new future and were filled with hope. For example, Individual 244 was “smiling with anticipation about a new dawn that will bring tribes together to stand strong,
to be visible... heard and... honoured” (<381>). Here, the imagination of a “new dawn” impacted the present by encouraging people to hope for a change in the status quo. It is debatable whether any actors would have attended the march without this vision. Overall, the march was enabled by many nonhuman relations.

Figure 20: Images of Travel to the March

Figure 21: Images of Signs Made for the March

Therefore, the Washington diplomatic encounter – understood as a form of pre-negotiation - can be seen as a socio-technical assemblage, which was itself comprised of multiple assemblages of assemblages converging upon one another. The march was a coming together of online networked relations, transport infrastructure, cultural symbols and the networks of their production, imaginations of new futures, bodies, emotions and demands. It was configured through a combination of online and offline activities, thus reinforcing Meek’s (2013) critique of the bifurcation between these spheres. It was a meeting of multiple political entities: the U.S. Government, the U.S. public, the publics of Native Nations, international and local organisations and the SRST Government. These entities, following Dittmer (2017), can each be thought of as distinct assemblages. The overarching assemblage, as Deleuze &
Guattari (1987) theorised, was coded with semiotic meaning – a demand for recognition of the SRST as a sovereign, indigenous nation, with inherent rights to self-determination. Thus, the diplomatic encounter was assembled through a multiplicity of nonhuman/human, technological/embodied, semiotic/material, online/offline and virtual/non-virtual actants. Similar to DeLanda’s (2006) discussion, agency was distributed across this assemblage: humans who posted, liked, reposted or commented on a post; danced, sang, held a sign, performed at the event; the nonhuman actants that enabled or enhanced those actions - each influenced the geopolitical narrative which emerged, and the resultant practice of pre-negotiation. While others have considered how state (Dittmer, 2016; 2017) and non-state (McConnell & Dittmer, 2018) diplomatic relations are enabled by nonhumans, the focus has remained upon diplomatic relations between two distinct polities. Here, I have considered how multilateral public diplomacy was assembled through nonhuman relations, thus further deconstructing conventional understandings of diplomacy.

The Washington diplomatic encounter has been extended in time and space by social media. The videos, photographs and written accounts of the march which have proliferated across YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, mean there is an ‘afterlife’ to the event - viewable anywhere, anytime – with persisting impacts. People continue to watch and interact with these online artefacts through likes, reposts, comments and views. These online artefacts act to cast a shadow on the ‘real’ event continuing its influence upon publics and arguably the U.S. Government. In this way, a second-order assemblage associated with the diplomatic encounter is still proliferating and gaining meaning, with potential future effects.

‘De-actualising’ the Event

The Washington diplomatic encounter which I have described as a form of pre-negotiation fell on deaf ears; the meeting with the U.S. Government never took place. This is despite the volume and multiplicity of actors involved, the extensive media coverage and the SRST’s compelling moral argument. Since the SRST were unable to engage with formal practices of diplomacy, their ambition for self-determination remained unrealised. Self-determination has been upheld as an international human right since 1966 (Castellino, 1999); is embodied in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations (UNA-UK, 2016); the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Franke, 2009); and purportedly follows political decolonisation.
(Wilmer, 2009). Despite these principles, in practice it seems that actual self-determination remains difficult for indigenous populations to achieve.

This shows the importance of studying the non-revolutionary event, its build-up, realisation and demise. While many scholars have considered how events are mobilised through assemblages of relations, the attention has predominantly attended to shifts in the ‘status quo’ (see Shaw, 2012; Cloke, et al., 2017). McConnell and Dittmer (2018, p. 148) consider how diplomatic events can act as “tipping points” which reconfigure the diplomatic relations between polities and the coding of the polities themselves. In this instance, the SRST entered into the diplomatic encounter with the hope of being reconfigured or ‘re-coded’, and yet both their political status and relationship with the U.S. remained the same. Thus, the event was far from revolutionary. This raises interesting questions, as Anderson & Gordon (2017, p. 175) ask: “How are happenings drained of their potential? How are events adjusted to and lived with, so their impacts and effects are dampened? How are events de-actualized?”

In this instance, it seems the U.S. Government ‘de-actualised’ the event, refusing to allow it to become anything more by rejecting the protest as a legitimate form of diplomacy. The diplomatic practices which are understood as acceptable within a given epoch are socially constructed, emerging from certain discourses of truth being amplified over others (Constantinou, 1996; Foucault, 1966). Protest is outside contemporary normative understandings of diplomacy. While a wider array of practices and practitioners are understood to be diplomatic in academia, the practical situation in international relations remains grounded in ‘traditional’ understandings (also see McConnell, 2017). The ontology of the state-system is rooted in formal diplomatic methods, and thus acknowledging ‘alternative’ practices could destabilise the state’s hegemonic position in the world system (Franke, 2009). For the U.S. Government, recognising and re-affirming the rights of Native Nations could compromise their own sovereign and territorial ambitions, and thus it was in their interest to conflate the protest with a social movement. In this way, the power relations between the SRST, multiple publics and the U.S. State were far from even. The U.S. Government was able to decide the outcome they would allow. Diplomatic practice, therefore, may be assembled through nonhuman/human relations, but it remains heavily influenced by human articulations of power. Diplomatic assemblages are not ontologically ‘flat’ phenomena characterised by purely relational configurations of power (see Dittmer,
2017). It seems the state has hegemony in international relations, even as non-state and nonhuman agency are increasingly recognised.
Conclusion

My research has focused on the diplomatic relationships which emerged in association with the Washington protest of 10\textsuperscript{th} March 2017. In this way, rather than being akin to conventional activism, I considered the event as a diplomatic encounter between various entities. Instead of focusing on a two-way relationship between governments, as has been common in diplomacy literatures, I have depicted the event as an assemblage of assemblages which brought the SRST, multiple publics, the U.S. Government and nonhuman elements into relations with each other.

After first conceptualising the SRST as a distinct polity, I demonstrated how they performed their indigenous rights and nationality at the Washington protest to affirm their right to an official meeting with the U.S. Government, thus engaging with pre-negotiation. Rather than being radically distinct from state-based diplomacy, I considered how the protest was accompanied by (desired) traditional diplomatic meetings. By conceptualising the SRST as being betwixt activism and diplomacy and between state and non-state diplomatic practice, I worked to diffuse the binary between state/non-state diplomacy. Rather than being essentially different, I suggested that indigenous diplomacy, in this instance, manifested differently due to unequal power relations within the diplomatic arena.

I then established how the SRST used digital diplomacy to encourage the publics of Native Nations and the U.S.A. to protest with them. Here, the SRST mimicked a so called ‘new’ form of state-based diplomacy (Pamment, 2013). The public actively responded, co-producing a narrative depicting the SRST as a sovereign nation with inherent rights to self-determination (and a meeting). Here, I acknowledged a networked, rather than dialogic, form of public diplomacy where communication flowed between multiple actors across multiple borders of estrangement. Importantly, I asserted that the SRST and multiple publics worked collaboratively at the Washington protest to engage with the U.S. State and thus portrayed this event as a networked diplomatic encounter. As such, I extended emerging work considering public agency in geopolitical affairs and provided a distinct account of indigenous public diplomacy.
Subsequently, I unpacked how the Washington encounter was enabled by nonhuman agency. I first examined how the diplomatic relations between the SRST and the public were enabled by the technological and embodied practices underpinning social media. I then conceptualised the Washington diplomatic encounter as a convergence of multiple assemblages of assemblages. It was the coming-together of the U.S. Government, the SRST, multiple publics, online relations, transport networks, commodity chains, historical and embodied practices and imaginations of a new future. In this way, my research has provided a novel perspective of the ways indigenous diplomacy can be assembled through governmental/public, traditional/alternative, online/offline, human/nonhuman, material/discursive, technical/embodied, and virtual/non-virtual elements. Thus, I extended both indigenous diplomacy literatures and the emerging field of more-than-human diplomacy.

Lastly, I considered how this event reinstated, rather than reconfigured, the status quo. The pipeline was approved, calls to meet with the President were unanswered, and indigenous self-determination was prevented. The political momentum fell to nothing; the U.S. Government ‘de-actualised’ the event by associating it with activism rather than legitimate diplomatic practices. As such, I asserted that the U.S. Government remained a more powerful actor within the assemblage, able to influence the political outcome. Accordingly, I maintained that assemblages are not characterised by flat ontologies of equal power relations but are more influenced by some (assembled) actors - in this instance the U.S. State - than others.

Overall, my dissertation has shown how a marginal geopolitical entity can use social media as a diplomatic tool to exert a form of geopolitical agency. Through these means, the SRST were able to gain a considerable degree of support from other actors and almost realise their national ambitions. This shows how the opportunities for marginal polities to engage in the international arena may grow as technology becomes increasingly ubiquitous in everyday life. While in this instance the state could ignore the protest, if more events of this nature occurred in the future they may become more challenging for state governments to ignore. The internet therefore brings new diplomatic prospects for states and non-state entities alike, with potential to re-configure the composition of the diplomatic arena. While states may
currently hold more diplomatic agency than other entities, the assemblages through which such power emerges are not stable but subject to re-territorialisation, de-coding, and potential dissolution. A future where diplomatic power is distributed across state and non-state entities, foreign and domestic publics does not seem altogether improbable. In this way, perhaps my research might encourage those actors currently shunned from ‘official’ diplomatic spaces and urge geopolitical scholars to engage more thoroughly with digital diplomatic practice.

My research has also added to nascent Geographical methodologies concerning social media. I have shown how a reasonably large data set can be manually collected without any knowledge of coding. This approach can be used by other scholars, thereby improving the accessibility of this area of research. With more time and collaboration with a data-collection team larger data sets and more complex issues could be considered. Equally, in future, ethnographic research of a similar diplomatic event could compliment digital research. This would allow triangulation of ‘online’ and ‘offline’ data (see Murthy, 2011) to better understand the ways diplomacy is assembled across these spheres. While my focus was limited to 24hrs before the protest, future studies could consider before, during and after a diplomatic event. This could provide deeper insights into the relations between online and offline spaces during the event and the ways in which the event’s online presence diminished. While I have considered how social media enabled the emergence of a diplomatic encounter, a future study could explore the ways algorithms and other technical infrastructures, as well as oppositional human actors, might hinder or prevent the assembling of diplomatic practices. Equally, as Dodge & Kitchin (2005) ask of Geographers in general, one could look more thoroughly into the coded mechanisms underpinning social media, how they work and what diplomatic practices they enable and disable.
References

Literary Sources


Han, J. & Yang, S., 2017. Investigating the Role of Non-governmental Organizations in New Public Diplomacy: Autonomy and Collaboration Between the Voluntary Agency Network of


Ó Tuathail, G., 1994. The Critical Reading/Writing of Geopolitics: Re-reading/Writing


Secondary Sources

@StandingRockST, 2017. We Welcome a Meeting with President Elect Trump. [Online] Available at: https://twitter.com/StandingRockST/status/807698088005509120 [Accessed 05 July 2018].


Kaplan, A., 2018. A Facebook-verified Standing Rock Page that has Posted Fake News is Run Out of Eastern Europe: Media Matters. [Online] Available at: https://www.mediamatters.org/blog/2018/05/08/A-Facebook-verified-
Standing-Rock-page-that-has-posted-fake-news-is-run-out-of-Eastern-Eur/220138
[Accessed 03 August 2018].

Luck, C., 2018. *What Are the Differences Between Instagram, Facebook and Twitter’s Algorithms?*. [Online]
Available at: https://www.ricemedia.co.uk/blog/differences-instagram-facebook-twitters-algorithms/
[Accessed 18 August 2018].

Available at: https://www.nexis.com
[Accessed 22 May 2018].

Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/09/dapl-dakota-sitting-rock-sioux/499178/
[Accessed 21 May 2018].

Available at: https://www.nexis.com
[Accessed 22 May 2018].

Available at: https://www.nexis.com[Accessed 22 May 2018].

Available at: https://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFN1N1O40RO
[Accessed 23 May 2018].

Available at: https://www.nexis.com
[Accessed 22 May 2018].

Available at: https://www.nexis.com
[Accessed 23 May 2018].

Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20161205200848/http://standingrock.org/history/
[Accessed 18 May 2018].
Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20161205050336/http://standingrock.org/fort-laramie-treaty/
[Accessed 18 May 2018].

Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20161120191158/http://standingrock.org/mission/visual-
[Accessed 19 May 2018].

Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20161122104223/http://standingrock.org/environmental-
profile/ [Accessed 20 May 2018].

Available at: http://waterresources.standingrock.org/about/ [Accessed 20 February 2017].

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe v. Dakota Access, LLC and U.S.
Available at: https://daplpipelinefacts.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Memorandum-

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe v. Dakota Access, LLC and U.S.
[Online]
Available at: https://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/files/DAPL-answer-and-cross-
claim.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2018].

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe v. Dakota Access, LLC and U.S.
[Online]

Available at: https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/nation-and-world/out-of-spotlight-

House*. The Real News Network. [Online]
Available at: https://www.nexis.com [Accessed 23 May 2018].


Image Sources

**Image a:**

Available at: http://www.whitewolfpack.com/2017/03/thousands-take-to-streets-of-new-york.html
[Accessed 23 May 2018]

**Image c:**

Available at: https://grist.org/climate-energy/how-the-climate-march-can-stand-out-in-a-crowd-of-protests/
[Accessed 23 May 2018]

**Image d:**

Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/04/1007341 16.08.2018
[Accessed 18 August 2018]
NAME OF STUDENT
n/a

TITLE OF PROPOSAL
Exploring the character of indigenous public diplomacy performed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL Please give a 100 word summary of the proposal.
This study will contribute to an emerging scholarship on indigenous diplomacy. This research would consider the ways in which indigenous peoples may enact public diplomacy. It would focus on the Standing Rock Sioux tribe who have been campaigning against the U.S. Dakota Access Pipeline and consider the ways in which tribe have been performing public diplomacy with U.S. citizens in order to further their interests for self-determination. More specifically, by analysing online media made by the Standing Rock tribe it will explore how this form of public diplomacy appears online and materialises as a socio-technical assemblage.

DOES THIS RESEARCH REQUIRE ETHICS CLEARANCE? Please answer with regard to criteria in the dissertation handbook and after consulting (https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/)
No
FULL PROPOSAL (Maximum 1000 words) to include brief context, research questions, and methods.

Context

In traditional international relations theory and practice, diplomacy has been understood as a state-based activity, performed by individual ‘diplomats’ who use tact, reason and empathy to further the interests of their states (Barston, 2014; Constantinou, 2015; Cohen, 1991). Recently, however, this narrow conceptualisation of diplomacy is being challenged by geographers, critical international relations scholars and historians. Here, the categories of who can enact diplomacy and what activities are understood to be diplomatic are widening (Sending et al., 2011). Of particular interest here is the growing attention which is being given to indigenous peoples and how they enact diplomacy (see Beirer, 2007). Indigenous people can be understood as a discrete body within the settler state (Beier, 2009), whose interests and views are often directly opposed to those of the settler state, to the extent that they can be seen as “aliens within their own land” (Foley et al., 2013: xxv). As such, when indigenous peoples negotiate with the settler state they should not be seen as a social movement but recognised as a discrete geopolitical entity engaging with diplomatic practices with a foreign nation (Beier, 2009). Of course, these negotiations often centre on indigenous rights for self-determination and land rights (Barsh, 1983).

This dissertation will focus on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who reside within the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, on the border between North Dakota and South Dakota in North America (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe 2018). The Sioux people, including the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, have been legally recognised as a sovereign nation with their own territory since the signing of the first Treaty of Fort Laramie (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, 2018). Yet their rights to self-determination have been repeatedly abused by the U.S. government. The Dakota Access Pipeline (see Figure 1) is proposed as the most recent infringement of these rights, as it is situated on ancient treaty land and poses a threat to the Sioux people’s rights to govern their own water supply (which is regarded as sacred) and protect their ancient ancestral burial grounds (which have significant cultural value for the tribe). The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, along with other indigenous nations, have passionately campaigned against the pipeline since it was first proposed in 2015. Rather than being an example of conventional environmental activism, this study advances the idea that the tribe, being a ‘sovereign’ nation, has been engaging with diplomatic practices in order to further their interests.
While there is a growing body of work considering indigenous diplomacy most of this work focuses on relations between indigenous communities and state governments. As such, this scholarship arguably remains quite closely coupled with traditional notions of diplomacy as a formal activity which takes place between governments. Less attention has been paid to the relations between indigenous communities and the subjects of the foreign nation, a form of diplomacy which has been termed ‘public diplomacy’. Indeed, public diplomacy can be defined as “a government’s process of communication with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and politics” (Tuch, 1990: 3). This study would address this gap by considering the ways in which the Standing Rock Sioux tribe have been engaging in forms of public diplomacy. More specifically, this study will consider how this public diplomacy appears online, exploring its character and aims, using a discourse analysis approach. Potentially, this research would draw upon assemblage theory to move towards an understanding of diplomacy as an activity which is performed through, and dependent upon, technologies and media circulation.

**Research Questions**

In what ways do the Standing Rock Sioux tribe engage in public diplomacy with citizens of the USA?

How does this public diplomacy appear online?

In what ways is public diplomacy mobilised through a network of actants?

**Methods**

This research will draw upon analysis of publicly available newspapers, media articles, blogs, policy documents and law case summaries which will be used to piece together a narrative of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe’s relations with the Dakota Access Pipeline and the U.S. government more generally. More importantly, great attention will be paid to videos, websites and written statements made by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe online, as well as their Twitter and Facebook accounts, as these are here recognised as crucial platforms for the tribe to perform public diplomatic practices.
As diplomacy is here understood as a relational and networked practice, attention will also be paid to the responses of non-tribe members made available across these platforms.

This research may also use interviews as a form of supplementary method. This depends on whether it is possible for interviews to be carried out. If it is possible, interviews would take place with Standing Rock tribe members over skype. There is a chance of an interview with a member of the Sioux tribe who is known by the researcher through a friend at Cambridge University. This potential interview may lead to further contacts.

References


Appendix 2: Research Diary

26.04.2018

Had skype meeting with supervisor and discussed my dissertation proposal. Mostly all fine, there were some problems with my methodology which we talked about. Slight disconnect between the concepts I used in the setting up the project part and the methodology. i.e. if I am going to talk about assemblages I am not going to get at that with discourse analysis. Instead, we decided that I would use discourse analysis to consider how the tribe present themselves as sovereign nation, and then use assemblage theory to think about how diplomacy is assembled and how this appears online. Noted that there is a slight epistemological contradictory between using both these methods, but there isn’t an easy way of reconciling this tension. Maybe useful to look at critiques of binary ontology? But really just need to think about which methods are useful and what they allow me to say. Can also say something interesting in the discussion about the merits of using either of these approaches for understanding public diplomacy?

Thought about the idea of using a timeline of events/tweets etc building up to an event… think about the online life of the event, how this inspired other events; think about how things were reported, moved, some things are offline (e.g. other protests) and then these are brought back online.

Talked about whether I should use assemblage theory or actor network theory. I decided I would use assemblage theory as this has more room to consider semiotics in conjunction with materiality. Should read more about assemblage theory

Talked about what defines a public diplomacy?

- critique of public diplomacy = propaganda
- assembling a public, making things public, temporary public
- maybe something to do with subaltern geopolitics
- public = people or people + things
- Latour says 'things' = ding etc
- can be using public diplomacy to engage with buildings etc... not only between people/governments but a whole array of things.

Things to read:

- Digital humanities, digital anthropologies – about how we study online stuff, the relationship between online and offline things. Also see emerging field of digital geographies.
- Royal Holloway; social media stud see Alister Pinkerton and Matt Benwell on Faukland islands and the role of social media in this geopolitical event
- Andrew Barry looking at ANT in international relations
- First 'plateau' of A Thousand Plateaus by Deleuze and Guattari talks about an assemblage being made up of material and semiotic elements...
- Dittmer 2013 assemblage theory + geopolitics in Progress in Human Geography

Things to do:

- Need to prepare for presentation by Monday and script for Alan to review. (100 words per minute)
- Need to read about assemblage theory + check in with internet studies + Material studies in geopolitics/international relations
29.04.2018

Read (Dittmer, 2014) and enjoyed the distinction between material/expressive dimensions of actants in an assemblage but did not understand the territorialising/deterritorialising and coding/decoding parts of the assemblage so much. I will ask Alan to explain this in the next meeting. Otherwise, reading was hard just because of lack of motivation. But should be better when taken a break from work. Liked the part in (Barry, 2013) about how ANT needs to be made applicable to the empirical material you collect – very relevant for my dissertation.

To do:

30.04.2018

Read some papers, not very many... But good work by Anderson and McFarlane about different approaches to doing assemblage work – which one should I do? Want to be open and keep it broad for now – can see what I find out later and see what best fits. In this way, perhaps I am taking more of an ethos approach to assemblage.

09.05.2018

Gave my presentation today, went quite well. Sam said I could maybe look at doing something to do with geotagging and coding... but not sure if I want to do this. Discuss with Alan

Things to think about

• What is the public? – they suggested that I look at more material from STS to bulk out my ideas here.
• What is public diplomacy?

14.05.2018

To do:

Make reading lists for five main areas of scholarship:
• Non-state diplomacy & Indigenous diplomacy
• Material geopolitics & material diplomacy
• Popular geopolitics & media
• Assemblage theory in geography
• Sioux and standing rock; First nations of America generally

15.05.2018

Read (Adams, 2017) Not so much useful material here, but I guess can talk about how media studies have been used in geography, I really like the stuff about encountering and media and how every form of media is not just a communication but an event – a moment when humans/nonhumans etc encounter each other. He called this a “metaphysics of encounter” think that this concept will be useful.

16.05.2018
Read lots of things about geopolitics and assemblage theory, but mostly thinking about territory and volumes and not about social media. Most people use ethnography and interviews and don’t look at events (see notes).

**To do:**
Ask Alan about events methodology and whether he knows any papers to look at about this

### 17.05.2018

Read Chapter 1 of Dittmer’s material politics, very interesting, should read more. Looked at Dingpolitiik – not sure how useful this will be, but quite interesting paper. Reminds me of the Critique running out of steam Latour paper

**To read:**
- Latour, critique running out of steam

### 18.05.2018

Had meeting with Alan, things we discussed included:

- **Timeline:** decided I should start data collection and then I can ask about this in the next meeting. Should aim to have some literature review and analysis written by July 13th.
- **Methodology:** Not many papers which are about studying events. Should make this observation in my write-up, as can be another point which makes my work relevant. Say something about the fact there are methodological discussions about studying assemblages, but only limited debates about specifically looking at events. However, should look at Andrew Barry’s book ‘Material Politics: disputes along the pipeline’ especially chapter 1 and the preface as there is some discussion about this there. Also look at Dittmer’s ‘Diplomatic Material’ in more detail as may have more stuff about methodology. Also read Alan’s paper on domopolitics and disease, his methodology may be useful. Finally, see ‘Researching emotions in international relations.’
- **Important points for my methodology:** need to make sure I store webpages and download them incase they disappear. For expired webpages can look at ‘Way Back Machine’ which has logged websites and videos on there. I could log my data on there. Decided against Sam’s idea of geo-tagging as time-intensive but could be something that I could suggest in my conclusion for a suggestion for further research.
- **We also talked about the ‘making things public’ point made by examiner in presentation. Dingpolitiik may not be that useful for my work, but good to keep in mind. Look at Walter’s paper on Drones and Dingpolitiik as he asks whether Latour’s ideas can be made relevant to studying political things like war…. Also look at Barry 2013 studying ANT and international relations.
- **Reviewed assemblage theory & decided I should read DeLanda (2006) as he makes Deleuze and Guattari’s work more analytically useful.**

**To read:**
- Dittmer’s Diplomatic Material
- Ingram’s Domopolitics and Disease
- DeLanda (2006)
- Barry 2013 Material Politics: disputes along the pipeline
- Latour’s Dingpolitiik
28.05.2018

Looked at the Way Back Machine and found the SRST’s website before the event took place. Took notes about their needs/culture/nation/demands/history.
Read newspaper articles about the event & took notes
Completed a Social media search and found the SRST’s official profiles on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. All of these have large amounts of followers and posts so think they will be suitable for my work.

04.06.2018

Started looking at Facebook posts of the official SRST Faebook page. Have collected all the posts about the march that are on this web page. Was very time consuming and lots of hiccups with the internet so tried looking for a more efficient way of doing this. Tried the search function on Facebook, which is useless as it doesn’t put the posts in chronological order and omits posts even if they have the key phrase in the title! I thought that I could look at archived facebook pages on way back machine, but nothing on there so can’t do that either.

I decided that mining data might be more appropriate so started looking for mining tools online but none of them seem obviously relevant to what I want to do. The info I am looking for is complex and therefore would need a complex code! I will keep thinking about this.

Thought about how I want to have my data to look at the end. Think would be good to have space/time and different spheres online and offline and show the movement of ideas across these.

Found it hard to know where to stop tracing posts, some posts are reposted 14,000 times! For now, I’m going to look at original posts and not the reposts but may be able to show something quantitative about the reposts. Basically, I am not sure what will be useful / interesting for the analysis just yet.

Realised that the timestamps that Facebook and Twitter and Instagram are likely to be different. Unclear what time zone the post time is. So, I realised I need to convert to UTC. Found a website (Quora, 2016) (CodersToolBox, 2018) which converts timestamps. Went back through my posts which I had already collected and converted the timestamp to UTC.

Started a word doc for each source, currently have Standing Rock Sioux Tribe on Facebook; Instagram and twitter.

05.06.2018

Found interesting hashtag called ‘take the meeting’ — will look into this further; is hashtag for when people of the public are asking Trump to take the meeting which the tribe are asking for. Clear example of pre-negotiation public diplomacy

Not sure what timezone Way back machine uses to display posts? Found article here which says it is GMT, but not sure. https://www.elephate.com/blog/internet-archeology-wayback-machine/ need to find a page on WBM which explicitly says this... Have had a look at their documents and can’t find anything. Don’t think that this will be compatible with the rest of my data, and also is hard to display a whole webpage in this way. Can definitely use for my background info for the SRST but don’t think it will work for thinking about my network
Decided it is better to just look at original posts as hard to find URL for reposts.
Found Youtube videos of events happening along the way... for example some celebrities have written songs about DAPL & the SRST.

Had meeting with Alan.

- Talked about different ways of making research analysis. 1. You have meaning which is about significance, relevance and this comes from the context of what people are saying. 2. You have patterns and associations, which is a different rationale, and is about the associations between 1 cluster and another... the timeline idea is meant to help these patterns/associations come to the fore. You can see the lulls and spikes and build a picture of the associations between things. This form of analysis is more positivist in style, it is about looking for patterns...finding patterns is a research achievement in itself. So, in this form of analysis, you would be looking at the relationship between their movement and what happens online – is there a correlation between these two things? About the statistical, temporal, spatial relationship. This form of analysis isn’t very good at identifying causality or underlying issues/meanings.

- So here, I am looking at different epistemologies... the first one which is about meaning which is more subjective and then the second one is thinking about the patterns but doesn’t get at meaning. Can try to overcome this by bringing these two different approaches together. So, can do network thing first and then apply a discourse analysis to the network to try to find meaning.

- Talked about retweets & abundance of material. Alan confirmed that I can just look at the network of original posts and not think about the connections between original posts and reposts. But can do a graph of how many times videos/posts etc are viewed, liked and reposted. This can be an interesting way to think about patterns, how things are changing overtime in a meaningful way. In terms of looking at videos, think it might be nice to find videos which are retweeted about on social media etc as a way in. this way can say that you are already interested in particular happenings and see how they work online/offline... and then see the connections... alternatively can look at the videos with the most likes /watches... but think the first idea is better.

- Fundamentally, going to track how the issue has revolved and developed and how those moments are expressed in different ways (e.g. statements, posts, videos) you can show the digital, online (and how the offline becomes online) moment and analyse that.

- Alan said he would look at some of my data ... and then we will discuss this on Wednesday.

To read:

- Gillian Rose’s Digital methodologies Visual Methodologies
- Collier D 2011 Understanding process tracing. Political Science and Politics. 44 4 823-830.

Meeting with Alan. We discussed ways forward for my project.

- Talked about the contention between building theories from the bottom up ‘i.e. grounded theory’ when you do research and allow theory to emerge from that. And then the other way around when
you have a hypothesis and find the empirical material with that in mind. Need to have a combination of both approaches. The grounded theory is a utopic ideal which doesn’t really happen and is very time consuming. Need to have some orientations or hunches. What are my orientations or hunches?

- Talked about presentation. I need to refer back to chart or appendix, shouldn’t have more than 1 page of data at a time. Need to have some in the text, plentiful illustration of analysis. He said you have 6-7000 words within which to tell the reader about a certain no of things, made up of other things
- Talked about ways of analysing data: could look at points when groups appeared and expressed support for the tribe – on a timeline; looking at different kinds of practices (church, protests, music, performances) ... an assemblage of people doing things with stuff and being made to work together.
- Talked about research ethics... anonymising the people who can be identified. Need to look at REEC when do write up

20.06.2018

Spent the week collecting data online, following three hashtags that I found on the SRST’s website – #nativenationsrise, #consentnotconsultation, #takethemeeting. There is loads of data and so very time consuming. But getting through it. Decided to move away from Facebook and just focus on Twitter and Instagram. On Facebook there is no way to limit a search by date/time, so you have to scroll though loads of data to get to the time frame you want to look at, and my computer always crashed before I got to the place I was interested in. Twitter and Instagram are better as they have a date-search function. Because of the large amounts of data, I have decided to focus on the 24hr period before the event.

04.07.2018

Continued collecting posts from Twitter and Instagram. Watched and analysed videos that came up in these posts using video ethnography style. This was hard to do, I basically took notes the first time I watched the video and then re-watched the video without taking notes. Then wrote a summary and re-watched the video one more time before completing my description.

11.07.2018

Moved onto analysis. The data collection process took a lot longer than I expected, partly as a result of the slow internet and computer processor (it would have been better to do this research on a high-quality computer in London, rather than Cornwall!). The large amounts of posts I needed to collect, and the high amounts of data needed for each post (e.g. timezone, screenshot of post, text, hashtags, Image), meant this was a very time-consuming process. Also, not having realised I needed to standardise the timestamps on all posts meant that I essentially had to collect my first set of posts twice.

Still, I am happy with my sample, and think that this method was quite methodical and the most time-efficient way that I was able to do it. This shows that the research process is quite hard to plan efficiently as you just don’t know how long something will take, or when something might go wrong. Just have to take it on the head and make adjustments when needed (e.g. I only collected posts for the 24hrs before the march rather than 30 days before). Research is about being reflexive and flexible.

Analysed the material I collected from SRST’s webpage, newspaper articles and SRST’s social media pages. Completed preliminary data processing by putting all post info into an excel spreadsheet in chronological order.
18.07.2018

Made graphs of various different variables. These included:

- Reposts/likes/views V. number of poster followers
- Repost/likes/views V. hashtag theme
- Repost/like/views V. image used
- Frequency of user postings
- Frequency of individual hashtags
- Frequency of Hashtag themes
- Time V Number of posts uploaded
- Pot identifier V. number of likes/reposts/views
- Top 5 and bottom 5 (in terms of likes/reposts/views) and hashtag themes

11.07.2018

Read some articles about Indigeneity, nationhood and self-determination, indigenous diplomacy
Read some more about non-state diplomacy (e.g. Dittmer & McConnell 2018)
Made a plan for the last month of my research write-up.

07.08.2018

Wrote the literature review & methodology
Wrote the first section of my analysis

19.08.2018

Wrote the next 4 sections of my analysis. Found it hard to collate ideas and communicate what I meant in writing. However, I had quite a clear idea of what I wanted to write, probably as a result the length of time I spent collecting data allowed for lots of thinking time! My original research questions added up quite well to what I actually found. I had spent a long time planning my project before I handed in the proposal and so think I had a pretty strong foundation and reasonable expectations of what I would find, the scholarship I would be adding to and the overarching argument I wanted to make. An exception is that I did not include the ‘events’ angle that I planned. I felt that my original plan of adding to literature on events was quite ambitious for the space and time that I had to write my research in. My work was already trying to contribute to three areas of scholarship, and I didn’t feel I would be able to add to a fourth in a way which felt meaningful. I think that this is more of a pointer for further research that I will put in my conclusion!

24.08.2018

Wrote the Introduction and conclusion.

30.08.2018

Edited and proof read.
# Appendix 3: Historical and Contemporary Events concerning the SSRT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>First Treaty of Fort Laramie recognised the Great Sioux region. Several tribes agree to follow these and recognise the borders of the region. Soon after, American goldminers moved into the region to exploit the Black Hills and conflict ensued (Green, 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Second Treaty of Fort Laramie initiated to restore the peace. (Green, 2000; SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al., 2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>General George A. Cluster and his 7th Cavalry trespass onto the Black Hills and discovered gold. The Great Sioux War begins (Green, 2000; SRST 2016d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>The U.S. wins the Great Sioux War and removes large sections of land from the Great Sioux region without the Tribe’s consent (SRST 2016d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Congress enact the Allotment Act, reducing the size of the Great Sioux Reservation and dividing it into six smaller Reservations. This Act also allowed white people to live in these Reservations (SRST 2016a). This is despite the 1868 treaty maintaining that no reservation land would be occupied by white people “unless executed and signed by at least three-fourths of all the adult male Indians” (SRST 2016b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Sitting Bull, chief of the Hunkpapa tribe, protested the Allotment Act and was shot dead by police. The Hunkpapa tribe flee but are caught by the 7th Calvary at Wounded Knee, and 300 Hunkpapa people are killed (SRST, 2016d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>The U.S. National Historic Preservation Act is created (Meyer, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>The National Historic Preservation Act amended to include tribal input (Meyer, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The UN bill on Indigenous Rights is finalised (Franke, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>The DAPL pipeline first proposed (DAPL, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 2015</strong></td>
<td>The U.S. Army Corps release an environmental assessment prepared by DAPL which makes no reference to tribal rights, land rights, oil risks, water safety (SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al., 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25th July 2016</strong></td>
<td>The U.S. Army Corps provide the easement to the DAPL (SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al., 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th August 2016</td>
<td>The Tribe asks court for a preliminary injunction on the pipeline’s construction (EJ, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th September 2016</td>
<td>The Court denies appeals for an injunction (SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al., 2016a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th September 2016</td>
<td>The Obama administration (Department of Justice, Department of the Army; and the Department of the Interior) asks DAPL to voluntarily stop construction while they review the rights of the tribe. An assessment begins (Milman, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th October 2016</td>
<td>Dakota Access ignore the request for voluntary easement and continue construction (EJ, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th November 2016</td>
<td>The U.S. Army Corps completes a review issued on the 9th September and decides to delay the easement until DAPL complete an environmental assessment with the SRST (EJ, 2017; Army Corps, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th November 2016</td>
<td>The DAPL file lawsuit against Army Corps for delaying construction (EJ, 2017; SRST et al. v. Dakota Access et al. 2016b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th November 2016</td>
<td>Camp Ocetti (a protest movement at the pipeline) is closed by American police (EJ, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th December 2016</td>
<td>DAPL are not granted the easement. The U.S. Army Corps begin assessing alternative routes (EJ, 2017) and making a full environmental assessment of the pipeline (Wynn, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th January 2017</td>
<td>The newly elected President Donald Trump insists the U.S. Army Corps should allow the pipeline to be completed and grant the easement. (Trump, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th January 2017</td>
<td>The U.S. Army Corps release a memorandum claiming that since the pipeline poses minimal risks, tribal consult is unnecessary (EJ, 2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th January 2017</td>
<td>The Army Corps grant the easement to the DAPL (U.S. Army Corps, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th February 2017</td>
<td>The SRST file a legal suit against DAPL (supported by Earth Justice), saying that their rights and environmental risks have not been considered in this hasty overturn of events (EJ, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th -10th March 2017</td>
<td>Tribal nations and allies begin lobbying U.S. government in Washington, D.C. (St Louis Post-Dispatch, 2017)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10th March 2017  

June 2017  
The Dakota Access Pipeline becomes operational (The Gazette, 2018)

14th June 2017  
Federal Judge James Boasberg rules that the Trump administration had acted illegally by allowing the easement to be granted without a full environmental assessment (EJ, 2017)

4th December 2017  
The Court allows the pipeline to continue working but insists that the company must work with the tribe to complete oil spill response plans; it must allow the tribe to act as auditor; and it must file regular reports about the pipeline incidents/repairs (Department of Justice, 2017)

4th December 2017 – Present  
The tribe continue to fight pipeline in court (Natural Recourses Defence Council, 2018; Associated Press News, 2018)
Appendices 4: Table of Raw Data (Truncated)

This table shows a section of my full data set, including data for the first five posts which I analysed. My full data set of 423 posts is stored on file on my computer and would be available upon request. URL’s for each post are also saved on file.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Unique Identifier</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time (UTC)</th>
<th>Hashtag</th>
<th>Textual Content</th>
<th>Image Unique Identifier</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Post creator</th>
<th>No. of 'views'</th>
<th>No. of 'repost s'</th>
<th>No. of 'likes'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thu, 9 Mar 2017 14:08:01 +00:00</td>
<td>#nativeationsrise</td>
<td>Sending prayers to our Indigenous relatives who are in DC for the #NativeNationsRise March tomorrow. <a href="http://fb.me/K01K6E">Link</a></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Individual 1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thu, 9 Mar 2017 14:11:41 +00:00</td>
<td>#prayercircle #dakota #ojibwe #nativeationsrise #minneapolis #nativeamerican #nodapl</td>
<td>#prayercircle #dakota #ojibwe #nativeationsrise #minneapolis #nativeamerican #nodapl</td>
<td>V1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Individual 2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thu, 9 Mar 2017 14:29:19 +00:00</td>
<td>#dapl #nodapl #bigred #biketagram #womenwhoride #fitness #girlsandbikes #bikelifeswimming #activist #justride #sacredearth #nativeamericans #sacredearth #NativeNationsRise</td>
<td>Women that cry for our 3ones who scream for our water and fight for our children! That’s the kinda people I roll with #NativeNationsRise #dapl #nodapl #bigred #biketagram #womenwhoride #fitness #girlsandbikes #bikelifeswimming #activist #justride #sacredearth #nativeamericans #sacredearth #NativeNationsRise</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Individual 3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thu, 9 Mar 2017 14:30:49 +00:00</td>
<td>#nativenationsrise</td>
<td>#dapl #nodapl #bigred #bikestagram #womenwhoride #bicycle #fitness #girlsandbikes #bikelife #schwinn #schwinninng #justride #activist #dc #daplcamp #indigenousresistance #sacredearth #nativeamericansrights #indigenousresistance #sacredearth</td>
<td>P1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Individual 4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thu, 9 Mar 2017 14:33:02 +00:00</td>
<td>#nativenationsrise</td>
<td>March 10 #nativenationsrise for sovereignty the right to protect homelands, environment and future generations</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Individual 5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: Video Ethnography Data

Below are examples of my video ethnography notes, all ethnographic data is kept on file and would be available upon request.

**Video 1/V1**

Blue skies at a car park, buses lined up. People stand together in a circle; the quiet, strong, rhythm of a drum beating around them. A man singing a chant in native tongue fills the air, a lady’s voice joins his, singing more softly. The other people in the ring have heads bowed, wearing solemn expressions with hands clasped. They move their heads in time with beat. A circle of hoodies, jeans, raincoats. Phones are often held up above people’s heads, filming this iconic moment before they go on their journey to the march. The camera filming this video moves back and forth across the scene.

**V2**

At the Washington Mall, blue, clear skies, chanting and car horns in the background. A lady with dreadlocks sits alone, filming her surroundings, twisting the camera around her. She lingers on tipis and trees, then turns the camera to display the Washington Monument with crowds of people gathered beneath it. Lastly, she shows the nearby road and cars passing by, before purposefully breathing the singular word, “well...” - as if to say, how awesome is this?