# Resistance Through Knowledge, Nature and Worldview

*Aboriginal resistance against the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline in British Columbia, Canada*

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# Abstract

This thesis looks at how Aboriginal peoples in northern BC explain their resistance against the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline; a 1170 km dual pipeline projected to carry bitumen oil from the tar sands in Alberta for shipping in Kitimat. The effects of this pipeline have many and varying consequences for people living in its proximity. The government of Canada has approved the pipeline through a Joint Review Panel process. An omnibus budget bill, potentially effecting opposition against pipeline infrastructure, was recently passed. Aboriginal peoples have long been neglected and ignored in natural resource projects affecting them; this study is therefore interested in how they explain their resistance against it.

The analysis is based on 12 in-depth interviews and 2 observations with various Aboriginal peoples over five weeks the summer of 2015. By examining their relation with the passing of the bill and the approval process, the effects the pipeline can have on their lives, and how they think of a future without the pipeline, explanations of resistance through knowledge, nature and worldview were given.

# Acknowledgement

This thesis would not have been possible without the participants. Your insights, thoughts, and stories have not only made this thesis what it is, you have enriched my life as well. I am forever grateful for that. Thank you for bringing me into your everyday life and showing me such great hospitality.

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A big thanks to 'pauseromgjengen' for always sharing Nugatti and giving constructive feedback.

Lastly, thank you to my family and friends for supporting my work and always asking the right questions.

*Hanna Høiland*
*Oslo, May 2016*

"The first step towards imagining a world gone terribly wrong would be to stop the annihilation of those who have a different imagination [...]. An imagination which has an altogether different understanding of what constitutes happiness and fulfillment. To gain this philosophical space, it is necessary to concede some physical space for the survival of those who may look like the keepers of our past, but who may really be the guides to our future." (Roy 2010)

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## List of Abbreviations

BC            British Columbia
CEAA          Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
ENGP          Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline
JRP           Joint Review Panel
NEB           National Energy Board
TEK           Traditional Ecological Knowledge
YDA           Yinka Dene Alliance

# 1 Introduction

It was still dark from the night but you could feel the sun getting ready to rise. We drove out of his driveway and headed out on the back roads created by the logging industry. "So have you really never seen a moose before, Hanna?" one of his daughters asked me. I hadn't. After about 20 minutes of bumpy driving along the gravel and stone filled road he stopped the car, grabbed his rifle and ran out. A loud gunshot was heard and then complete silence followed. The dark figure about 50 meters across the logged clearance fell to the ground. We had just successfully hunted a two-year-old bull moose. It was a surreal experience standing in the cleared bush watching them skin, saw and gut this huge animal. We were racing the clock before the sun got up and the heat would spoil the meat. I helped carry the moose parts back to the truck and I could feel the warmth of the animal and the blood soaking into my shirt. Before heading back they spread tobacco around the area the moose had died and did chants. They later told me this was a sign of respect and appreciation to Mother Earth for giving them the moose.



Figure 1: Moose hunt (photo: Hanna Høiland)

Hunting and fishing has been a part of their and their ancestor's lives for thousands of years. They hunt to have food to eat, as a cultural practice, and as a way to stay connected to the Earth and to their family.

An hour or so further into the bush along the back roads you can see nothing but pristine, almost untouched nature. An area of wildlife cherished by many Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia. Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline would run along not too far from there, bringing with it bitumen crude oil from the Alberta tar sands to Kitimat for shipping. The project is at the forefront of energy, environmental, and Aboriginal rights issues in Canada.


Figure 2: View from the back roads where the pipeline could go (Photo: Hanna Høiland)

In the past decade, the pace of production in the tar sands has increased rapidly with industry friendly policies, significant foreign investment and an insatiable global appetite for fossil fuels. Analysts have described the future profits from these areas in trillions of dollars, although this has been somewhat revised down after the recent fall in oil prices.[1]

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[1] http://www.wsj.com/articles/oil-sands-producers-struggle-1440017716

The process around the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, the geographies affected and the different actors that are guiding the path of the project, come together in varying ways. Sometimes creating flux and fluidity, sometimes rushing and crashing together, and at other moments creating equilibrium and calm. This was the way the hunt felt to me. The way it crashed when the bullet hit the moose, the way their practiced hands moved methodically through the animal, and the way shoulders were lowered when the pink sky enfolded as we drove back with the catch. My own positionality as a white researcher from Europe is also subsumed in this metaphor of the hunt. I am pulled back and forth between the actions and words of the Aboriginal people participating in this thesis and my own situatedness within academia. That is also a force pushing and pulling the story I tell.

## 1.1 The research questions

An Aboriginal way of living in and understanding the world is distinctive from many parts of the Western world. How one lives in and understands the world informs how one makes decisions and solves problems (Hart 2010; Hedlund-de Witt 2012), thus I have chosen to structure the thesis within a knowledge/nature/worldview framing. The overarching research question that I address in the thesis is:

- How do Aboriginal peoples explain their resistance against the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline?

The thesis' research question will be examined and answered with the help of three concepts that relate to how the resistance is explained. The Canadian government has passed an omnibus budget bill, C-51, which might put a damper on opposition against the pipeline. This exemplifies how *Aboriginal knowledge* of the land and Western laws and regulations collide. I am examining both how the participants think the passing of the bill will affect them and what they think of the government's role in the ENGP process when answering:

- How could bill C-51 affect the opposition against the pipeline and how is the Canadian government's involvement in the approval process perceived by Aboriginal peoples?

*Nature* implies a strong connection to the land in many Aboriginal communities (Fonda 2011; Simpson 2004; Turner & Clifton 2009) and the ENGP will potentially cross substantial

parts of that land. An understanding of resistance explained in relation to land is examined by answering:

- What are the potential effects of the ENGP affecting Aboriginal people's relationship with nature?

*Worldviews* are important and inform the entirety of answers given by the participants and their interpretations. Reasons for opposing the pipeline are formulated on the basis of worldviews and it is therefore interesting to seek answers to questions like:

- What is viewed as the most important reason to oppose the pipeline by Aboriginal peoples? How do they think about a future and life without the pipeline?

In addition to examining these questions thematically, I am also looking at how potential variations in the participant's understanding of the themes are explained.

## 1.2   Structure of the thesis

In the following background chapter a contextualization of the thesis is given. Here the participants, the place they live, the colonial history and an introduction to the ENGP is given, along with some background on bill C-51 and the approval process of the ENGP. In chapter 3 the thesis' theoretical framing is explained and discussed. The chapter focuses on resistance, knowledge, nature, and worldviews, which play into the analysis chapters later in the thesis. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the methodology and fieldwork, including strengths and weaknesses. Following are three analysis chapters that address the research questions posed above. Chapter 5 concerns how bill C-51 could effect the opposition and the government's involvement in the approval process. Chapter 6 deals with the potential effects of the ENGP, while chapter 7 goes into specific reasons for opposing the pipeline and hopes and fears for the future. Lastly, in chapter 8, I conclude by answering the three research questions and thereby answering the overarching research question, as well as concluding on the study's input to further research.

# 2 Background

British Columbia, the westernmost province of Canada, is breathtaking in its beauty and diverse nature. But its history, along with the rest of Canada's, is filled with dark spots of colonialism and ruthless exploitation. This chapter will give a brief account of the historical background of the people I interviewed, the colonial context their stories were told to me in, and how this clashes with the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline (ENGP). It will also give an introduction to the legal processes leading up the government decision on the pipeline and the chapter will end with an account of the newest government approved bill affecting the resistance against the ENGP.

## 2.1   People of the north

Until the arrival of Europeans, all of present-day Canada was inhabited and used by Aboriginal peoples. They had organized societies with systems of tenure, access, and resource management (Usher et al. 1992). Aboriginal communities in Canada had their own culture, customs and character and they developed permanent urban settlements, agriculture, monumental architecture, and complex societal hierarchies (Joe & Choyce 2005). A lot of scientific discussion revolves around when Aboriginal peoples came to the Americas and how they populated on the continent. Carter (1999) explains how this contradicts, challenge, and ignore the ancient teachings of Aboriginal peoples. Deloria Jr. (1995:6) calls this the "origin myths" of Western science and, according to him; the Western stranglehold on definitions has led Aboriginal explanations on origin, migration and experience to be cast aside. As it will be elaborated on later in this chapter, Aboriginal peoples are persuading the courts that they have been here since time immemorial, as being Aboriginal means "belonging to a region from earliest times" (Carter 1999:17).

The people who participated in this project live in northern British Columbia (BC), in an area extending from Prince George to Hazelton, along Highway 16 cutting across the state. It is also more or less along this route that the ENGP will go across, meaning that the people I talked to will all be affected by it. They are part of various First Nations and have different stories and histories relating to their people and their ancestors.

Figure 3: Map of British Columbia (Source: Magellan Geographix)

The community I spent the most time with is part of the *Nadleh Whut'en* First Nation, located along the banks of the Nautley River between Fraser Lake and the Nechako River. Nadleh Whut'en means 'people who live where the salmon returns'. There are five clans in the Nadleh Whut'en: *Lhtseh yoo* (frog clan); *Dumdehm yoo* (bear clan); *Luk sil yoo* (caribou clan); *Ulstah mus yoo* (owl, grouse clan); and *Tsah yoo* (beaver clan). They speak a dialect of the Carrier language, which is part of the Athapaskan language family. Carrier people refer themselves as Dakelh, which means 'people who travel by water'. Archeologists have found pieces of an axe head and fishing weirs in the Nadleh Whut'en area. A fishing weir is an obstruction placed in tidal waters to direct the passage of fish (see Figure 4). It may be used to trap fish such as salmon as they migrate downstream. They carbon tested the artifacts to be over 1000 years old (Prince 2014).

Figure 4: Fishing weir (Photo: Hanna Høiland)

In Canada, there are two general modes of governance within Aboriginal communities. *The Hereditary Chief governance system* is complex and varies from nation to nation. Common is that they have been able to maintain jurisdiction over their lands since European settlement through this traditional system of governance. It includes a matrilineal inheritance of titles, designated at feasts in which rights to land are passed on. The hereditary system have control over traditional territories, although a lot of that territory has been intruded on by industry over the years. *The band system of governance* is different in that a chief councilor and council controls the band governance. Here, the chief is not necessarily hereditary, but mostly voted upon every two years by members of the band. Bands are also the governing body for their reserves. A reserve is an area set aside for First Nations by the Canadian state. A single band may control one reserve or several.

The enforced European election process through the band system came with confusion and undermined millennia of traditions. Although, after a 140 years living under the *Indian Act* most Aboriginal people are used to the election arrangements and living on reserves. Still, many of the people I talked to expressed discontent with their system of governance. For example a grassroots activist doesn't see the system as legitimate: "I will never support my

band supporting LNG.[2] So in that way the chief and councils are not representing the people because the people actually don't want these pipelines going through." (26.06.15).

## 2.2   The colonial context

To better understand the Aboriginal resistance in BC against further industrial expansion in general, and fossil fuel related infrastructure more specifically, it is necessary to look at their history as a people and as a culture. All of the participants experience colonialism either firsthand or through their parents and grandparents. This dark history is telling of the extractive capitalism going on in BC now. The current struggles against pipeline construction are in many ways a result of hundreds of years of struggle with the settler Canadian society. I am giving an account of colonialism because it is useful, as Willems-Braun (1997) pointed out almost two decades ago, that geographers recognize their discipline's complicity with colonialism and imperialism and give it contemporary focus.

Colonialism is a process where a foreign settler population arrives in a new land and creates a new colony. Over time, the settlers expropriate, exploit, and suppress many of the Indigenous peoples' lives and identities (Barlett et al. 2007). Colonialism among Indigenous peoples in the Americas began after Christopher Columbus sailed to their lands in 1492 (Yazzie 2000). Most of the historical relationship between Aboriginal peoples and settler populations was characterized by competition for land and resources. Notzke (1994:1) calls attention to an exception to this state of competition with the fur trade. It was based on a partnership between Aboriginal peoples and European groups "for the cooperative exploitation of the fur resource." When the fur trade era came to an end, so did the partnership that had existed. After defeating France in 1760, the British Empire issued a Royal Proclamation in 1763 recognizing the rights of Aboriginal peoples to unceded lands. They also stated that negotiations between the two would be on a nation-to-nation basis (Neu 1999). With this, Britain formally recognized the rights of Indigenous peoples:

> "And whereas it is just reasonable and essential to our interests and the security of
> our Colonies, that the several natives or Tribes of Indians, with whom we are
> connected, and who live under our protection, should not be molested or disturbed

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[2] LNG is Liquefied Natural Gas. There are 20 LNG projects proposed in BC
(https://engage.gov.bc.ca/lnginbc/lng-projects/)

in the possession of such part of our dominions and territories, as not having been ceded to us, are reserved to them, or any of them as their hunting grounds" (Royal Proclamation 1763, cited in Neu 1999:67).

This recognition and relationship didn't last long and was later replaced by more paternal relations where the colonizers took the view that Indigenous peoples were "savages" or "barbarians" rather than sovereign nations (Henderson 2000a:27; Preston 2013:51). This coincided with the end of the fur trade era and was all in an effort to gain access to land (Simpson 2004; Smith 2012; Turner et al. 2000). Canada's legal claim to the different territories was based on the doctrine of *terra nullius*, the principle of 'empty lands' meaning that North America was not populated by humans before the arrival of Europeans (Alfred 2009). To gain access to this land, there are stories, according to Smith (1999), being told of blankets used by smallpox victims being sent into Aboriginal communities while soldiers and settlers camped outside waiting for the people to die.

In Canada colonialism is still the lived experience for many communities (Czyzewski 2011). From 1876 to 1996, the residential school system removed Aboriginal children from their families in a deliberate attempt to eradicate Aboriginal cultures (Woo 2013). The recently published report of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* revealed stories of rape, abuse and torture among many of the 150,000 residential school pupils (Paquin 2015). Czyzewski's work suggests that this type of trauma embodied in parents or previous generations negatively impacts Aboriginal people's lives and health today. She refers to high suicide rates among Aboriginal youth, life expectancy, unemployment, and substance abuse (2011). Furthermore, recent research indicates that the legacies of colonialism have created effects on Aboriginal peoples in many of the same ways as the Holocaust had on Jewish survivors (Alfred 2009; Yellow Horse Brave Heart & Debruyn 1998).

Other aspects of colonialism that are present today can be found in, for example, cultural appropriation where the assimilation and exploitation of marginalized and colonized cultures is done by a dominant culture with asymmetric power relations and scope of voluntariness (Rogers 2006). The Canadian public and broadcasting industries have long been accused of stealing stories from Aboriginal peoples and thus destroying their meaning and authentic traditions (Coombe 1993). A contemporary example is the use of headdresses by non-Indigenous peoples in the name of 'fashion' (ICTMN 2014). Another example of

contemporary colonialism is the missing and murdered Aboriginal women. According to the Native Women's Association of Canada, over the last 20 years, more than 500 Aboriginal women have gone missing (Amnesty International 2004; Jiwani & Young 2006). Both the case of missing and murdered women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and disappearances along northern BC's highway 16, now termed 'Highway of Tears', show proof that a proportionally large number of Aboriginal women as compared to non-Aboriginal women were among the missing and dead (Kubik et al. 2009). There is still, according to Woo (2013) widespread fear that police will retaliate if victims or families of victims report the crimes. But the most evident, and in this case relevant, aspect of ongoing colonialism is the industrial projects to extract and ship natural resources (Nielsen & Robyn 2003). It is to this I now turn.

## 2.3   The Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline

"Our people used and managed the natural resources for thousands of years, and the resources remained plentiful. The environment was cared for and kept healthy. It took 100 years of extraction by the Europeans to just about wipe out the resources and the environment. This was done without any regard whatsoever for the true owners of the land" (Gisdaywa 1994:x).

The earlier, nation-to-nation relations between the British and Aboriginal people was possible through the merchant-based capitalism of that time where the latter were seen as fellow traders (Kubik et al. 2009). This changed with the emergence of industrial capitalism where wealth could be better accumulated through industrial production as opposed to trade. At the forefront of this industrial relationship today, we find the proposed ENGP.

The ENGP is a 1170 kilometers long dual pipeline connecting Alberta's tar sands to the Pacific Coast at Kitimat (Zickfield 2011). The $7.9 billion project is proposed by Enbridge, the world's largest pipeline construction company based in Calgary, Alberta (Brookes et al. 2014). The westward pipeline would deliver an average of 525,000 barrels of diluted bitumen per day to a Pacific port in Kitimat, BC, and the eastward pipeline will import 193,000 barrels per day of condensate, which is used to dilute raw bitumen for pipeline transport (McCreary & Milligan 2014).
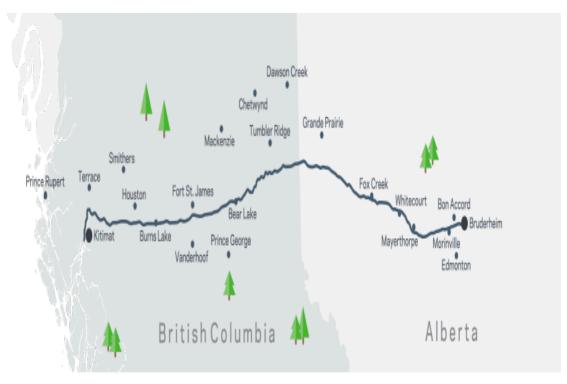
Figure 5: The proposed route (Image Northern Gateway)

The tar sands project in Canada is widely considered to be the most destructive industrial project on earth by both environmental and Indigenous activists alike (Huseman & Short 2012). Tar sands-derived oil must be extracted by strip-mining or 'in situ' techniques. These processes use extreme amounts of water – about three barrels of water is used to process one barrel of oil (Preston 2013). They also create vast 'tailing ponds' into which over 1.8 billion liters of contaminated toxic wastewater are dumped daily. They cover about 170 square kilometers and eleven million liters leak from them every day (Veltmeyer & Bowles 2014). This has resulted in Alberta changing from "a pristine environment rich in cultural and biological diversity to a landscape resembling a war zone marked with 200-foot-deep pits and thousands of acres of destroyed boreal forests." (Thomas-Muller 2007). Local doctors have also observed disproportionate levels of deadly diseases such as leukemia, lymphoma, colon cancer, and Graves disease, most likely being a result of rising carcinogens in the sediments and waterways emanating from industrial activities associated with tar sands mining (Huseman & Short 2012). It is this 'oil', produced with adverse human and environmental effects, that is to be transported through BC in pipelines.

The people I talked to for this research are all in some way affected by the ENGP. The pipeline would cross hundreds of salmon-bearing rivers and streams and it would traverse unstable mountainous terrain that is difficult to access (Forest Ethics 2013). It will cross

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approximately 50 First Nations' territories. A spill in any of these areas or watersheds would be devastating to the Aboriginal people who depend on the land or water (YDA 2013). One participant I interviewed, high up in a non-violent resistance camp, expressed grave concern for their ability to continue to fish: "We are salmon people, we depend on this. […]. If they are depleting all our fresh water sources then how can the salmon spawn when all our waters are being depleted and poisoned?" (03.07.15). In August 2014, an estimated 24 million cubic meters of mining waste spilled from the Mount Polley mine tailings pond into Quesnel Lake, the lake being home to an estimated quarter of the province's sockeye salmon (CBC News 2015). In their study of the effects of the spill, Petticrew et al. (2015) concluded that there should be expected some spill-related metals in the lake to be accumulated through aquatic food webs. These types of events are worrying to the Aboriginal peoples in the province who rely on the salmon as part of their diet. Another consequence affecting people at the exit point of the proposed pipeline is the Kitimat terminal. With the tanker traffic associated with the ENGP an average of 500 deep-sea vessels per year would go through (Gunton & Broadbent 2012). An oil tanker spill could then cause major disruption to the traditional way of life for the Coastal First Nations residing there.

## 2.4  "It was a rigged process" – A story of approval

Both domestic and international law protects Aboriginal peoples basic human rights to make decisions about their land and resources. The process leading up to the decision concerning the ENGP is important. The changes in laws and environmental assessments affected the outcome of the process. As one participant said to me: "I really don't have much faith in what the provincial and federal government does because obviously they are gonna go where the money is […]. It was a rigged process from beginning to end." (13.07.2015). I now turn to the legislation leading up to the decision on the pipeline.

**Aboriginal title**

> "The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed" (Constitution Act, 1982, in Wright & White 2012:2).

> "From a theoretical standpoint, aboriginal title arises out of prior occupation of the land by aboriginal peoples and out of the relationship between the common law

and pre-existing systems of aboriginal law". (Lamer C.J. statement in Delgamuukw court case, cited in McNeil 2006:293).

With the *Royal Proclamation* of 1763 Great Britain's rule over North America was effectively consolidated. It gave the Crown the sole right of acquiring land from Aboriginal people, while recognizing the right of Aboriginal people to occupy their traditional lands (Wright & White 2012). In most of Canada, government officials had signed treaties with Aboriginal people before settlement and these treaties often contained a condition that Aboriginal people cede, release and surrender their traditional territory. Aboriginal peoples were then put on reserves given to them by the government (Blackburn 2005). In the province of BC, the situation was different. The process of treaty signing hardly took place there, mostly because the premiers in the province at that time argued that: "Aboriginal people were too primitive to have had any concept of land ownership." (Fisher 1977:164). This has resulted in centuries of unfettered resource extraction in the province, where the rights of Aboriginal peoples have been largely ignored.

However, the legal terrain has been changing over the last four decades. The court case of *Calder v. Attorney General of British Columbia* (1973) (hereafter *Calder*) opened up for the possibility that Aboriginal title exist in BC (McNeil 2006). The meaning of the term title has been difficult to define for the Canadian state, although in the *Calder* decision, Mr. Justice Judson said: "the fact is that when the European settlers came, the Indians were there, organized in societies and occupying the land as their forefathers had done for centuries. This is what aboriginal title means." (McNeil 1997:136). Following the *Calder* case, the *Canadian Constitution Act* was revised in 1982. It included Section 35(1), which states that the Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada are recognized and affirmed (Blackburn 2005). The *Calder* case led to a number of other court cases over land rights and Aboriginal title, the most famous being the *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997) (hereafter *Delgamuukw*). It found that unextinguished Aboriginal title continues to exist in most of the province. Even more important, it ruled that Aboriginal title was a right to the land itself and not just a right to hunt and fish on the land (Thom 2001). It was also the first court case in Canada to rely more on oral evidence rather than written, as is more common in Aboriginal knowledge transfer. The *Delgamuukw* decision also stipulated that governments had a duty to consult Aboriginal peoples before undertaking anything on what could possibly be Aboriginal territory (Blackburn 2005). It is this duty to consult that the

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government and Enbridge officials have conducted through the Joint Review Panel. But before I go through the process that led to the government's decision on the ENGP project, it will make more sense if a brief review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012 and omnibus budget bills C-38 and C-45 are given first.

**The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act**

Environmental assessments are helpful in minimizing and sometimes compensating for the environmental impact of proposed undertakings. It can, among others, improve project design and planning, and integrate environmental, social and economic considerations (Kirchhoff et al. 2013). The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012 (CEAA 2012), which came into force on 6 July 2012, eliminated most federal government involvement in environmental assessments and sharply curtailed the scope and potential effectiveness of what remained (Gibson 2012). The government's core statement about the application of CEAA 2012 is that the changes were meant to focus assessments on major projects that have greater potential for significant adverse environmental effects (Canada Economic Action Plan 2012). The result was that the number of active assessments went from about 3000 in April 2010 to 70 in the first month of CEAA 2012 (Gibson 2012). This resulted in projects being approved even though they could cause adverse environmental effects because the decision-making authority believed that these effects would be "justified in the circumstances" (CEAA 2012:52-53). A reduction in the number of projects that undergo an environmental assessment also greatly reduces opportunities for Aboriginal involvement (Kirchhoff et al. 2013).

**Omnibus budget bills**

The ability to change the environmental assessments in Canada was made possible by the passing of omnibus budget bills. An omnibus bill is a single document that is accepted or rejected through a single vote by a legislature (Kirchhoff et al. 2013). They cover several topics at once so by voting in favor of the bill means agreeing with everything in it. Bill C-38 and C-45 were voted upon and passed in 2012 and introduced changes to more than 60 federal acts and regulations in Canada, including environmental protection and environmental assessments. The passing of these bills has been criticized and Devris (2012) concluded that: "there is a clear lack of transparency and accountability." The bills took only two months each to pass. One of the changes bill C-38 made to the CEAA 2012 was that the National Energy Board (NEB) could take over assessment responsibility in their mandate areas. The

NEB is responsible for reviewing pipeline projects at the federal level (Kirchhoff & Tsuji 2014), and has expertise in the sectors they cover but have traditionally been close to the industries they regulate (Gibson 2012). This is why many Aboriginal peoples I met with expressed skepticism and discontent with the Joint Review Panel process that was set up by the NEB.

**Joint Review Panel process**

In late 2009 a Joint Review Panel (JRP) were tasked with evaluating the balance of social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed ENGP project. This evaluation would then become a recommendation on whether or not the project should be approved and give suggesting conditions to mitigate negative impacts if approved (McCreary & Milligan 2014). A three-person panel was selected by Canada with no involvement of First Nations. The Yinka Dene Alliance (YDA), an alliance of six First Nations who together oppose the pipeline, made numerous requests to have Aboriginal representation in the panel but was dismissed (YDA 2013). Additionally, none of the panel members were from BC. Over the course of a year and a half, from January 2012 to May 2013, public hearings took place along the planned route of the pipeline. Here First Nations, environmental groups, political representatives, community-based groups and individuals cross-examined Enbridge on its application and evidence (Forest Ethics 2013). Many of the people I talked to expressed disdain with the whole JRP process. One hereditary chief I interviewed explained insecurities on whether or not to even participate in it:

> "We really had to think hard. Do we want to be part of this process they have outlined? Because we knew it wasn't going to work in our favor, but we learned a long time ago: if you aren't in the room and raise your hand, they can ignore you." (13.07.15).

Another participant expressed grievances with the information presented at the hearings: "It's a joke and a lie. When you are trying to say: 'Oh, it's the safest pipeline on the planet, it's not going to break.' That's all a joke." (03.07.15). The panel received and considered feedback from 1200 participants and received over 9000 letters of comment (McLean 2015) and on December 18th 2013 they issued their recommendation for approval for the project, notwithstanding the 209 conditions that it imposed on the project before construction could start. The approval was not shocking to the Aboriginal peoples of BC, but still disappointing.

The JRP process seemed rigged and they were especially concerned with the fact that notions of Aboriginal title were not allowed in the narrative (Rossiter & Wood 2015). After the issued decision from the JRP, the government had six months to review and make their decision on approval. On June 17th 2014 they approved it with the same 209 conditions to be met and further Aboriginal consultation.

As mentioned earlier, most land claims have not been settled in BC. Aboriginal title to a vast majority of territory provides First Nations with the ability to legally challenge the government in cases like these (Veltmeyer & Bowles 2014). But the continued facilitation of industrial development within Aboriginal territory and rigged processes that are supposed to evaluate if a project is in the people's best interest, makes it difficult. Legacies of suppression and exploitation are present today and this is, as Simpson (2004:380) bluntly points out: "colonialism in action."

## 2.5  "They can't arrest a whole nation." Bill C-51

The proposed and government approved ENGP is still a highly controversial subject among Aboriginal peoples and settler Canadians alike. Many of the people I talked to for the thesis expressed the belief that the pipeline would not go through because they themselves would block it, both legally, in court, and physically, in the form of blockades and protests. In many ways Aboriginal peoples are on a "collision course" (Cuthand 2015) with federal and provincial governments, as well as with the pipeline companies that encroach on their traditional lands. One YDA co-founder I interviewed explained how more and more First Nations are taking a stand against industry and the government and how this has scared the previous conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper (in office from 2006-2015), and that it "goes against his greedy plan to accommodate industry, corporations and banks" (14.07.2015).

Figure 6: Street art showing discontent with PM Harper. The poster on the right-handed side reads: "Is Harper an imperialist?" (Photo: Hanna Høiland)

This activist, along with many other Aboriginal peoples I talked to, therefore believe the close ties between industry and government is the reason the Canadian Senate in June 2015 brought the *Anti-Terrorism Act*, largely known as Bill C-51, into law. The bill is intended to enhance the security of Canadians by changing security laws and government agency powers, especially those that relate to the Canadian Security Intelligence Services, the Canadian equivalent to the United States' Central Intelligence Agency. The purpose of the bill is to "encourage and facilitate the sharing of information among Government of Canada institutions in order to protect Canada against activities that undermine the security of Canada" (Forcese & Roach 2015:67). This means that the state can place individuals or groups under surveillance and monitor they everyday activities. An accompanying definition includes "interference with critical infrastructure," which could be, for example, pipelines and other industrial development infrastructure (Roach & Forcese 2015:7). Bill C-51 exempts lawful advocacy, protest, dissent and artistic expression from activities that undermine the security of Canada. But Larsen (2015) does not find this reassuring. The term lawful is difficult to define in relation to the bill, as unlawful doesn't necessarily mean criminal, just

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that it is without lawful authority. Aboriginal peoples in Canada are worried they will be targeted for defending their territories from devastation associated with further destructive industrial development (Friedel 2015). An example of this is the *Unist'ot'en Camp*, a non-violent resistance camp, which is built in the right-of-way for the ENGP. Rumors and fears of mass-arrests in this camp were highly present in the late summer of 2015 (Madondo 2015; Trumpener 2015; Earth First Journal 2015). One participant I spoke with about the possible ramifications of the bill said this: "They can't arrest a whole nation of people crying out for the earth" (26.06.15).

Because of the vagueness of the language in the passed bill, anyone defending First Nations' sovereignty could automatically be criminalized for refusing to recognize the supremacy of the colonial state (Bell 2015). It has been characterized as pedagogy of fear and racist demonization (Giroux 2015) and Aboriginal protesters, along with environmentalists, can be subject to information sharing involving over 17 different federal institutions (Roach & Forcese 2015). The extreme potential repercussions facing, for example, the Unist'ot'en Camp, cannot be underestimated (Friedel 2015). Pamela Palmater, a Mi'kmaq activist and lawyer, explained the inherent colonialism in the bill in an interview with the Canadian Charger:

> "We've had maybe two deaths from terrorism on Canadian soil but we've had 1200 murdered and missing indigenous women. Where's the Bill C-51 for them? We're really talking about an over-exaggerated response to just a fear, not even evidence-based reality." (Stockdale 2015).

## 2.6 Summary

Large-scale resource extraction processes alienate Aboriginal peoples from their land by forcing them off of it (Huseman & Short 2012). This denial of access to land-based cultural practices leads to a loss of freedom on both the individual and collective level. Alfred (2009:49) equated this to the psychological effect of *anomie*, or 'the state of profound alienation that results from experiencing serious cultural dissolution.' The practices of Aboriginal peoples to maintain and enhance their lands, waters, and living resources comes from generations of observations and interactions, leading to an understanding of ecological systems that is complex and intimate (Turner et al. 2000). This knowledge and understanding

is threatened along with the lives and cultures of the people who used to inhabit the lands. The settler government remains committed to facilitating the industrial development of natural resources located within Aboriginal territories. And now, the recently passed bill C-51 is making it difficult for Aboriginal peoples to defend their land without being labeled as terrorists. It is with this background of continued colonial actions from the settler state along with expanding industrial development, that my time spent with the Aboriginal participants of this research was done.

# 3 Theory

An understanding of the intimate relation Aboriginal peoples have with their lands is an important theoretical and historical starting point for understanding the phenomenon of Aboriginal resistance. Through interviews, the themes of knowledge, nature and worldview came up repeatedly. In this chapter I will outline these themes as concepts to address their importance within Aboriginal resistance. To recognize this, it is important to consider different understandings. This is in line with developments within the field of human geography, where social constructionism – and its focus on a critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge – is widely used (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002).

I will therefore present Indigenous knowledge, nature and worldview with their Western counterparts, both because the Western understanding and application of these concepts are what is mostly used in the world today, and because the case, the ENGP, is both proposed and wanted by Western institutions. The concepts are separated for clarity but it will become apparent that they are connected. As mentioned in chapter 2, for many Aboriginal peoples in BC, the ENGP is seen as an extension of colonialism and an attack on an Aboriginal way of living. This speaks to the way Indigenous peoples relate to the concepts. Present in the outlining of Indigenous versus Western understandings, is a slight favoritism towards the Indigenous kind. However, Berkes (2008) highlights the inclination of ascribing myths to Indigenous peoples. The first is one of the *Exotic Other*, where traditional peoples are intrinsically attuned to nature, which makes it possible for them to live 'in balance' with their environment. The second myth is the intruding *Wastrel* where Indigenous peoples are superstitious, careless and backwards. The third myth portrays Indigenous peoples as *Noble Savages* where they should continue to live as 'primitives', lest they become a threat to the very ecosystem in which they live. These myths often blend and make up a view of Indigenous peoples as something they are not. Indigenous peoples do not always act as wise stewards of the environment (Berkes 2008; Redford 1992). Hames (2007) moderates this argument by explaining that many of the Indigenous peoples were living sustainably until the arrival of Europeans, and Krech (2005:80) states that the effect Indigenous peoples had on land and resources "did not hold a candle to the long-term impact of people of European descent."

Before presenting the concepts of knowledge, nature, and worldview and their relation to Aboriginal resistance, I will briefly present notion of *Indigenous peoples*. The term is an all-encompassing term that includes the Aboriginal or First Peoples in all countries, including Canada (Kanatami 2015). The term is generally used in international context. The *United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations* emphasizes several principles to be considered in any definition of Indigenous peoples (Kenrick & Lewis 2004). This includes, for example, priority in time, with respect to the occupation and use of a specific territory prior to colonization; the voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness; self-identification; and an experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist. *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (UNDRIP 2007) emphasize the importance of self-definition: "Indigenous peoples have a collective and individual right to maintain and develop their distinct identities and characteristics, including the right to identify themselves as Indigenous and to be recognized as such". In Canada, the term Indigenous is not used legally. Instead, Canadian Aboriginal Peoples comprise three groups: North American Indian, Métis and the Inuit. However, 'Indian' is considered derogatory and outdated and has generally been replaced by Native or First Nation. First Nation is not an officially defined category but is widely used to describe Aboriginal peoples not of Métis or Inuit origin.

It is important to note that the term Indigenous is problematic in that it appears to collectivize distinct populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different (Smith 1999). The Aboriginal population in Canada is approximately 3-4% of the total Canadian population of 35 million, while estimates of the number of Aboriginal peoples in North America before European contact range from two million to as many as 18 million (Graham 2002:56). However, Aboriginal peoples as a demographic are one of the fastest growing in Canada (Mendelson 2004).

In this chapter I will mostly use Indigenous because the outlining of the theoretical concepts is not exclusive to Canadian Aboriginal peoples only. It is an introduction to theoretical framings that vary across Indigenous populations across the globe. In other chapters I will mostly use Aboriginal peoples because I will be writing about Canadian Aboriginal peoples specifically.

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# 3.1 Resistance

"To release me from the chains with which I bound myself, chains which were welded to me by a history neither I nor my ancestors created. Bondage is paralyzing and removing chains is painful. When the chains are bound to you by internal attitudes and beliefs created by external world conditions, removing them is both painful and humbling" (Maracle 1996:VIII)

McIsaac (2000) states that for resistance to be considered a legitimate concept, it must truly challenge or subvert the dominant culture. She quotes Scholle (1990) when she suggests that it is not a question of whether resistance is expressed, but rather whether it is significant. This may hold merit when speaking in terms of social agency as she does, however, Bargh (2007) concludes that a broader conception of Indigenous resistance is needed. Both the formal acts of resistance and the everyday acts of resistance or acts of 'making do' emphasize the daily practices of people as "actively reshaping and actively participating in power relationships." (2007:17).

When engaging in the kind of comparative explanation between Indigenous and Western perspectives, generalizations must be seen as indicative and not definitive. Indigenous knowledge systems, views on nature and worldviews, as well as their Western counterparts, are themselves diverse, constantly adapting and changing in response to new conditions. The qualities in both Indigenous and Western systems represent tendencies rather than fixed traits and must therefore be used carefully to avoid overgeneralization (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2005). The heterogeneity of both the Indigenous and Western application of the terms can become lost in efforts to try to understand them. This might fix them in space and time and suppress its dynamic nature (Hunt 2014). These concerns must be present while reading this chapter.

## 3.1.1 Knowledge in resistance

Castree (2005:12) defines knowledge as "any form of understanding that can be articulated verbally, textually or pictorially." Knowledge is therefore how we represent the world we live in, both to ourselves and to others. All societies strive to make sense of how the natural world works and behaves and try to apply this knowledge to guide practices of manipulating the

environment (Gadgil et al. 1993). Creating order out of disorder is done through general intellectual processes, and Berkes (2008) states that these processes might be quite similar in both Western and Indigenous knowledge seeking. A classification of knowledge into Indigenous and Western is not optimal. It seeks, according to Agrawal (1995), to separate and fix in time and space systems that can never be separated or fixed.

**Indigenous knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge is defined as a cumulative body of knowledge and belief handed down through generations by cultural transmission about the relationship of living beings, humans included, with one another and with their environment (Berkes 2008; Gadgil et al. 1993; Ohmagari & Berkes 1997). Indigenous societies have always possessed sophisticated systems of knowledge (Battiste 2000; Loppie 2007; Smith 1999), and the search for knowledge is, from an Indigenous perspective, considered to be a spiritual journey (Louis 2007). Such knowledge is passed down from generation to generation and in many societies by word of mouth (Agrawal 1995). Indigenous knowledge is, according to Berkes (2008) characterized by embededdness, boundedness, community, attachment to the local environment, and a non-instrumental approach to nature. The long inhabitation of a particular place creates the depth of Indigenous knowledge. This knowledge comes from the land and it is through the relationship Indigenous peoples develop and foster with the essential forces of nature that have made it embedded and bounded (Simpson 2004). Their knowledge is vital to them as well, they are aware of what to expect and also what anomalies exist. This type of knowledge arises from both observation and interaction with the natural world and surrounding environments, as with Western knowledge. A key difference is that Indigenous knowledge can also arise from visions, stories, and spiritual insights (Cajete 2000; Getty 2009).

In the Western world, knowledge can be owned and commodified through for example, copyright and trademarks. Indigenous knowledge in contrast, is perceived as belonging to the whole group, individuals cannot own or hold knowledge for themselves (Smith 2000). Another contrast is that in Indigenous education, *how* you learn is as important as *what* you learn (Simpson 2004). Knowledge is shared through stories that are intended to teach and so languages are an integral part of Indigenous knowledge systems (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2005; Hunt 2014; Loppie 2007).

**Western knowledge**

Western knowledge is here delimited to mean modern scientific knowledge that arose from the Eurocentric world – meaning Europe and North America. It is, according to Agrawal (1995), associated with the machinery of the state and the people who are the bearers of it often believe in its superiority. This knowledge is often compartmentalized and taught in the detached setting of a classroom or laboratory, reducing and fragmenting the knowledge (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2005). The knowledge systems of the West are characterized by disembeddedness, universalism, individualism, mobility, and an instrumental attitude toward nature (Berkes 2008; Turner & Clifton 2009).

In any society there are knowledge-producers that are able to claim that their knowledge is especially 'truthful'. Today, the scientific and Western way of understanding and attaining knowledge about both the human and non-human world are more or less taken for granted. It is part of a hegemony – a lived system of meanings and values (Williams 1977) – where the meanings and values are experienced as practice and appear as reciprocally confirming.

The above arrangement of Western knowledge is attached to the Enlightenment period where ontology and epistemology were considered to be separate and not affecting one another. *New materialism* attempts to offer a different perspective to signification, materiality, and methodologies of crafting knowledge. Here, what is in the world and what we know about things in the world cannot be considered as distinctive things. They are constantly shaping one another. This can be similar to poststructuralists who, when writing about language, explain that words are fluid, but new materialists point out that materiality too is unstable. Thinking differently about the fundamental structure of matter has far-reaching normative and existential implications (Coole & Frost 2010). Coole and Frost (2010:6) explain that we find ourselves "having to think in new ways about the nature of matter and the matter of nature; about the elements of life, the resilience of the planet, and the distinctiveness of the human." Stacy Alaimo (2011) criticizes Coole and Frost on their focus on the materiality of human life-worlds, thereby ignoring non-human animals and ecosystems. However, Van der Tuin and Dolphijn (2010) when writing about the works of prominent new materialist scholars Manuel DeLanda and Rosi Braidotti, show how they give special attention to matter as it has been so much neglected by dualist thought. "Reworking and eventually breaking through dualism appears to be key to new materialism." (2010:156).

Together with feminist writing such as Donna Haraway's *Situated Knowledges* (1988) where she criticizes the science's search for 'objective' knowledge, and Sneja Gunew's (1990) book *Feminist Knowledge*, where issues such as what legitimate knowledge is and to what extent knowledge and power are intertwined are discussed, new materialism show that there are great developments within Western knowledge that no longer hold on to the very modernist paradigm of truth claims. Hodge and Derezotas (2008:106) explain that the 'objective' knowledge produced within modernism is actually a value-informed paradigm that "tends to reflect the interests of those with power." This is being changed and challenged by among others, new materialists and feminist writers.

**Resistance through knowledge**

How we perceive, attain and value knowledge has long been controlled and developed by the Western world. By reacting to an uncritical focus on Western science as the main producer and deliverer of knowledge, Indigenous people are taking a stand of resistance (Smith 2000). Alternative stories are an important part of these acts of resistance against colonization (Iseke-Barnes 2002).

In the Western world today we see a growing interest in spirituality and ecology (Coates et al. 2006). Through this an emphasis on the need to accept and value alternative perspectives and accept knowledge systems that are placed outside the dominant Western paradigm are highlighted. This alternative way of looking at the world may be accepting of Indigenous knowledge systems, but we are yet to see a full inclusion of it. As Hunt (2014) explains, Indigenous knowledges need to retain its active, mobile, relational nature rather than the fixity we find it in today, more or less stuck at the point of contact with colonizers. The fairly new Western interest in *traditional ecological knowledge* (TEK) was initially viewed with optimism and hope by Indigenous peoples. They saw it as an opportunity to indigenize environmental thinking and policy to the betterment of all people and to press on the agenda of decolonization and liberation (Simpson 2004). However, that was not always the outcome. Indigenous knowledge has become more of interest to Western society because of its potential to help design more effective management for various ecological systems (Dewalt 1994; Matsui 2012; Ohmagari & Berkes 1997). Turner and Clifton (2009) write how either ignoring Indigenous peoples' perspectives or attempting to use their knowledge without their full consent and participation would be unethical. Even where Indigenous ways of knowing

are respected, projects that aim to include Indigenous knowledge have undermined or blatantly ignored the Indigenous spiritual relationships with the knowledge (Prosper et al. 2011; Reo 2011). There are legitimate forms of generating knowledge in Indigenous communities. Western thinkers must acknowledge this and see it as valid in its own right (Duran & Duran 2000), and not just measure, classify, collect, dissect, and map the knowledge so that it suits the Western agenda of, for example, resource management (Chinn 2007). Also, when Indigenous knowledge is made into a text, it is translated from the Indigenous language to English. Not only is it stripped of its fluidity and void of the spatial relationship created between Indigenous people, its interpretation is locked "in a cognitive box delineated by the structures of a language that evolved to communicate the worldview of the colonizers." (Simpson 2004:380).

What seems to have been lost on the people trying to access and 'save' Indigenous knowledge is that its context and meaning is derived from the relationship the knowledge holders have with the natural world around them (Simpson 2002). Indigenous knowledge does not need to be saved and rescued; Indigenous people need knowledge of their own power and how to access it so that they can be the protectors of their knowledges. The continued destruction of land through development projects, like the ENGP, are the factors that are threatening the continuation of Indigenous knowledge creation.

The interactions around TEK have now become important sites of resistance and mobilization for Indigenous knowledge holders and political leaders. They are advocating for Indigenous control over Indigenous territories and Indigenous knowledge. Not taking knowledge out of its cultural context is one of the biggest challenges of Indigenous knowledge. Berkes (2009) also calls for the need of a deeper partnership of traditional knowledge and science to solve conservation problems, strengthen the network of community conserved areas, engage in ecosystem-based management, set up cross-cultural monitoring for environmental change, and carry out ecological restoration that responds to community needs. This means involving the Indigenous peoples, who are holders of TEK, in ways and on the premises that they themselves decide.

### 3.1.2  Nature in resistance

> "The concept of nature has accumulated innumerable layers of meaning … Nature is material and it is spiritual, it is given and made, pure and undefiled; nature is order and it is disorder, sublime and secular, dominated and victorious; it is a totality and a series of parts, woman and object, organism and machine." (Smith 1984:11)

Noel Castree in his book *Nature* reminds us of Habgood's definition of nature as "the entire physical world" (2002:4 in Castree 2005:1). And Williams writes that, "The word nature is perhaps the most complex in the English language" (1983:219).

**Indigenous nature**

In general, Indigenous communities have developed strong relations to their land and are attuned to their local environment (Colchester 1997). They view nature through what Salmón (2000) calls *kincetric ecology*. Humans are here part of an extended ecological family that shares ancestry and origin. The surrounding environment is your kin and it includes all the natural elements of an ecosystem. These are generous relatives who give of themselves so that humans may live (Turner & Clifton 2009). Likewise, Callicot (1982) claims that the typical Indigenous attitude is to regard all features of nature as enspirited. A great deal of identity and wellbeing comes from this sense of relationship to the land and to the creatures and objects within the environment (Fonda 2011).

For many Indigenous people, nature is best understood as the land itself. It is the place that both feeds them and heals them. For hunting, fishing and food processing, certain kinds of knowledges are essential (Ohmagari & Berkes 1997). It is therefore of great importance that the land and ecosystems are intact so that they can continue to nurture these relationships (Simpson 2004). The holistic understanding and relation with the land is crucial because it embodies philosophical perspectives and modes for transmission of this knowledge and the worldview it is part of (Prosper et al. 2011; Turner & Clifton 2009).

**Western nature**

Much of Western knowledge about nature was created in the period of colonial exploration in the late eighteenth century and continuing through the nineteenth century. Pratt (1992:31 in Johnson & Murton 2007:122), described the process by which nature was possessed and

transformed: "One by one the planet's life forms were drawn out of the tangled threads of their life surroundings and rewoven into European-based patterns of global unity and order." Even in the history of geography we find the *Royal Geographical Society* in London actively supporting expeditions linked to the expansion of the British Empire. These 'unknown lands' needed topographic description, social survey, resource inventory, mapping and comparative observation, and these occupations were filled by many geographers (Castree 2005).

There is a static vision of nature in the Western world (Datta 2015) where humankind is apart from nature (Colchester 1997). This idea is deeply rooted in Western civilization and many scholars contribute this to the Judaeo-Christian traditions where man was given dominion over the beasts (Colchester 1997; Geisinger 1999; Klein 1994). White (2004) traces the historical roots of the ecological crisis and finds that the Judaeo-Christian concept of time as non-repetitive and linear along with a striking story of creation has had a great impact on how large parts of the Western world interact with nature. "Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. [...] And although man's body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God's image." (2004:197). Callicot (1982:299) sees the Western relation to nature similarly, where, in relation to nature, the human person is "…alien not only to his physical environment but to his own body, both of which he is encouraged to fear and attempt to conquer." The later rise of science and capitalism served to deepen the rift between people and nature and strengthen the view of domination. An ideology of nature as valued solely by its ability to satisfy human needs became strong (Geisinger 1999; Klein 1994). This is supported by a linear future image of time in which change and development are sought, and it feeds an exploitative attitude towards nature (Kearney 1984). White (2004) agrees with this and claims that the ecological problems we face today cannot be understood apart from the attitudes towards nature, which are deeply rooted in Christian dogma. She asserts that our present science and technology alone cannot provide solutions for the ecological crisis because of its anchoring within Christian arrogance towards nature. The idea that nature, or environment as it is mostly referred to in the Western world, is actually manageable and controllable is a uniquely modernist concept (Berkes 2008).

As with most presentations of a Western 'something', there are great developments and differences within one. The presentation of Western nature above lies closer to a positivistic and humanist view. Within humanism, as explained by Badmington (2004:1345), 'Man'

stands at the centre of things. He is distinct from animals, machines and other nonhuman entities. These assumptions rely upon a set of binary oppositions, such as human/inhuman, natural/cultural, and wild/tame, to name a few. Reason dominates nature and "permits the human realm to be increasingly demarcated and separated from the natural realm," Murdoch (2004:1356) explains. The continued struggle to emancipate humans from nature brings with it domination and tyranny, as Simon (2003:4) writes: "the emancipatory impulse of liberal humanism has come to be understood as being unwittingly complicit in colonialist, patriarchal and capitalist structures."

An –ism increasingly growing within the social sciences is *posthumanism*. There are three general views on posthumanism, first, a cultural posthumanism critical of humanism and its legacy and questioning the historical notions of 'human' and 'human nature' (Esposito 2011). The second is philosophical posthumanism, examining the ethical implications of expanding the circle of moral concern and extending subjectivities beyond the human species (Miah 2007). Lastly, there is transhumanism, seeking to develop and make available technologies that can enhance human intellectual and physical capacities to achieve a "posthuman future" (Bostrom 2005:22). These strands of posthumanism are sometimes merged as in Fukuyama's (2002) *Our Posthuman Future*. The conflation of the distinction between transhumanism and posthumanism, especially, is troubling as transhumanism derives from the ideals of "human perfectability, rationality, and agency inherited from Renaissance humanism and the Enlightenment." (Wolfe 2010:xiii). This is quite far away from Haraway's literary invention of *cyborgs* for example, where "technology is seen as co-emergent with social and natural worlds, and not something alien to them" (Elichirigoity 2000:147), and where she advances the notion of a post-gender world where being a cyborg is preferable to being a goddess (Miah 2007). Haraway's claims about cyborgs were not based on an interest to enhance humanity, it was more likely proposed to disrupt ideas about what it means to be human and the social and political entitlements it might imply (Haraway 1985; Miah 2007).

For Hayles (1999) posthumanism is characterized by a loss of subjectivity that is based on bodies losing their boundaries. This speaks to what Alaimo (2011) writes about *bodily natures*, "By emphasizing the movement across bodies, trans-corporality reveals the interchanges and interconnections between various bodily natures" (2011:282). She contends that human and environment no longer can be considered separate. Bodily natures explore the interconnections, interchanges, and transits between human bodies and nonhuman natures

(Alaimo 2010). So by imagining human corporeality as trans-corporeality, where the human is always intermeshed with the "more-than-human world" (2010:2), the human is ultimately inseparable from 'the environment.'

This brief presentation of *posthumanism* and *bodily natures* is not meant to be exhaustive but is given to illustrate that there are developments within the Western world of how nature is viewed.

**Resistance through nature**

Nature is to Indigenous peoples the land itself, meaning not only the environment as the Western world often sees it. But included in it we find the spirits, the soul and all the relationships as well. Resisting continued colonial practice through nature is done by protecting nature, by defending the land, and healing relationships. Settler governments remain committed to facilitating industrial development of natural resources located on Indigenous lands, effectively destroying the land within those territories (Simpson 2004). The colonial definitions of nature have successfully been applied to practice unequal power relations within many Indigenous communities (Datta 2015). Further, they seem to favor the dominant management paradigms and development projects that are based on the disassociation of humans from nature. The power to say what nature is, how it works, and what to do (or not to do) with it have far-reaching consequences for both people and nature (Castree 2005). That is why since humans, in many parts of the Western world, are placed at the top of the natural hierarchy, nature only exists for the sake of them, while in most Indigenous communities, the land and the animal inhabitants of that land are seen as coequal members of the natural social order (Callicott 1982). Much destruction of nature and consequences of that destruction, has taken place because the Western dominant view of nature has persisted.

Merchant (1995 in Johnson & Murton 2007) sees the story of the Western world as a meta-narrative through which we are educated and live our lives. Because it is only a story – although compelling and powerful – she observes that we can rewrite the story that has separated humans from non-humans. For Johnson & Murton (2007) it is essential for Western scholarship, and geography in particular, to succeed in decolonizing the construction of nature, which has fixed Indigenous peoples both spatially and temporally. Alaimo (1994) sees the glorification of nature and Mother Earth by ecofeminists in the Western World as

playing into the pockets of patriarchal capitalism. Although it promotes a more respectful attitude and advance a less exploitative relationship with the Earth, it "often falls into mysticism, widening the great divide between nature and culture" (1994:143). It might be necessary for the Western world to acknowledge, respect and incorporate Indigenous views on nature in order to slow down climate change, biodiversity loss and other pressing environmental issues, but this must be done with Indigenous peoples' consent and participation. In analyzing a car commercial where both Indigenous culture, nature and women are glorified, Alaimo (1994) argues that this does not truly valorize them, but transforms them into exotic, sexualized feminine Other. Indigenous peoples are already resisting the struggles facing the world by resisting a continued attack on nature. Supporting them in their efforts to do just that might be the best sign of respect and acknowledgement (Datta 2015; Johnson & Murton 2007; Simpson 2002). But when the Western world wants to aid Indigenous peoples in their resistance against exploitation of the land, the mystification and glorification often found within those accounts only "bind them more securely to narratives of phallic domination." (Alaimo 1994:145). When nature is altered or destroyed to facilitate a development project, the connection and experience Indigenous people had with that land is changed, or in some cases lost. When Indigenous people have fewer and fewer reasons to go out on the land, there are fewer occasions for children to observe and learn from the natural world (Simpson 2004). That is why resistance through nature is so important for Indigenous peoples.

### 3.1.3  Worldview in resistance

A worldview is a way of understanding the world and your place in it. Schlitz et al. (2010) include genetic tendencies, religion, culture and geographic region as aspects that give rise to our worldviews and Hedlund-de Witt (2012:74) sees worldviews as the "inescapable frameworks of meaning and meaning-making that profoundly inform our very understanding and enactment of reality." Understanding worldviews is necessary because our worldviews influence and are influenced by our belief systems, decision-making, assumptions, and modes of problem solving (Hart 2010). Hedlund-de Witt (2012) points to some of the aspects of worldviews. The first is *ontology*, which deals with the question of what exists. Different worldviews conceptualize the nature and origins of the world differently. The second aspect is *epistemology*, which deals with questions of how can we know what we know and how knowledge came about. It is intrinsically intertwined with ontology. Hedlund-de Witt

(2012:79) gives an example of "whether we ascribe to empirical science or to divine revelation as a valid source of knowledge will profoundly impact and interact with our views on nature of reality." The third aspect is *axiology* and concerns ideas about what a good life is both in terms of morals and quality of life. The fourth aspect is *anthropology* and refers to assumptions about what a human is and what the role and purpose of humans is in existence. The fifth and last aspect is *societal vision* and speaks to fundamental assumptions about how society should be organized and how challenges and problems in society should be addressed. These aspects characterize the structure of worldviews, but they do not highlight the content of, and the variations between, different worldviews.

It is important to recognize that worldviews are not binary consisting of either Indigenous or non-Indigenous. As, Hart (2010) points out they are more fluid between various peoples of the world, consisting of strong overlaps and great chasms. Any worldview is at best an approximation of reality, rather than a precise image of it. It is also important to identify that worldviews are dynamic and change over time.

## Indigenous worldview

As Whitbeck (2006:184) states, "It is extremely important to the individual cultures to acknowledge that they are unique." But there appears to be some commonalities between them that I will lay out here. Indigenous worldviews emerged as a result of people's close relationship with the environment (Morrissette et al. 1993) and the belief that the Earth is a living entity, Mother Earth (Smith 1999). All things are respected for their place in the overall system. Although there are differences between entities of the world, the relations among them are not oppositional but instead inclusive and accepting of diversity (Martin & Mirraboopa 2003). What is noteworthy is that it is a relational worldview; there is an intimate connection between the spirit, the context, the mind, and the body (Graham 2002:60). The spirit consists of spiritual practices and teachings, dreams, symbols, stories, intuition, and gifts. Context includes family, work, culture, community history, and environmental factors such as climate and weather. The mind is made up of intellect, memory, emotion, experience, and judgment, while the body includes chemistry, nutrition, genetics, substance use and abuse, sleep and rest, and age and condition (Cross 1998). Duran and Duran (2000:91) define an Indigenous worldview as "a systemic approach to being in the world that can best be categorized as process-thinking, as opposed to content thinking found in the Western worldview."

An Indigenous worldview is founded on responsibility for the land and resources, respect for all living things, and reciprocity (Archibald 2001). All life is considered to be sacred, something that is evident in the practice of beginning and ending most gatherings with a prayer to the Creator (Getty 2009; Henderson 2000b). Within Indigenous languages, trees, rocks and other inanimate entities can talk and have a spirit. Little Bear (2000:78) explains, "If everything has spirit and knowledge, then all are like me. If all are like me, then all are my relations." The world is experienced as a totality that humans are an integral part of (Duran & Duran 2000).

**Western worldview**

Modern Euro-American society is strongly based on a culture of individualism (Kearney 1984; McCormick 1997), and it sees humans as being apart from and above the natural world (Gadgil et al. 1993). In the modern Western worldview there is a real world made up of things that can be identified. The mind and reality are separate, where the rational human can come to know the objective world. The value system in this worldview is linear and singular, static, and objective (Little Bear 2000). The linearity is visible in terms of social organization that is hierarchical in both structure and power; the singularity is apparent in the thinking process of concepts such as 'one true good,' and 'one true answer'; while objectivity manifests itself in the emphasis on materialism. As Turner & Clifton (2009) explain, in the modern Western worldview people place a high value on possessions and the ability to accumulate the greatest material wealth – often far more than needed to be healthy and happy.

The above presentations of a Western worldview hold merit in some instances of the Western world. However, a growing body of people in the Western world is moving away from this *modernist* worldview. Griffin (1988) sees modernity as an aberration rather than the norm and that the modern worldview is "increasingly relativized to the status of one among many, useful for some purposes, inadequate for others." (1988:ix). The modernist worldview is commonly understood to emanate from and echo the values of the European enlightenment (Atherton & Bolland 2002), and within it there is a deep-seated privileging of human rationality over other ways of knowing (Hodge & Derezotas 2008; Slife et al. 1999). The other worldview within the Western world that is particularly prominent is *postmodernism*. Some commentators (Berger 2003; Bertens 1995; Ingram 2006) see postmodernism emerging

around the middle of the 20$^{th}$ century. Within the postmodern worldview a plurality of ways of knowing is favored (Keenan et al. 2004). Hodge and Derezotas (2008) describe the postmodern worldview as one in which human relationships and subjectivity is emphasized. Rather than a single, real material world, as championed in the modernist worldview, multiple realities exist – realities that include both the material and the spiritual. The postmodern worldview is, according to Smith (2015), relativistic, marked by a pessimistic attitude towards all claims to truth, purpose and meaning. Bruner et al. (2014) argues that Europe and North America are in the midst of a major change in worldviews, especially among young adults. The move is towards a postmodern worldview in a much more profound way than seen now. They notice a potentially monumental shift in values that can lead to changing technologies and powerful marked mechanisms. But the authors still reckon with the trouble of "assuming all newly emerging ideas concerning a restructuring of lifeways necessarily pose a fundamental threat to the underlying assumptions upon which traditional models of community life have been historically erected." (2014:45). Still, their research among undergraduate students over the past 20 years has given them some confidence in advancing the thesis of a growing and strengthened postmodern worldview.

The gradual but profound changes in Western worldviews bring, as Hedlund-de Witt (2011) elaborates on, both potentials and pitfalls. She is looking specifically at the growing contemporary spirituality for sustainable development, a type of Western counterpart to Indigenous spirituality. Among the potentials is a *rehabilitation of nature*, an emphasis on *interconnectedness*, and an orientation towards *inner and spiritual fulfillment*. She also draws attention to the pitfalls of contemporary spirituality for sustainable development. One of the pitfalls mentioned is a *potential for narcissism* because of the emphasis on inner work. A second concern is the *instrumentalizing and commercializing of spirituality*. A third pitfall is that this type of spirituality can breed *passivity*. The focus on inner work can easily come at the expense of the needed outer work. Within Indigenous worldviews, inner and outer work is simultaneous (Duran & Duran 2000; Little Bear 2000). There is no separation between the work you do on yourself and the work you do for the land, because the land is you. Most people, if they stop to think about it, presumably do understand that humans are sustained by nature, but evidently many also believe that humans can make nature work better (Walker 1999). This technology-, science- and consumerist-driven worldview of the Western world is being challenged. There is little doubt that there has been a significant greening of the Western consciousness (Hedlund-de Witt 2011; Partridge 2005), and Ray and Anderson

(2000) explain how this encompasses a deep care for ecology and saving the planet, relationships, peace, social justice, spirituality, and self-expression.

**Resistance through worldview**

As mentioned above, most Indigenous worldviews are empirical relationships with local ecosystems while in large segments of the Western worldview, the world is created for the purpose of human domination and there is a separation between the mind, body and spirit. There is a huge discord between Indigenous and dominant Western worldviews so restoring Indigenous worldviews and language is essential to make real Aboriginal solidarity and power (Henderson 2000b).

Central to Indigenous worldviews is relationality. Australian Indigenous activist Moreton-Robinson (2000:16) writes, "relationality means that one experiences the self as part of others and that others are part of the self." This type of relatedness has been especially important for members of Indigenous communities in postcolonial times. Establishing identities and connections of relatedness has been central to reconciling some of the impacts of physical dispossession and social fragmentation (Keddie 2014; Martin & Mirraboopa 2003). Colonialism in Canada suppressed Aboriginal worldviews while imposing their own Western worldview. This cruel experience contains a very important element, according to Daes (2000): the utter denial of the victims' relevance. Colonialism and oppression is a spiritual death, which is why interest, workings, and belief in Indigenous worldviews by Indigenous peoples is a very important part of resistance.

Traditional Indigenous worldviews are resources that can potentially facilitate resistance and survival (Fenelon & Hall 2008). Throughout colonialism, the worldview and traditional customs that accompany it have been under attack, so by restoring traditional relationships within modern contexts, Indigenous peoples are taking a stand of resistance. Although they may need to understand Western society, the understanding of it must not come at the expense of what they already know and the way they have come to know it (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2005). The recovering and maintenance of Indigenous worldviews represent a web of liberation strategies Indigenous peoples can employ to disentangle themselves from the oppressive control of colonizing state governments (Simpson 2004).

## 3.2 Power and empowerment

Empowerment is a "process necessary for lasting social transformations of existing dehumanizing, oppressive, or unjust circumstances." (Moser 2013:280). Within the Indigenous resistance through nature, knowledge and worldview, a central element of power, or more accurately, lack of power is essential. In the coming analysis chapters it will become clear that many of the Aboriginal participants in this study feel a lack power to make choices that effect their lives, something Moser (2013) posits as the most basic level of empowerment. Kabeer (1999) explains how it is only through losing power once had that it is possible to become empowered. That is why the term is useful for Aboriginal resistance. Hundreds of years ago they had total power over their lands and lives until they were deprived of that power through centuries of colonialism. Certain rights have been given back to them, as some of the legal victories outlined in chapter 2 show, but a fundamental say in what happens on their land is still difficult to attain.

Rowlands (1997) distinguishes between five different forms of power. All of them can in some way be linked to Aboriginal resistance. The first is *power over*; right now settler Canadians in many ways have power over Aboriginal peoples, as this type of power is often responded to with either compliance or resistance. The second form of power is *power to*; it can change existing hierarchies, increase capacities and give access to decision making. The third way to think of power is *power with*; this is power that arises from collective action, when a group tackles problems together. This is one of the types of empowerment slowly building grounds in Aboriginal communities in Canada. They are seeing strength in numbers, and similarly to Kabeer's (1999:457) writing on women's empowerment, the collective solidarity "reduces the costs for the individual" to move away from oppressive conditions and positions. Lastly, power can take the form of *power from within*, where spiritual strength and changes in consciousness are highlighted. Gutierrez et al. (1995:7) identified "awareness of the inherent power of any individual, family, group, or community" as an important factor in enhancing empowerment. This is very much present in Aboriginal resistance. A growing (re)learning of the strength and pride in their own people can, and in some cases is, showing the way towards community empowerment over both the land and their own lives.

## 3.3 Summary

A comparison between the Indigenous and Western theoretical understandings of the concepts knowledge, nature, and worldview has been given to illustrate their importance within Aboriginal resistance. It demonstrated that there are great differences among the understandings of the concepts and that the Western consideration and application of them is what is prevalent in most of the world today. As mentioned, it gives hope, in terms of the ENGP, that in some parts of the Western world there is a change towards more spiritual and sustainably friendly knowledges, views on nature, and worldviews. Where Western science, technological might and institutional models seem to have failed, a gaze is made to Indigenous knowledge and their way of viewing the world as a lesson to be learnt. Because Indigenous knowledge has permitted its holders to exist in 'harmony' with nature, allowing them to use it sustainably, it is seen as especially pivotal in discussions of sustainable resource management (Agrawal 1995). Salick (2009) for example, makes the concluding point of expanding our perspectives to learn the lessons that traditional cultures have to offer so that we may find that they can teach us how to save ourselves, and McArthur (2014) states that Indigenous peoples are the communities with the longest history of appropriate resource management. This gives an image of Indigenous peoples as being holders of some great secret of how to be a sustainable world community, something Berkes (2008) have challenged as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

The separation of resistance into fields of knowledge, nature and worldview was done to emphasize the three important stances of difference from Western thinking and practice. Reading through them, it is possible to recognize that they are very much intertwined. Well-being and survival of Indigenous peoples are dependent on the survival of their lands – hence nature. The continued intimate relationship with the land is dependent on transmission of Indigenous knowledge, which is heavily linked to the land. And the worldview of Indigenous peoples influence both the way they care for and maintain relationships with the land and how knowledge is gathered, understood, and transmitted. The ENGP challenges their knowledge, view on nature and worldviews, which makes it an interesting case to examine.

# 4 Methods chapter

> "I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speak subject, and you are now at the center of my talk" (hooks, 1990:151-152).

The above excerpt holds a tension and struggle I have dealt with throughout this project. When I first chose to have Aboriginal peoples as my participants I wasn't fully aware of the colonial history associated with it. Working through my own experiences with them, together with literature that poses these difficulties, I have to the best of my ability tried to avoid speaking on anyone's behalf. I have tried to avoid posing my own sound of legitimacy at the expense of their "noisy" background (Fine 1994:73). Unfortunately, a great deal of qualitative research has reproduced a colonizing discourse of self and other, where the other is interpreted through the eyes and cultural standards of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Sunseri 2007).

In qualitative research the researcher brings his or hers personal histories and perspectives with them and any gaze at what is being studied is filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Hay 2010). With critical reflexivity it is possible to take steps to ensure the reliability and credibility of one's own research. Here the researcher considers and is open about how her subjectivity could influence the different stages of the research project. The researcher recognizes that what she describes in no way exists apart from her involvement in it (Steier 1991). The need to challenge assumptions, uncover our own tacit world and see how our values enter our research is why I have used critical reflexivity throughout this research.

In this chapter I will describe some of the considerations and choices made to avoid further marginalization, and actually 'walk the talk,' through, among others, critical reflexivity (Wallerstein 1999). I will explain the methodological choices and show how it suits the

project's research questions. I will also elaborate on some of the challenges and ethical dilemmas I was faced with doing research with Aboriginal peoples.

## 4.1  Research with Aboriginal peoples

Aboriginal peoples in Canada have a long history of cultural and physical invasion that has attempted assimilation through the residential school system and of research that has quantified and described their reality, but has done little to improve it (Barlett et al. 2007; Dickson & Green 2001; Graham 2002). This makes doing research with all Indigenous peoples far from a straightforward endeavor. Smith (1999), in her groundbreaking book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, explains how the term research is "inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary." (1999:1). I read these words while I was in Canada conducting research and they were shocking and sobering to me. I had read up on research with marginalized and Indigenous people and knew I had to take several careful steps to ensure that my research agenda is sympathetic, respectful, and ethical from an Indigenous perspective (Louis 2007). But those words made the rhetoric real and the abstract embodied, as Sikes (2006) explains. Personal doubts as to whether or not this project was feasible crossed my mind several times. I didn't want to end up having qualitative research findings that further marginalize Indigenous peoples (Denzin et al. 2008) or "smash and grab" as Braun et al. (2013:122) call it when the researchers come and take what they need to advance their careers, and leave with no discernible good left to the community. Louis (2007:131) brutally points out "If research does not benefit the community by extending the quality of life for those in the community, it should not be done."

In the following sections I will elaborate on steps I took to make this project as decolonizing and participatory as possible.

**Decolonizing methodologies**

Science is a quest for knowledge that was developed in the historical context of Europe's search for new lands and economic resources (Chinn 2007). Indigenous peoples have through this been politically, socially, and economically dominated by colonial forces and marginalized through biased legislation and educational initiatives and policies that served

Western knowledge systems at the expense of their own (Louis 2007). Research is linked to colonialism and oppression and must be decolonized. Smith (1999) also points out that research through imperial eyes and from the Indigenous perspective steals knowledge from others and then uses it to benefit the people who stole it. The fairly recent globalization of knowledge and particularly of Western culture constantly reaffirms the West's view of itself as the holder of legitimate knowledge.

There are, according to Lincoln and González (2008 & 2006), five ways in which Western scholars can help to decolonize methodology and research. The first is to work with *bilingual data*. Because of timeframe and personal resources I was unable to learn any of my participant's traditional languages. There are over 60 Aboriginal languages grouped into 12 distinct language families in Canada (StatCan 2014). Most Aboriginal peoples in Canada also speak English and during interviews and time spent together all communications was done in English without noticeable challenges. But I kept in mind that failure to know and understand the first languages of respondents can leave researchers with misunderstandings, inaccuracies and misleading information. Further, Bhattacharya (2007) points out that writing in a language about people whose first language is not that one can indicate an established mental and epistemological colonization. A step I have taken to work in some respect towards this goal is to write this thesis in English and not my mother tongue, Norwegian, so as to make the findings readily available to participants, I also doubled-checked with some of the participants during and after interviews if what they expressed was unclear to me. I also found some comfort in Wilson's (2001:179) words that "it is not helpful to make people who cannot speak an Indigenous language feel bad about it, but what might be most important is mastery of the language chosen."

The second is to consider *non-Western cultural traditions*. Being among residues of colonial practices offers a potential minefield of possibilities for cultural offense. Researchers need to not only be aware of them but also actively work with them (Lincoln & González 2006). For example, by using unfamiliar terms Barlett et al. (2007) explain a possible consequence is the increased likelihood of eliciting responses more in line with the Western culture from which these terms originate and then possibly miss out on Indigenous perspectives. I didn't realize this point until later in my data collection phase, and found it difficult to change interview questions without using words like, for example, community. However, I found that changing

entire questions so as to let the participants choose which direction to take the conversation helped a lot in gaining richer data.

The third is *multiple perspectives* in texts. To achieve this, research needs to be shaped by the needs and questions of local people, as well as carried out under their direction (González & Lincoln 2006). In practice this means collaboration of two or more writer-analysts where at least one is a local or indigenous resident. Formally I did not have a collaborator with me throughout the process of doing this project. But in the field one of my participants became an informal collaborator in that she set up interviews for me, introduced me to the community members and invited me a long for many of their daily activities. During our drives and time spent together we would often discuss my thesis and she gave me pointers on what I should delve more into and what I should avoid. One time, on the phone with her sister-in-law, she expressed how she had helped me to change the focus of my thesis from the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline to connection to the land. That is an outcome of multiple perspectives in my text. I came with a partially fixed idea of talking to them about the pipeline and climate change consequences but left with a deeper understanding and exploration into worldviews, connections, ceremonies and stories. That wouldn't have happened if I had insisted on only asking information of them that supported my wish. The ENGP has become a background and site of struggle for where different views and stories of the world meets. The perspective broadening mechanisms that I found in listening and letting them tell their stories are invaluable to the result of this project.

The fourth is *multi-vocal and multilingual texts*. Here González and Lincoln (2006) explain the importance of reaching across cultures and making the results of the research available and accessible. To abide to this, texts must be produced in two or more languages simultaneously. Essentially all of my data was collected in English, which makes it nearly impossible for me to present the text in other languages. A self-reflective criticism is that I in some interviews should have asked the participants if they wanted a translator present in case they felt more comfortable speaking in their native language. None of my participants expressed this wish, but I didn't offer it either. This represents potential misunderstandings in my own analysis and presentation of the project. Meanings and underlying thoughts may be missed when the participants had to speak in English.

Lastly, is *technical issues to ensure accessibility*. This covers availability, publication, and co-authorship (González & Lincoln 2006). Regarding availability and publication, I will send a copy of the finished project to my participants so that they easily can have access to it. When it comes to co-authorship I have had difficulties in meeting this standard. As a master thesis, this project is small in both scope and time. What I did do in the field was give remuneration in the form of a paid meal or gas. A co-authorship is challenging in a master thesis, and I have chosen to dedicate this project to my participants as a sign of gratitude.

**A decolonized research paradigm**

Paradigms are the cultural foundations of sciences and humanities, and constitute a set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that goes together to guide people's actions as to how they are going to go about doing their research (Stanfield 1994; Wilson 2001). The dominant research paradigms of today vary between positivism and post-positivism, critical theory, postmodernism, constructivist theory, and post-structuralism (Hubbard et al. 2005; Rubin & Rubin 2005; Wilson 2001). These paradigms have different views on ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology, which are the parts that make up a research paradigm.

When I am stating that I want to produce knowledge sensitive to the experiences of Aboriginal peoples as a unique cultural population, it would be contradictory to use Eurocentric logics of inquiry that reduce the knowable to the measurable or linear variables (Stanfield 1994). Research is, as Ryba and Schinke (2009) and Bhattacharya (2007) mention, a site of complex interactions of power, knowledge and representation. To address these complexities it is first of all important to interact with Aboriginal peoples on their terms, become informed about local concerns, and honor local consent and cultural practice (Howitt & Stevens 2010; Louis 2007). Yet, it is crucial to be aware that Eurocentric thought has come to mediate much of the world, including research (Hart 2010). There is no one Indigenous paradigm, the same way there is no one Western paradigm, thus it is better characterized by a diversity and overlap of research paradigms (Hubbard et al. 2005). I will briefly go through the different parts inspired by an Indigenous research paradigm. This is because to take a truly decolonizing approach means that the research process must stem from a space within which Indigenous peoples can feel honored and their cultural goals and perspectives understood without the imposition of non-culturally cogent terms and paradigms (Barlett et al. 2007). According to Botha (2011), a lot of research is conducted that claims to pass as

Indigenous research but that is carried out and modified to fit hegemonic modern Western knowledge traditions. Long-held Western research paradigms and assumptions need to be examined and reworked in order to become knowledgeable about and immersed within an Indigenous paradigm (Barlett et al. 2007).

*Ontology*

Recognition of a spiritual realm and that this realm is understood as being connected with the physical realm, is an important aspect of an Indigenous ontology (Hart 2010; Meyer 2008). This is similar to constructivism where there is more than one reality (Wilson 2001) and postmodernism that assumes reality is not fully knowable (Rubin & Rubin 2005). But it is still different in that it is not the realities in and of themselves that are important, it is the relationship shared with them. A researcher then needs to think about her or his relationship with the ideas and concepts that are being explained. A scientific inquiry that opens up spaces that work with both the potentials and pitfalls of different ways of knowing and understanding the world is important, according to Bhattacharya (2007). Indigenous knowledge development starts with narratives; these must be experienced, whereas Western knowledge development begins with facts and data that are synthesized into abstract information (Barlett et al. 2007).

*Epistemology*

Earlier research epistemologies have developed methods of conducting research that is located within the cultural preferences and practices of the West (Bishop 1999; Sunseri 2007). The dismissal of multiple ways of knowing is, as Bhattacharya (2007:1107) writes, "akin to dismissing people's lives: their realities, sufferings, and accomplishments." In Indigenous epistemologies, information and mysteries lie within the self at the spiritual level. This is accessed through ceremony (Louis 2007). The search for knowledge is not just a physical aspect of life but also a spiritual journey. Through prayer, ceremony, vision quests, and dreams this knowledge can be accessed. Indigenous epistemology arises from the interconnections between the human world, the spirit, and inanimate entities (Hart 2010; Kovack 2005). By decolonizing epistemologies to align with an Indigenous one, challenges are made to imperialism because this kind of epistemology function in spaces invaded by both colonizing and decolonizing discourses (Bhattacharya 2007).

*Methodology*

A research methodology is how you use your way of thinking (epistemology) to gain more knowledge about the world and your reality (Hubbard et al. 2005; Wilson 2001). To Wilson (2001), an Indigenous methodology means talking about relational accountability. It is not just about answering questions of validity or reliability, instead it is about asking questions of how the researcher is fulfilling her or his role in the relationship, and the recognition that we depend on everything and everyone around us (Sunseri 2007). By claiming or advocating flexibility and accommodation to methodological issues in qualitative research it is possible to move away from a rigorous Western doctrine of qualitative research that in many ways continues to serve as a colonizing act (Bhattacharya 2007).

*Axiology*

Axiology is a set of morals or ethics to follow in your research (Hart 1971; Hart 2010). Axiology needs to be an integral part of the whole research process, especially methodology (Wilson 2001), because when knowledge is gained, it is not just in some abstract pursuit, but it is gained to fulfill the researcher's end of the research relationship. One major guideline to follow for an ethically sound research project with Indigenous people is respect for people (Sunseri 2007). This involves both a respectful relationship with participants individually, and a communal responsibility to follow the established codes of ethics and protocols of the community.

As the preceding sections show there is a tension between reaching out in democratic and liberating ways to do research with respect and humility and to conduct research that serves Western academic knowledge communities and universities (Lincoln & González 2008). It is essential when doing research with Indigenous peoples to confront ideologies of oppression to decolonize both our minds and disciplines because from the vantage points of the marginalized, scientific paradigms have allowed researchers to take advantage of minority peoples' knowledge and "invade their subjectivities" (Louis 2007; Ryba & Schinke 2009:265). In chapter 3, I clarified that the research paradigm many of the authors mentioned here are skeptical about, is more aligned with modernist and positivistic research paradigm. In recent decades, within Western academia, and parts of the Western world as well, developments and challenges against this 'truth-seeking' research model have been many. In the following section I will argue why a qualitative approach works well in research with Indigenous peoples.

## 4.2 Qualitative approach to Aboriginal resistance and worldviews

According to Ragin and Amaroso (2011) typical goals of qualitative research is to understand culturally and historically significant phenomena, explore meaning, give voice to marginal groups, and develop new theory. Previous studies done with Indigenous peoples often combined several of these goals, and so will mine.

This study doesn't advance the voice of all Indigenous peoples. It looks at a smaller group of people confined within a rather close geographical proximity who wants to have their voices heard and their land respected. I am hesitant about claims to give voice, as it in many cases, especially regarding minorities, can be a domineering act (Adler 2004; Howard 2006; Sikes 2006). To be able to actually give voice, Ragin and Amaroso (2011) express that it might be necessary to live with the members of that group for an extended period of time. I was able to spend five weeks with some of the people I interacted with and I am therefore careful and tentative in claiming that I have given voice. It is merely my interpretation of their interpretation.

My choice to focus on the stories of Indigenous peoples is based on my view that social science research is most valuable when it advances the concerns of marginalized groups. Qualitative approaches are well suited as they allow Indigenous peoples to tell their stories and challenge non-Indigenous investigators to acknowledge values and worldviews different from their own (Braun et al. 2013). Qualitative research, according to Liamputtong (2010), emphasizes interpretation and flexibility. This is necessary to understand meanings, interpretations, and subjective experiences of individuals.

## 4.3 Critical reflexivity

Qualitative research, especially research concerning Indigenous peoples, is shaped by both the researcher and the participants. Our characteristics, social positions and interpretations of the world effect how we perceive each other and the research situation (Hay 2010; Schostak 2006). Lavallée (2009) even goes as far as to state that every time we think or reason, emotion is tied to the process and therefore research can never be free of emotion or

subjectivity. My characteristics have affected both substantive and practical aspects of the research process – from the types of questions asked, data collection method and analysis to writing (Carling et al. 2013). This is close to what McLafferty (1995:437) writes about "privileged" positions. Here, the researcher holds the deciding power in the above-mentioned aspects of a research process.

Re-presenting what people have said is always problematic (Sikes 2006). To navigate this "tricky ground" (Botha 2011:316), I examine my own attitudes, practices, and positions through critical reflexivity. Knowledge is produced and situated and therefore my own positionality is important (Hubbard et al. 2005). Madge (1993:296) argues that when situating knowledge, it is important to illustrate the different types of "self" that may influence the data collected and what becomes coded as knowledge. Situating knowledge is essential because the sort of knowledge made depends on who its makers are. Many scholars look to Haraway's work when exploring positionality. From her perspective, "positioning is the key practice grounding knowledge" (Haraway 1991:193). In contrast to research aimed at remaining distant and seeing "everything from nowhere", critical knowledges work from their situatedness to "produce partial perspectives on the world." (Rose 1997:308). However, situatedness is not given, it must be developed, and critical reflexivity is one of the ways to work towards it. Adler (2004) describes positionality as the various roles and positions we take on in situations when we are interacting. By being honest about this and questioning the interpretations explored and made, I am being critically reflexive.

To be critically self-reflexive in a more rigorous manner I took field notes throughout the fieldwork and continuously wrote thoughts down while working on the project from the brainstorming period to the writing phase. After each interview, I debriefed by writing down initial thoughts and reflections. I documented the fieldwork journey with the Aboriginal peoples of northern BC in a journal. Here I recorded both public and private reflections. Throughout the research process I also kept a methodological journal on my computer that chronicled things such as time, location of interviews, working models, notes about initial discoveries (e.g., data sources, questions, literature) and in some cases possible links in the gathered data. In the other journal I recorded my private reflections, impressions, reactions, and interpretations. This included notes on my relationship with the participants, conversations had, quality of interviews, speculations about the meaning of interactions and at times frustrations with the project. These are examples of practical elements of critical

reflexivity where the "circumstances surrounding data collection and analysis are made explicit" (Dyck 1993:53-54). England (1994:82) emphasizes the importance of reflexivity as a process of "self-discovery", and she borrows from Stanley and Wise (1993:157) when stating that, "our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs". This materialized with the journal writing and helped me in two especially important ways: First, it sorted my thoughts and helped me stay focused during the project. Second, it was crucial in working with tough questions and dilemmas such as: whom do I silence when I align with what is deemed scientific in the currents scientific discourse (Bhattacharya 2007)? Am I fully recognizing the positions of power I represent in relation to the communities (Wallerstein 1999)? Is my research participatory enough (Bishop 1999; Dickson & Green 2001; Fong et al. 2003)?

The personality of the researcher helps to determine the selection of topics, the intellectual approach, and abilities in the field (Punch 1994). But in my case, the participants had as much to do with this as me. They helped me change the focus of the topic, show me different ways of attaining knowledge through stories and being on the land, and they aided me in getting around in the field. At the same time, my qualitative research project is in many of its forms a metaphor for colonial knowledge, power, and truth (Denzin et al. 2008). It is difficult to work with thoughts and fears of repeating familiar patterns of decisions being made for Indigenous people by those who presume to know what is best for them; and to speak for them and thereby deny them the self-determination that is essential to human justice and progress (Battiste 2008). Rose (1997:312) in her essay on the difficulties with positionality, places this sort of relationship within a landscape of power where "the researched must be placed in a different position from the researcher since they are different from her." The differences are then imagined as distances in the landscape of power. Although the researcher can move within the landscape and the landscape can change, the difference is still distance, and the distance is the "effect of the material and/or analytical power of the researcher." (1997:312). She goes on to explain that in attempting to mediate this relationship, there are two options. Either as a relationship of difference, something that is unacceptable, or a relationship of sameness, which is impossible. England (1994), Katz (1994) and Nast (1994) offer a way out of this dilemma. They describe the analytical position as 'between'. Rose (1997:313) observes that the task then becomes "less one of mapping difference – assuming a visible landscape of power with relations between positions of distance between distinctly separate agents – and more one of asking how difference is constituted, of tracing its

destabilizing emergence during the research process itself." Examining difficulties in the relationship between me as the researcher, and the participants as researched was eased with situating it in a 'betweenness'.

## 4.4   Appraisal to data collection: choosing the topic and selection

The preparation phase of a research project starts with an idea that is then formulated to a topic and lastly clarified to a research question (Johannessen et al. 2010). A clear identification of the universe being studied is, according to George and Bennett (2005), important to systematize a qualitative undertaking and thereby strengthen the transferability of the research. Following I will define and make grounds for the topic of this study and furthermore describe the selection and recruitment of participants.

**Qualitative case study**

The decision to study Aboriginal resistance and worldviews in Canada is first and foremost based on a genuine interest in the lives of people most greatly affected by intrusive carbon production expansion while at the same time being the people least responsible for it. It started with an idea about climate change and different ways of conceptualizing and making sense of it. It was later narrowed down to Aboriginal people in Canada affected by the ENGP. During the fieldwork it circled back to the original idea of how Aboriginal peoples explain their resistance against the ENGP and the worldviews they speak from. I thought it would be too difficult to write about worldviews, but once in interview settings and other social gatherings I noticed that the participants immediately answered the questions with stories of worldviews and connections to the land. The goal of this study is therefore not to explore general knowledge of Aboriginal peoples resistance in Canada but to explore their understanding and resistance to expanding carbon production infrastructure from their worldview. This is done through the use of a case study. A case study is characterized by gaining a lot of information on one or a few cases over shorter or longer periods of time through detailed and comprehensive data collection (Johannessen et al. 2010; Silverman 2010). Case study research is therefore the study of an instance of a phenomenon to be able to explore in-depth nuances of the phenomenon and the contextual influences on and explanations of that phenomenon (Baxter 2010). A case study is not representative of diverse populations and other contexts (George & Bennett 2010; Silverman 2010).

In qualitative research there is still a goal to contribute to a wider understanding of the chosen phenomenon beyond the individual study. Qualitative research is, according to Thagaard (2009), characterized by a coherent and holistic understanding of reality where individual cases are seen as expressions of a larger entirety. One of the strengths of qualitative case studies is that the in-depth knowledge attained by studying a phenomenon in a concrete case can be used to develop high conceptual validity as well as develop new hypotheses and understandings of causal mechanisms (George & Bennett 2010). I am still cautious in generalizing my findings to wider Aboriginal resistance and worldviews.

**The case**

The case in this project is delimited geographically and contextually to Aboriginal resistance against the ENGP in northern BC, Canada. The mostly untouched and scenic landscape of northern BC and the possible damaging effects a pipeline laid in that area could have, together with the quite untraditional Aboriginal resistance against it, was essential in choosing ENGP as a case. For me it is especially interesting to look at the resistance against ENGP because of the current relevance. Canada has set it goals to become an energy superpower and emphasized the tar sands as the number one way to get there. Infrastructure is needed to physically get the tar sands to different markets. This proposed and expressed expansion plan poses a serious threat to the climate in form of increasing release of $CO_2$ contributing to climate change, and to Aboriginal peoples in form of destroying their traditional way of living. The resistance against ENGP is therefore an interesting case for studying how Aboriginal peoples explain their resistance and how they place it within their broader worldview.

**The selection**

Participants make up the elements of the case in question (Hay 2010), and in my case these elements are Aboriginal peoples effected by and resisting the ENGP. The research question points to participant's understanding and explanation and it is therefore appropriate to use a selection of fewer informants to examine the theme in-depth. Variation in the selection reflects different opinions within the thematic and can then contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Gerring 2007).

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The participants were supposed to be selected by characteristics of the functions they serve on the resistance against ENGP (see Appendix 2). I wanted to interview people with different roles within the resistance. This was very difficult to set up and plan before traveling to BC. My selection of participants was partly through snowballing, which involved people I got in contact with in the field, criterion sampling through contacting people I hoped would have an interesting perspective on my research question, and opportunistic sampling through *going with the flow* of life in the field. The latter was especially the case for my two observations. With these two participants I never had a formal interview but instead spent time with them and their daily doings on a regular basis for about four weeks. This gave me an interesting insight into the life of the people I was doing research with and helped give a good background realization that became useful when interviewing other participants. Even though they didn't oppose the pipeline through an organization or movement, they still expressed great concern for their own safety and livelihoods and confirmed that a variation in selection of participants contributes to a better understanding of what is being studied.

**Recruitment of participants**

The first-time contact with participants was done through e-mail in the spring of 2015. I sent out several e-mails to different First Nations whom I thought would be of interest because of their previous work with the ENGP. I only received two replies but they were positive and they both had ties to the YDA. A general agreement was made that I would contact them further once in Canada. Upon arrival in BC, one of the participants I had had e-mail contact with fell through. The second participant I met with my first day up north. We talked for about an hour and she agreed to let me 'in' to her community. It wasn't until later in the fieldwork that I realized how important she and that first meeting was. She became my in-field collaborator as mentioned earlier, and introduced me to many of the other participants I got interviews with. While in the field and in touch with my key participant, it became much easier to get in contact with others. The field study area was located about mid-way along the proposed pipeline, which made it fairly easy to get to people and communities along the route. My rental car was crucial in the process of getting anywhere, especially to more remote places.

I believe I got better responses from people while in the field because a sense of urgency was present. In e-mails written while in BC I would specify my timeframe of availability and I think that helped in getting positive responses for interviews. It also became easier further

into the fieldwork when I could refer to previous participants. This may have helped their perception of the legitimacy of my project as well.

The selection of participants includes 14 people (5 women and 9 men). I now turn to how the data I have used for this research was collected before going through some of the ethical considerations of the fieldwork.

## 4.5   Data collection

In this project data collection was done primarily through interviews. But the insight gained through these would not have materialized the way they did without participatory observation throughout the project.

**The qualitative interview**

Qualitative interviews are used in this study to explore knowledge about the participant's understandings. The interview is characterized by a direct relation between the researcher and participant where the researcher is trying to uncover meaning and significance attached to social phenomena for humans in a specific context (Dunn 2010; Ragin & Amaroso 2011). The contact that the researcher has with the participant opens up for feedback on the questions being asked (Dunn 2010). Based on this feedback it is possible to adjust and change both the form and content during and between interviews. After the first couple of interviews I had, I realized that to some of the questions I asked the participants immediately talked about something else. That was their take on the question. In later interviews I adjusted the question so as to grasp this element as well, and that enhanced the richness of my data immensely.

The research interview is further characterized by the fact that the researcher has an active role in the data collection. A qualitative interview requires intense listening, a respect for and curiosity about what people say, and the, sometimes difficult, ability to ask about what is yet known (Rubin & Rubin 2005). I used a semi-structured approach to the interviews where an interview guide (see Appendix 1) helped me structure and focus the data collection (George & Bennett 2005; Thagaard 2009). At the same time I kept the form of the interview flexible so that the participants could express their attitudes and views as freely as possible and focus on the elements they thought was mostly relevant (Dunn 2010; Rubin & Rubin 2005).

**Conducting the interviews**

The interviews were conducted during five weeks in the summer of 2015. Because the interviews were conducted in Canada, I didn't have resources or time to stay longer or to make several visits. Throughout the five intensive weeks I experienced a development in my own role in the interview situation. During the transcription of my first interviews, I noticed moments where I should have delved more deeply into what the participants was talking about. I got better at this during my time there and I became more confident in my role and in asking follow-up questions.

Social activities were incorporated into almost all interviews. Four of the 12 interview participants chose to take me to a culturally significant place for them to do the interview. This entailed a longer drive or hike to get to the spot, which gave us time to get to know one another, establish rapport and trust, and for them to more freely ask me questions. Two of the interviews were conducted outside in scenic environments overlooking the forest or lakes; this sparked the participants to talk of the spirit of the land and water. The rest of the interviews were either done in the homes or offices of the participants. By and large, the participants were very enthusiastic about having the opportunity to share their stories, experiences and sometimes frustrations.

After consent from the participants, I audio recorded all the interviews. This contributed to the possibility of analyzing and processing the richness of details uncovered following the interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). That the interview is recorded can in some cases contribute to nervousness with the participant and then affect what is being said in the interview. My experience was that the microphone was forgotten rather quickly and it didn't hinder the flow of the conversations. Several of the participants used the surroundings to point to different aspects of what they were talking about and to enlighten me on what they meant by what they were explaining. These details weren't caught on tape, and important points made by the participants could therefore be inconclusively perceived in my processing of the interview. Further, it is difficult to perceive non-verbal communication on audiotape. To remember these types of elements with the interviews I supplemented the audio recording with short field notes after each interview.

**The interview guide**

The interview guide consisted of several questions that were treated fairly the same in all interviews. Some of the questions were modified to fit the role of the person being interviewed. The interview guide helped focus the interviews (George & Bennett 2005).

The first interview guide I developed almost became a script; it had questions formulated in a seemingly logical order. When conducting the interviews it became clear that it was nearly impossible to follow this template because the participants sometimes covered several questions in one answer. In the first interviews I still followed the guide strictly and that resulted in needless repetition and almost a sense of just asking for the sake of asking. Eventually I was able to detach from the interview guide and instead ask follow-up questions. I still used the interview guide but more as a list of subjects to touch upon during the interviews. The interviews then became more relaxed and interesting.

It is important to keep the design of the interview dynamic (Dunn 2010). I changed and adjusted the interview guide continually based on experience from the interviews. Some of the questions didn't work with the participants. This could have something to do with the participant's profession, position in the community and background knowledge. One such experience was with the question of how a potential spill could affect their community. This was difficult in two ways: first, it made a subtle claim to the fact that the pipeline would be built; and second, several of the informants said that even before a potential spill there are pressing issues such as the constructing of the pipeline itself. I therefore had to find other ways of elucidating this thematic without the use of a direct question. I found that when I changed the question to how the pipeline could affect their community, the participants both touched upon the construction part of the pipeline and the risk of a potential spill.

**Transcribing the interviews**

I transcribed the interviews as soon as possible after the interviews. This was easier in the beginning of my stay in Canada before I had gotten to know people and was invited along for different activities. Later stages of the fieldwork was characterized by a lot of driving, up to four hours one way, excursions and hanging out with the people I got to know better. This made time, at some points, a scarce resource. Because of this I had about four interviews left to transcribe when I got back to Norway. I still managed to take notes after each interview

both as an exercise for reflection and reflexivity, and to remember where, when, and how the interview was conducted.

After all the 11 interviews were transcribed I was left with data material consisting of about 160 pages as a starting point for the projects further analytical work.

**Observation**

Throughout my time spent in BC there were two people I spent a lot of time with. I never had formal interviews with them so it became at first a sort of unplanned observation. They were both related to my key participant and it was through her that I met them. When I later realized that I would be spending more time with them, I more actively observed and took notes when I got back to my cabin. This type of observation would be what Kearns (2010) calls *contextual observation*. It is used to get in-depth knowledge of either a time or place through direct experience. Observation is, as Thagaard (2009) explains, well suited to get information about peoples behavior and interaction. By participating with the participants and at the same time observing, the researcher can get a sound basis for understanding the social context that the people are included in.

During these observations I met several other people and they were always informed of who I was and what I was doing there. Most didn't really seem to care as much and just went about what they were doing but some seemed more hesitant of what they were saying and doing. As explained by Kearns (2010) in this type of observation, the observer is very much a participant as well. Throughout my five weeks spent with them I was able to be part of amazing experiences such as hunting a moose, picking berries in the bush, doing a sweat lodge, horseback riding in the forest, quad biking, sitting in on a high school graduation, and doing different excursions. I was also part of their more daily activities such as getting coffee, preparing meals, feeding the horses, and running errands.

I didn't prepare to do any observation when I left for Canada. Although many will state that observation is far from haphazard (Jacobsen 2010; Johannessen et al. 2010; Kearns 2010; Ragin & Amaroso 2011), mine at some points felt like that. I was not rigorous in choosing the setting, it was more or less chosen for me. Access was mediated through my key participant and then later through the two people I got to know well. I never entered the community without their invitation and I believe this helped the rest of the community to

allow my presence when I was there and better field relations (Kearns 2010). This was also a way of working in a more culturally sensitive way, by interacting with them on their terms (Howitt & Stevens 2010).

## 4.6 Ethical considerations

In studies where there is direct contact between the researcher and the researched particular ethical guidelines have been compiled, which defines the researchers relationship with the participant. Ethical guidelines are required within all scientific work, both those internal to the research environment and those regarding the surroundings of the research (Thagaard 2009).

**Informed consent**

The researcher's respect for participants as autonomous individuals implies that participation in the study must be based on informed consent (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Ragin & Amaroso 2011; Silverman 2010), where the participants choose to be part of the research after having received sufficient information about the study and what participation entails. Participants must also be able to withdraw from the study whenever and for whatever reason they want.

This project was submitted to *Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste* (NSD), and is aligned with NSD's requirements of informed consent. People I contacted both in Norway and when in Canada were given a written "letter of introduction" (Dunn 2010:113) where I had briefly outlined the project, data gathering method and treatment of gathered data and an attached file of the consent form (see Appendix 3). Some of the interviews where planned after initial meetings with the participant and the consent form was therefore first introduced in the beginning of the interview. Before starting the interviews I secured informed consent with a short explanation of the study, going through the consent form with them and asking for a signature. For the most part this was a good way to start our conversations: it let the participants know what the theme of the interview was and gave them space to ask initial questions to me if they had any. This is what Dunn (2010) calls a warm-up period.

**Protection of participants: confidentiality**

Confidentiality requires that researchers take steps to ensure that respondents are made anonymous in the results of the research and that outsiders cannot gain access to the gathered material (Silverman 2010). In the consent form given and signed by all participants, I state that I will make the respondents anonymous but that there is a chance of recognition through their official position in the community. I have chose not to anonymize the case of Aboriginal resistance against the ENGP in northern BC because I think it is important that the context of the study is clear. This increases the possibility of comparison with other cases in later studies. But it can lead to some recognition by other people in that area if the participants are publicly engaged in the case. This requires me to introduce the participants in a credible and honest way.

**Consequences of participation**

The researcher has an ethical obligation to conduct research in such a way that it minimizes harm or risk to participants and the community involved (Dowling 2010; Ragin & Amaroso 2011; Silverman 2010). Doing research with Aboriginal people this is an especially important consideration. The potential of the research to affect the object of study is clarified in an interview with a medicine man (08.07.15): "[…] you know, look at you. You came from across the water and I'll be forever engrained in your brain and likewise." The researcher therefore has a special ethical responsibility for how the participants are affected.

Some of the participants expressed some degree of injustice in their representation both in previous research and mass media. This could have had an effect on stories they shared with me. My own goal together with their expressed wish to be presented truthfully has strengthened my responsibility to do so in a credible but also respectful and constructive way. To avoid harm or negative consequences it is also important that I as a researcher respect their concerns and let them decide where the line of the interview is drawn. Although some had, both visible or more hidden, concerns about doing the interview, most of the participants expressed positive feedback to my project like one grassroots activist did in the beginning of the interview (26.06.15): "This is so great that you are doing this project. It is needed".

**Other ethical considerations**

Being an outsider ethnically, culturally, and nationally set barriers for my research that probably can't be overcome without truly being part of the community. Some spaces are not

available for me as a white researcher in another culture. This is okay and should not be seen as a disadvantage in form of knowledge explored. As mentioned earlier, an important part of a decolonized research paradigm is to be respectful (Sunseri 2007). Respect for sacred spaces, both physical and spiritual, is needed when doing research with Indigenous peoples as a non-Indigenous researcher. As Bhattacharya (2007) explains, this type of surrendering a will to know does not automatically make a study dismissive or less rigorous. Instead, it points to tensions of established ways of knowing and limits. In one of my observations I was sitting in on a meeting about water quality in the community and I could feel the tension and eyes on me as I walked in. To them I was a white person who had nothing to do there and I was told not to take notes. Both my *outsiderness* as a person of a different ethnicity and as a researcher kicked in at that meeting. Although some of the information I heard at that meeting could be of interest to my project I had to respect their wish of just observing. This is crucial as I was invited to come by one of the participants and to show her respect, I had to comply with what the majority of the people present wanted so as not to bring dishonor upon her.

*Power*

Wallerstein (1999) illustrates how outsiders who think of themselves as being trusted community friends and allies often fail to appreciate the extent of power that is embedded in their own sources of privilege. This can affect the process and outcomes of such research. I am hesitant in calling myself a community friend, as I did not get to come in contact with enough people in the different communities. The research process is still encouraged to be empowering and that power sharing must be increasingly emphasized in inquiry (Dickson & Green 2001). I attempted to reduce the conventional power differential between researcher and subjects through flexible interviews and me being part of their daily lives where they show the way and I am just along for the ride. Another effort that gave a sense of power sharing, even in interview settings, was for them to take me to 'their' places. They know the setting, surroundings and way to get there and then I ask the questions once we are there. Power cannot be eliminated from the research process (Hay 2010), as it exists in all social relations. But the power was no longer solely with me as the researcher but shared through the whole process. This is a way of placing the relationship in a 'betweenness' as explained earlier.

## 4.7 Qualitative analysis: dialogue between theory and empirical evidence

In qualitative case studies the analysis can be understood as a continuing retroductive interaction throughout the research process between empirically founded images and theoretically grounded analytical frameworks (Ragin & Amaroso 2011). This means that the analysis has already started when doing the data collection. In social science studies, the empirical material can be endless and it is therefore necessary to select what empirical data to collect in order to separate relevant from irrelevant aspects of the case. In this project the idea of *resistance against the ENGP* is a theoretical starting point for the data collection. To make this relatively abstract concept 'researchable' it is concretized in an analytical framework.

The framework is made up of *worldview*, *nature* and *knowledge*. These categories form the grounding of the questions in the interview guide. The analytical framework is used both to answer the question *what is this phenomenon a case of?* meaning to categorize the phenomenon within the concrete context, and further to characterize and examine variations within these categories (Ragin & Amaroso 2011). The analytical framework affects both how the empirical data is perceived and what is perceived as relevant in meeting with the case (Ragin & Amaroso 2011).

Research findings and themes are gradually uncovered in the research process when there is a dialogue between empirical evidence and theory (Silverman 2010). The design of the study therefore needs to be flexible enough so that theoretical and methodological frames can be shaped in meeting with the empirical data (Ragin & Amaroso 2011). I have previously disclosed how selection, data collection, and interview questions was adapted during the fieldwork, which illustrates that even if the study is based on a theoretical preliminary study, it is still not determined by the theory (George & Bennett 2005).

**Densification of meaning and coding the data**

The purpose of the first analysis phase is to identify what of the gathered material is relevant to answer the research question (Cope 2010). I therefore started the analysis by reading through the transcribed interviews and categorizing excerpts based on the three semi-predefined categories. In the first perusal of the transcripts and memos large sections of the texts were coded but in the second perusal the excerpts where shortened and I was left with a

summarized version of the interviews and a *densification of meaning* (Kvale 1997, cited in Thaargard 2009:149). The process of ascribing categories to data can seem simple but in reality it is characterized by challenges tied to ascribing relatively compound answers into apparently simple categories. The first phase of the analysis gave me an overview of the data while also developing the analytical framework further. As I got to know the data better I also developed new codes based on elements I found interesting, elements that kept resurfacing, and elements that seemed conflicting either with the theoretical preparations or with statements made from other participants. Several of the codes were also developed to specify the original codes. One specification that I used early on was to separate the physical and more abstract impacts of the ENGP. These codes turned out to be useful to concretize the essence of the analysis, as there were incidents of an either-or approach from the participants or a combination of the two.

A potential challenge when doing qualitative research is analysis can seem anecdotal and it is difficult for the reader to judge how representative a chosen example is for the selection at whole (Silverman 2000). The confirmability of the analysis can be strengthened by the critical reflexivity of the researcher (Steier 1991; Thargaard 2009), and that the researcher tests his or hers conclusions by repeating inspections of the data material, as well as comparing findings within the material.

To enhance the credibility of the project's analysis I will start each analysis chapter with an explanation of how I have proceeded when examining the chapters' particular research question in the empirical material.

## 4.8 Summary: strengths and weaknesses with data collection and method

In this chapter I have accounted for and discussed the methodological work that forms the foundation of the projects empirical work. Because of the turbulent history of research with (and on) Aboriginal peoples, I have chosen to be thorough in the account of the research process, how it has been shaped by critical reflexivity, and hard work to enhance decolonizing methodologies. The review has shown that some elements can contribute to a weakening of the findings' credibility. The participants recruitment didn't always go the way

I planned and there can be an element of homogeneity within the participants, which means that some Aboriginal viewpoints where never picked up in this thesis.

The analytical approach, based on the categories of knowledge, nature, and worldview is a strength. By forming a clear theoretical frame for the analysis of the resistance against the ENGP, it enhances the study's potential transferability to later studies.

An important point to be made is that the data material can be understood as the participant's interpretation of the phenomenon being studied, and the analysis as my interpretation of their interpretation. This is called the *hermeneutic circle* (Bradshaw & Stratford 2010:77) and is part of ensuring rigor in qualitative research. However, this has the implication that neither the analysis nor the conclusion forms a foundation to assess whether or not an Aboriginal worldview is best suited for opposing the pipeline. The data are, however, suitable for analyzing how the participant's subjective understandings contribute to shape the resistance against the ENGP and other exploitative industrial projects.

# 5 Aboriginal knowledge of land and Western laws and regulation processes

In chapter 3 an outline of the differences between Indigenous and Western knowledge was given. There, Aboriginal resistance through knowledge was sketched as being able to retain control over their knowledges – and the land it is often tied to – and at the same time be in a decision-making role when cooperating with Western governments or industry. One quite extensive way Western knowledge is expressed today is through laws and regulations (Gibson 2012). In this first analysis chapter I will therefore examine how the participants view and understand the fairly recently passed omnibus budget bill, C-51, as well as the process of the approval of the pipeline. As mentioned in chapter 2, bill C-51 is intended to enhance the security of Canadians through easier information sharing between federal agencies in order to protect Canada against activities that undermine the security of the country. The approval process is related to the Joint Review Panel (JRP), which was tasked with evaluating the balance of social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed ENGP and then give a recommendation on whether or not the project should be approved.

The interviews form the empirical foundation of the analysis. By using the interview guide I made sure all the interviews contained some questions that explicitly asked about the participant's view relating to bill C-51 and the approval process. Examples of such questions includes:

- Can you tell me about bill C-51?
- How do you think the bill will affect the opposition against the pipeline?
- How do you perceive the Canadian government's involvement in the approval process?

These direct questions form an important empirical foundation for the analysis. The interviews also contained questions that dealt with the government's involvement with the oil industry and their interaction with Aboriginal peoples. Those questions turned out to give answers that can be tied to the participant's understanding of the approval process, the bill, and it's effect on opposition as well. Some of the interesting feedback connected to bill C-51 and the approval process appeared when participants were answering other questions, such as

how they perceive the government's involvement with the oil industry and how they perceive the way the government work with the oil and gas industry compared to other industries. While many of the participants could have answered *absolutely not!* to a direct question of if the bill was a good thing for Aboriginal peoples in Canada, other elements of the participant's stories contributed to a nuance of this understanding.

This chapter is divided into three parts where each part examines different elements of the participant's understanding and view of bill C-51 and the approval process. Part 5.1 looks at the approval process from two interrelated understandings. Part 5.2 looks at whether or not the way the government is doing business with the oil industry is a new thing. Lastly, in part 5.3, I examine how the participants expressed their understanding of bill C-51 influencing opposition against the pipeline.

# 5.1  Approval process

As mentioned in the background chapter, the ENGP was approved by the government with 209 conditions that needed to be met before construction could start. This approval took place after a JRP process where concerned parties could voice their opinions and get answers from Enbridge. Some of the participants I spoke with had been part of the JRP process and spoke from first-hand experience.

**"So really, you know, it's a foregone conclusion."**
A prevalent attitude among the participants is that the approval process of the ENGP was not democratic. Political decisions in Canada are, according to one resistance camp manager (03.07.15), made far away from the impacts of that decision. The participant, who had been part of the JRP, remembered how they weren't able to ask real questions and they weren't listened to. This input can be connected to how the knowledge of Indigenous peoples is often only respected and taken into consideration when it fits the Western use and application (Dewalt 1994; Matsui 2012). The participant compared the approval process with her own hereditary chief system.

> "We are governed through hereditary chiefs. Through this system there is real
> democracy. People will come together and say what they want on the subject. If
> someone says no to a proposal we will talk with them and hear them out, if they

say no, then we won't do it. […]. We are not selfish. Our system is about sharing, this system is about selfishness, money and greed." (Resistance camp manager 03.07.15).

An environmental assessment coordinator (02.07.15) expressed grievance on the listening part as well. He is part of a First Nation that upholds the hereditary chief system as well. The environmental assessment coordinator explains:

"The government didn't listen to us in our testimonies, they haven't listened to us during the environmental assessment process. We told them we are unique. […]. As I mentioned, other First Nations are chief and council, we are unique in that each house territory has the right to say what occurs on that land. And they don't look at it from that point of view."

A tribal chief (07.07.15) outlined the lack of addressing First Nations issues in the JRP. Neither their own cumulative effects study nor the issue of title and rights was taken up in the panel discussions, according to him. He also spoke of the passing of governmental responsibility to companies as a fault in consultation leading up to the approval process. "They get the proponent to consult with First Nations. So really it's a download to the actual company to consult, and also to provide the information to see if they have addressed all the issues. So really, you know, it's a forgone conclusion." A recognition and reconciliation implementation coordinator at a hereditary chief's office (13.07.15) talked about how the approval process and the government's involvement in it were clearly stressful for a lot of Aboriginal people and communities. "It divides a lot of communities […]. So it has created a lot of stress, a lot of impact socially already without even being built." At the same time the coordinator explained how the process also brought some good to the different communities. Not only has it brought unity to the different communities, it has also built a lot of capacity to understand and review projects and make informed decisions.

While most of the participants expressed contempt and mistrust against the approval process and the government's involvement, especially the government's close tie to the industry, some of the participants used harsher language when telling me about their view of this. One healing camp founder (10.07.15) said: "In Canada, we are governed by a pro-rouge

[conservative] government." A co-founder of the Yinka Dene Alliance (YDA) (14.07.15) said:

> "Look at the JRP process. Like Sheila Leggett and those two other fools, they are supposed to have an objective opinion or remain at least neutral in the JRP process. They all come from frickin industry! […]. How objective do you think she was listening to the joint review panel? What do you guys think we are just stupid? […]. So they all come from industry and they are not going to bite the hand that feeds them."

An Aboriginal artist and enthusiastic fisher (19.07.15) I interviewed who lives quite far downstream of the pipeline still expressed anger and frustration with the approval process on behalf of his brothers and sisters further north. As with many of the other participants I spoke with, the experience of the approval process often boils down to a general mistrust of the government. He commented, "I don't see how they can approve it when they have no say on the land that they don't own. […]. It bothers me because the government and corporations have no regard for Indians and their way of life. It's almost like we don't exist." The empirical data show that there are some minor variations in how the approval process and government's involvement was perceived. The participants overall expressed a strong discontent with the process, the variations mostly refer to what aspects of the approval process and government involvement was problematic.

**"Obviously there is a tweak in our system that wants instant money"**
A medicine man (08.07.15) believes that the approval process merely was set up as a sham to hide the fact that the government is only after the money. "You know, you and I come up here and look at the beauty of it, they come up here and look at how much money they can sell or how much money they can make. Its not about the natural beauty, it's about the almighty buck for them." A similar understanding is found with an Elder (29.06.15): "They want lots of money coming in and people gonna get a job but what about the rest of them other people?" Again, there can be found a separation between the Western knowledge of what is worth sacrificing for economic progress and job creation versus the Aboriginal knowledge of the land, the beauty it holds and the sacredness of that beauty in their lives. A hereditary chief (13.07.15) explained how his faith in governmental processes is tired down because of the overrepresentation of money as a goal in and of itself: "Obviously they are

gonna go where the money is. Canada is in a deficit. British Columbia is in a deficit. So they are gonna do whatever they want to do."

This governmental dilemma between economic benefits on one side and Aboriginal rights and consideration on the other, clarifies the principal of Western versus Aboriginal knowledge. That the pipeline was approved shows how Aboriginal peoples still catch the last straw of governmental processes that affect their livelihoods even though the process supposedly weighed the pros against the cons. Even more, the outcome of the dilemma clarifies how even the supposed benefits for Aboriginal peoples with the approval of the project are ambiguous at best. The recognition and reconciliation coordinator (13.07.15) explained, "Well, it's clear what their interests are, they are aligned with the oil sands industry. They are aligned with the pipeline industry. […]. It is more about *them* getting their best economic outcome." A grassroots activist (26.06.15) found it hard to follow a government that breaks their owns laws and doesn't take Aboriginal understanding of the land into consideration in a process of approving a pipeline that will affect the land in so many ways.

> "Obviously there is a tweak in our system that wants instant money and gratification over, you know, sustainability and preservation. The government obviously has its priorities totally flipped, completely upside down. […]. We have our own governing systems which they need to adopt and learn from because this is our territory and we follow those traditional laws and there is now way that can ever be broken because they're the laws of the land. The land tells us how to live."

## 5.2   A new thing?

Aboriginal peoples in Canada have dealt and traded with settler Canadians for centuries. Natural resources such as fur, forestry, and minerals have been a focal point of this interaction. Recently, natural resources in the form of oil and gas, particularly the tar sands oil, have become a site of struggle and contact between the Canadian government and Aboriginal peoples. Responses from the interviewees varied on whether or not the way the government is dealing with oil companies is comparable to how they have 'always' dealt with other natural resource companies. It is also a question of whether or not they are dealing with Aboriginal peoples in the same more or less nonexistent way as in the past. The need to understand this relationship in order to resist it and work both with and against it is important.

**"It's a new realm"**

The environmental assessment coordinator (02.07.15) understands the way the government and Enbridge worked for approval as something new.

> "It's a new realm of looking at it from the federal and provincial government where they are looking at getting these small reserves to say yes and then out of the First Nations they are going: 'Well, now we have 21 agreements, now out of 36 we have this many.' But they are not looking at it from the perspective of the Wetsuwet'en, the Gitxsan, and the Gitanyow. We are hereditary, we are a unique system that they are trying to impose their will upon, and changing the way we govern ourselves."

Although trusting the government and oil companies is hard for many Aboriginal peoples because they have been let down countless times in the past, the YDA co-founder (14.07.15) admits that working together with them is necessary: "The reality is: we have to do business. Reality is business, but there is nothing more threatening than big oil." But she also echoes what the environmental assessment coordinator talked about when it comes to gaining false support from people not really affected by the pipeline. Enbridge acted as if the various First Nations were only holding out for a bigger piece of the pie, when in actuality they were saying no. Further, the nations that did sign on were consequently compromising other nations, who's potential impacts would be bigger.

Another thing that some of the participants pointed to as new to this process and relationship was the fact that the conservative government had weakened environmental legislation so much that there was hardly any ground to stand on when trying to oppose the project.

> "Only people directly affected could participate, without giving a clear definition of what directly affected means. […]. At the same time our environmental legislation is so weak, and the scope, like not looking at climate change or tanker traffic. […]. I just can't believe those three people could sit in that room through those First Nation's Elders and the community stories and not be moved and still say yes. Like just sit there and hear: 'It is in your hands to decide whether this goes through so we wake up every morning deciding that this is the day our community is going to die.'" (Senior campaigner 02.07.15).

This resonates with the point made in chapter 3 where legitimate forms of generating and holding knowledge in Aboriginal communities are often disregarded by Western institutions (Duran & Duran 2000).

**"They just keep repeating their same history all the way through"**
Most of the participants didn't see a significant variation in the way the government now deals with oil companies or Aboriginal peoples. They express governmental fatigue and a sense of helplessness when it comes to trying to go up against this "beast" (Aboriginal artist 19.07.15). "It's always been like that. And its whatever the business or industry of the day is. In BC it was forestry for a long time, then mining, oil, and gas." (Recognition and reconciliation coordinator (13.07.15). Likewise, a senior campaigner (02.07.15) didn't see much difference with the past and now. To her the conservative government's mandate on becoming an energy superpower might have made things more difficult for many people, including Aboriginal peoples, but it doesn't change the fact that people for a long time have been tired of short-term job opportunities, "From an economic perspective, people here are sick of these boom and bust cycles where we are shipping it all to China and people don't want to see another raw resource shipped overseas."

Some participants, like the hereditary chief (13.17.15), were tired of being looked at as against development for wanting to stop projects like the ENGP. The participants are, in line with points made in chapter 3, advocating for Aboriginal control over Aboriginal territories and Aboriginal knowledge. For that to happen there needs to be a partnership and strengthening of networks (Berkes 2009).

> "They are just repeating their same history all the way through. Just a different tactic. And we never stopped progress. I believe that we are probably one of the most progressive nations. Progress can happen in a sustainable manner *if* we know what sustainability is. What are the risks and what are the returns?" (Hereditary chief 13.07.15).

## 5.3  Bill C-51's influence on opposition

In the summer of 2015 omnibus budget bill C-51 was passed. Named *Anti-Terrorism Act 2015*, it can make possible the surveillance, arrest and jailing of people illegally protesting infrastructure of national interests. The ENGP can easily be viewed as critical economic infrastructure for Canada with revenues estimated to CA$300 billion in additional GDP over 30 years (Gatewayfacts 2016). Opposition against the pipeline project, especially from Aboriginal peoples who many already feel scrutinized and unfairly handled by the government, is in many ways threatened. The response from the participants regarding bill C-51 was overwhelmingly negative. A few of them still mentioned some of the positive effects the bill could have, something I will come back to at the end of this part.

**"Its terrible! I am a terrorist now!"**

Many of the participants highlighted the connection of the bill with severe democracy issues. This can in many ways be tied to the alleged failing of the Canadian state to consider an Aboriginal perspective on issues clearly affecting them.

> "Bill C-51 is a further step towards political total control of the people of Canada. Incremental steps on our rights and freedoms. […]. Bill C-51 in and of itself says that anybody that says anything against the government or anything that affects intrinsically the sovereignty of the state, is against the state and as thus a terrorist or seditious or criminal. So anybody that fights for the sovereignty of the people or fights for human rights and sovereignty of Indigenous rights, is fighting against the state of Canada because if you acknowledge the sovereign rights of natives in Canada, you automatically distinguish the sovereign rights of Canada itself as a state." (Healing camp founder 15.07.15).

A medicine man (08.07.15) also brought up the democracy issue and the lack of cooperation between the government and Aboriginal peoples.

> "Canada used to be such a democratic place but now I mean, we are becoming more of a police state. With those types of laws coming into place, where is the freedom of opinion here? Where is the process of dialogue here? It's just not my way or the highway. It shouldn't be like that and that's what C-51 is, it's my way or the highway."

When asked questions of how the bill could affect the opposition against the ENGP, most of the participants explained that it unfortunately could curtail public participation in the resistance effort. "Any development or any issue that comes up whether its pipeline or just questioning the government and having protests, you know, you're potentially breaking the law of bill C-51." (Tribal chief 07.07.15). The senior campaigner (02.07.15) explains an interaction she had a few weeks before I interviewed her, "I had somebody come up to me at the Farmers Market and say 'You know, I am going to be a little bit, I am going to step down a little bit and not speak out as much.' […]. It is just scary. I think it is totally going to have a chill."

A clear skepticism towards the true meaning of the bill was also clear with some of the participants. The parts of the bill highlighted by much of mainstream media and the government itself is focused on stronger no-fly lists and other anti-terrorism tools to protect Canada from mostly foreign threats. But in the 'fine print' there are many points in the legislation that pertains to domestic threats as well. The recognition and reconciliation coordinator (13.07.15) said, "It's so obvious again like the alignment with industry that it is not about terrorism. That legislation is purely about squashing opposition to mega-projects." The resistance camp manager (03.07.15) agrees, "I see it as a scare tactic. They want to protect critical infrastructure. I consider hunting, fishing and future generations critical infrastructure. So how are they going to come and tell me what is critical infrastructure?"

**"Put me in jail? I am fine with that"**

The fear of being misunderstood or arrested can understandably make some people less inclined to voice their protests against the government and its projects. Still, many of the participants I interviewed saw some possibilities with the bill.

> "I think it will affect in a positive way where people see that their loved ones, if there are incarcerations in the future, if their loved ones are incarcerated then maybe they will become more motivated. So what the government is doing is actually aiding us in becoming stronger and more together because that's what it takes. They can't arrest a whole nation of people for crying out for the Earth." (Grassroots activist 26.06.15).

The bill could work as a wake-up call for many people, Aboriginal peoples especially, according to several of the participants. Outnumbering the Canadian government in terms of political power would be difficult, but the sacrifice many Aboriginal peoples are willing to take to stand up and defend their land could leave any one person in awe, wanting to back them up. This could then result in something bigger than political power, namely people power.

> "A lot of us stated from the get-go if we have to go to jail we are going to jail. And I am still standing on that platform. When push comes to shove if you want to put me in jail I am fine with that, I have made my peace with that. Because I am fighting for the future generations." (YDA co-founder 14.07.15).

The senior campaigner (02.07.15) told a similar story of her meeting with a person from the Haisla Nation: "He said according to Haisla's laws we are supposed to protect our waters and our lands for future generations. And so in fact if we do something like stand in front of a bulldozer against Enbridge, then we are committing civil obedience." Other participants referenced the danger of the bill but bluntly shook it off as not being their problem because the bill wouldn't affect them as Aboriginal peoples of the land. The resistance camp manager (03.07.15) explained, "For some it will make them back down a little. But for us it won't change anything. My territory is not part of Canada, it is our own. So that law doesn't apply on my land." The grassroots activist (26.06.15) explained it similarly.

> "Bill C-51 is only an illusion. It's just a spell right at this point, an incantation at which they have derived to put us in a fear-like state and possibly deter some people from becoming motivated into action on what is necessary. The grassroots movement and people who are of the Earth and speak for our Earth will never be silenced."

## 5.4  Summary

The chapter gives a comprehensive understanding of how the participants view the interaction point between Western laws, regulations and processes, and their own traditional ways of living, cooperating and following the law of the land.

First, it was made clear that the participants viewed the approval process as *undemocratic* and *only about money*. These two explanations of the process are interrelated and some participants even echoed both positions. The resistance camp manager (03.07.15), for example, who didn't feel like Aboriginal people were listened to or able to ask the questions they wanted to also mentioned that government only catered to the industry in processes like these. The money perception of the process was well expressed among the participants.

Further, some of the participants believe the approval process and the way the government has been dealing with both the oil companies and Aboriginal peoples is not really a new thing. History is repeating itself as it was with other natural resource industries and consultation processes regarding them. A couple of the participants emphasized some elements that make the situation seen today different from the past. This included the way the government signs deals with First Nations that are not directly, and in some cases even indirectly, affected by the pipeline, and how the environmental legislation in Canada is weakened.

Lastly, the participants overwhelmingly made it clear that bill C-51 is unwanted, undemocratic and a threat to their continued opposition against the pipeline. Still, in answering questions of the effect the bill could have on opposition, some participants saw it as a wake-up call and readily stated they were willing to go to jail to protect their land and resources. The chapter showed that most of the participants are worried about the bill and the effect it could have on their lives, while others simply don't regard it as a bill that pertains to them because the territory where they live is not considered Canada, according to them.

A reoccurring theme in this chapter is power, something that is strongly tied to knowledge. As Merchant (1992:51) writes, the limited view of reality found within large sections of Western science and society, is very powerful "inasmuch as it allows for the possibility of control whenever phenomena are predictable, regular, and subject to rule and law." The ENGP is, to many of the participants, an example of how the government and industry keep undermining Aboriginal voices and knowledges of how the land should be treated, while favoring their own way of continued natural resource exploitation in the name of jobs, market diversification and global energy power. Mediating the distrust between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government has not been made easier by "extending anti-terrorism legislation and rhetoric into the realm of civil disobedience" (Le Billion & Carter 2012:171).

The authorative power of the Canadian government to pass bill C-51 despite much criticism and public pressure, along with the, according to the participants, undemocratic approval process of the ENGP, goes a long way in illustrating the imbalance of power within Canadian society – where, time and time again, Aboriginal peoples catch the last straw.

# 6 The "nature" of the pipeline

The theoretical account in chapter 3 pointed to how nature is perceived from both a Western and Indigenous perspective. In Aboriginal communities, a view of nature is strongly connected to the land. The ENGP will traverse a big portion of this land and create possibly irreversible damage to the land it crosses.

The interviews form the empirical foundation of the analysis and the interview guide included several questions that deal with the participant's view and understanding of the use of the land that the pipeline will cross and the potential consequences the pipeline could have on that land. Examples of such questions are:

- Can you tell me about the pipeline?
- If the pipeline was built how would that effect you/your community?
- If there was an oil spill from the pipeline, how would that effect you/your community?

Based on these quite general questions it was possible to get an overview of what the pipeline is and what it represents to them as well as what effects the pipeline could have on their lives. While answering these questions most of the participants related the potential dangers of the pipeline with their use of the land. As mentioned in chapter 4 some of the participants reacted to the wording of the questions about a potential pipeline spill as it could be interpreted as if the pipeline will be built, when in fact in their minds, the pipeline will never be built. I therefore used the question of how the pipeline would affect their community instead. If when answering that question the participant didn't touch upon the effects of a spill I would add that to the interview.

Some of the participants also mentioned climate change without me asking about it specifically. This speaks to the importance they ascribe the issue. However, the interview guide also included questions about climate change:

- What do you think about when you think about climate change?
- What is climate change to you?
- How do you feel about the future in relation to climate change?

The chapter is comprised of three parts. The first part goes into how participants explain their use of the land. Here there are two interrelated perspectives. The second part presents the effects the pipeline could have on that land both from the construction itself and the future dangers it could bring to the communities, while the last part looks at climate change.

## 6.1 Use of the land

The participants gave many examples of the way they use and live on their land. These stories were sometimes told when answering other questions as well. The participants who took me outside for the interview gave the most detailed stories. The surrounding nature helped spark the conversation in interesting directions. Every single participant talked about the land at some point in the interview. The way they talked about it can be separated into two interrelated perspectives, namely a *livelihood and traditions* perspective, and a *being-of-the-land* perspective. Some of the participants told stories that include elements of both these perspectives. This is understandable as the pipeline threatens both parts of their livelihood and traditions and their sense of being of the land.

**"Our people rely on the land to live"**

Many of the participants I talked to use the land both recreationally and as a means to survive. The resistance camp manager (03.07.15) who now more or less lives off the land explained: "We have been trapping for the last three years. […]. That's part of the way we are sustaining ourselves." The grassroots activist resonated this:

> "The people actually don't want these pipelines going through. Our people still
> rely on the land to live. We require the salmon and the berries and the fish, or the
> bear, moose everything. We eat it. We are poor people. We require that to
> survive."

The healing camp founder (15.07.15) told me how the land surrounding his cabin is important for teaching youth as well. He wants the land to have all its inhabitants and its strength so that kids can learn how it is all connected. The tribal chief (07.07.15) described how when the pipeline threatens the salmon, not only will Aboriginal people lose an important stock of their diet but it can damage their economy as well, "We have a potential to develop our economies […]. Do we want to put that at risk? Because that's potentially

continuous revenue every year." The recognition and reconciliation coordinator (13.07.15) also brought up salmon.

> "Salmon is the main resource. And its not just about using though, its not just about 'oh I have a right to fish and I have a right to hunt and I want to protect those rights,' its also the taking responsibility for something that you know our ancestors fought for. […]. No one has ever surrendered it and we have a responsibility to them to not just sign it away, to not damage it. And to make sure our kids and their kids can look back and say the same thing."

Not only is the land important to the participants in form of food to harvest and eat, it is also a place they have great spiritual connections to. The hereditary chief (13.07.15) exemplified with burial sites, travel routes and sacred sites. The ENGP will cross many such locations, which means that Aboriginal peoples no longer can pay their visits to these places. "The area surrounding the pipeline will be owned by Enbridge, access to cultural sites will then be a liability to them," the hereditary chief explained. Enbridge can't allow anyone on the sites because they can be sued if something happens. As pointed out in chapter 3, a great deal of wellbeing and identity for Aboriginal peoples comes from being able to be in contact with the land and its sacredness (Fonda 2011). Some parts of the Western world, especially in industry, view nature as something that is there to satisfy human needs (Geisinger 1999; Klein 1994). It is clear then that a collision of perspectives happen. The land the pipeline will traverse is in many ways, by Enbridge and the Canadian government, only viewed as a route for transporting oil to enhance income. The land, according the Aboriginal participants in this research, is much more. To some, the land is them; which will be elaborated on in the following section.

**"I don't control the land, the land has me"**
The land is intimately linked to identity for many Aboriginal peoples (Turner & Clifton 2009). This became very apparent when talking to many of the participants. The recognition and reconciliation coordinator (13.07.15) said, "We've lived there for 10,000 years, the territory is who we are, you know, it's where we come from. We can link our history back to the occupation of it. It still sustains us." The healing camp founder (15.07.15) also held this view:

"I don't control the land, the land has me. I come from the land, when I die I am going to go back to the land. This land that I sit on here has ancestors and family that has been buried here. My family blood is on this land. That's what it means to come from the land, to know where you come from. To know where you are going to go when you die. To know that this is where my people come from. This is where my people are. How many people in the world can say that now? How many people can go home and say this is where I am from. Since time began this is where my people come from. This is where we are."

The Aboriginal artist (19.07.15) who lives far from where the pipeline would go is still worried about the downstream repercussions a potential spill could have. "My fish is going to be affected that I harvest for my family down here. […]. It is going to take a big chunk of our connection to the land away from us that will never be replaced. So it is really a bad thing all around." He also drew the threat the pipeline could have to the salmon to include dangers to other species, not just people. Other species of fish rely on the salmon and eagles and bears eat the salmon. The potential ramifications of the pipeline would, according to him, affect a whole ecosystem of interconnectedness that is irreplaceable. As mentioned in chapter 3, the intimacy many Aboriginal peoples feel with the land relies on the land being healthy. It is therefore important that the land and ecosystems are intact so that Aboriginal peoples can continue to nurture these relationships (Simpson 2004).

I spent a lot of time with my key participant, the YDA co-founder (14.07.15), during my stay in BC. Several of the excursions we did involved looking for and picking berries both for personal use and to be used in ceremonies. She explained to me the importance of being able to continue to do this in the future:

"We are kind of an isolated community and we still, as you witnessed throughout the interviews, everybody is just like hunting for berries now and getting kind of berry fever. The disruption of that would be just untold devastation. And what they are threatening us is our way of life, is our future generations that could be wiped out in one swoop. And I may be overdramatizing it but in reality, when you come from the land you know what is at risk."

From the interviews it is clear that a strong sense of being of the land is present, this is also supported by Colchester (1997), who emphasizes the strong relation many Aboriginal

communities have to their land. From chapter 3, where worldviews were thoroughly discussed, it becomes understandable that this connection to the land both in the form of their cultivation of it, and their sense of being of it, is existent.

## 6.2   The effects of the ENGP

In the above sections the participant's *use of the land* and their sense of *being of the land* was presented. In this part, two main effects of the pipeline will be presented as described by the participant's during the interviews, namely the *construction* and *fear of the future*.

**Construction of the pipeline**

To some of the participants the *construction* part of the pipeline itself presents substantial damage to the land regardless of a potential spill. Pipelines are laid in 'right-of-ways' that are typically 25- to 30-metrewide lines cleared across the landscape. For the ENGP, most of this is in already clear-cut areas or alongside existing pipelines. But the areas it crosses where the participants of the this research are residing is mostly untouched, which would mean a huge intrusion on their land and for the animals that live there as well. The environmental assessment coordinator (02.07.15) stressed that it is not only an avenue for humans to go in, but predators and animals as well. By creating a right-of-way it makes it easier for predators and other animals to come and go, changing the dynamics of "that unique ecosystem." He also explained how the area used to be pristine; there was no access, only heavy bush. In other areas where the pipeline would be laid and the landscape is more open, it still creates problems for animals. The Aboriginal artist (19.07.15) said, "It is going to create a barrier for migrating animals because they have to clear forest and things like that to make room for the pipeline." The construction of the pipeline will not only hurt animals that live and migrate in that area; it will also put important food sources for the people in danger.

> "That they wanted to put pipes through our territory and through pristine waters where our salmon spawns. They wanna go under the very river that the salmon spawn in. So that's where red flags came up for us, like wait a minute, we are salmon people, we depend on this and they are already endangered right now." (Resistance camp manager 03.07.15).

The environmental assessment coordinator (02.07.15) brought up the issue of the pipeline affecting their use of the land in a way that threatens their very right to make those uses. "It effects too much of our house territories and effects the land where we cannot make use of that land under our cultural and traditional use. And it will affect us in a manner that it would infringe on our right to do that."

**Fear of the future**

In conversation with an Elder (29.06.15) he told me about the dangers of a spill related to future food security: "All that thing is gonna clap into Fraser Lake. And Fraser Lake they got farm here, and here, and a farm here. They gonna be belly up floating down." Some of the area around where the people I interviewed for this research live, is farmland. A spill into a river that is connected with this farmland through irrigation would be devastating. Similarly, the hereditary chief (13.07.15) told me about his visit to Fort McKay in Alberta, located right by the Athabasca River and among the many tar sands production sites.

> "When I was in Fort McKay, I always gotta talk about that place, its just dead ground. The air is so toxic that the berry bushes don't even bloom. […]. They cant eat the fish, they don't even swim in the rivers or lakes anymore because they come out of it they got cancerous tumors. They don't allow the kids to go swimming or nothing."

The tar sands deposits make up significant portions of the state of Alberta. The vast majority of this oil is too deep to mine, forcing the industry to use even more intensive equipment and methods to get the tar sand to the top for transport (The Guardian 2015). This continued drive by the industry and the government fits well with the claims made in chapter 3, where in parts of the Western world, nature is alien to the human, separation is prevalent and therefore domination and exploitation of nature is widespread (Callicot 1982; Datta 2015). The hereditary chief (13.07.15) again brought up the fear of turning out like communities in Alberta:

> "Can I lay that seven generations down there? I don't ever wanna see our kids: 'I remember grandpa saying that we used to be able to go over here, or we used to.' I have been to enough places where they say that. I have been to the tar sands; that's what they say up there: 'We used to be able to go up there, we used to have this

here.' I've been up to Fort St John that's just pipelines and gas right. 'Oh, yeah, our deer and our moose used to go over there but now we can't eat it because if it goes in there in one of the wasted water wells they are contaminated.' […]. I don't want that for here."

The resistance camp manager (03.07.15) also echoed the 'used-to' fear of having things change so much that the way of life they've had for thousands of years will be gone. "So we have noticed a lot of that happening, so my family decided that if we don't do anything then our next generation is gonna be telling the tales of what used to be, as what our neighboring Indigenous communities are experiencing now." Some of the participants also looked to events that had happened in the past for fear that it could happen again. Particularly the Exxon Valdez oil spill off the coast of Alaska in 1989 was a returning fear: "You are still seeing that a lot of the wildlife have never recovered. […]. The herring fishery was gone. It's gone." (Tribal chief 07.17.15). "You dig down a foot of sand and throw a pale of seawater in there you will see the oil come up. And that was 20 years later." (YDA co-founder 14.07.15).

As described in chapter 3, the government of Canada remains committed to facilitating industrial development of natural resources on Aboriginal lands (Simpson 2004). By doing so, the land – used by Aboriginal people for survival, cultural traditions, and sense of wellbeing – will effectively be destroyed. By resisting the pipeline the participants are trying to preserve their own lands and the land for future generations.

# 6.3 Climate change

Climate change is perhaps the single most complex and difficult challenge of the world. It affects everyone in different ways and degrees. The ENGP will contribute to further climate change as it sends a signal of continued reliance on fossil fuel extraction and usage.

**"Well, to me it is obvious"**

Many of the participants already felt and saw the effects of climate change. One of the most noted changes for them is the pine beetle infestation. The mountain pine beetle is a native insect of the pine forests of western North America. Its population periodically erupts into large-scale outbreaks. The previous outbreak in BC, around 2008, was an order of magnitude larger in area and severity than all previous recorded outbreaks (Kurz et al. 2008). It lasted

until 2011-2012 simply because then there was hardly any pine trees left to attack. The dead trees left behind was a big part of the landscape I spent the five weeks in. The black, sad-looking, tall leftovers of the pine trees served as a constant reminder of the fragility of ecosystems and effect of climate change.

> "What really made the problem worse is that right now we are getting a week or two longer summers. So during that time we are seeing two flights of pine beetle. There used to be just one. […]. We are not getting that cold snap in the fall. That really kept it in check over the last 100-200 years or so. You get a blast of cold air, which usually calms down the weather and then kills a lot of the pine beetle. Just freezes them out and that hasn't occurred because climate change has changed the weather patterns" (Tribal chief 07.07.15).

The tribal chief also spoke about a natural way to solve some of the pine beetle infestation. "We need fire. Our forests, any forest in the world, needs fire to regenerate." The hereditary chief (13.07.15) also mentioned this, "They wouldn't allow wildfires. Wildfires are nature's way of getting rid of the weak trees. Every time there is a fire they put it out." He also pointed to the issue of monoculture in their forests. The logging industry usually replants pine because it is what they mostly use. He worried about the next pine beetle infestation because of how much pine the insects now could feast on.

Some participants mentioned other effects of climate change that are already happening and already being felt, like the YDA co-founder (14.07.15) explaining the difficulties in not being able to predict things the same way as before: "Before we would have it almost to the week when the berries are going to be ready. But now it is a lot of hit and miss." The grassroots activist (26.06.15) pointed to weather effects of climate change.

> "Well to me it is obvious, because we used to have really hard, long winters and I'm seeing less snow, quicker snow melt causing flooding, I am also seeing droughts on our trees. […]. As a child I'd be outside all day, I never burn in the sun, I'm dark. It just never, ever happened. All day. Now I feel the strength of the sun, I feel the rays."

Experiencing quicker snowmelt and runoff was also mentioned by the tribal chief (07.07.15), he saw the effects it had on the salmon when it comes back in late July to September. Either

there isn't enough water, meaning high temperatures and death to a lot of the salmon; or too much water making it too hard for the salmon to make it back up the river because they are wasting their energy on the big volumes of water.

During my time in BC, I spent many days with a farmer. He took me horseback riding one afternoon and we went down to the river close by his house. Along the edges of the river you could see the surrounding marks of how high the river was supposed to be. "It has never been this low. Never," were his words to me. He was worried about the salmon run coming up in about a month's time, hoping they would make it so that they would be able to catch some for the fall and winter. The hereditary chief (13.07.15) was also worried about the salmon, especially in terms of water temperature. "If they are not the right temperature some simply wont [spawn], and if they do spawn they also have to have the right temperature for the eggs to start incubating properly and become a smoke."

**"We used to"**

The preceding section showed what climate change is to the participants. This part will go more into how they perceive it, what they fear and what they want. All the participants agreed that we are living it right now. But how they choose to frame it, what stories they tell to explain it differs some. The YDA co-founder (14.07.15) told me:

> "We are dealing with climate change as it is. And I think it is really important to start minimizing it. […]. Climate change is such an important issue. And it is feeding an ongoing problem, this monster that isn't going to stop until we start realizing and our corporations start realizing that we can't do this anymore. […]. At night we used to just sleep under the stars with just a blanket and not worry. But now you could just be sweltering all day and at night it will get so cold."

There is a constant line drawn to how it used to be compared to how it is with the participants, as seen in the above quote. With some of the participants there is also a division between a good and an evil. The healing camp founder (15.07.15) explaining climate change as a consequence of the history of civilization went on, "Political systems altruistic in their inception have changed to subvert and control the people for the monetary gain and for the evil of a despot or a tyrant. So throughout history, the spirituality is the first thing to suffer.

Before, all nations in the world worshipped the Mother, Mother Earth." Others, like the tribal chief (07.07.15), emphasized the unfairness of the effect of climate change.

> "But in the end, go anywhere in the world the first people that feel the effects of climate change are Indigenous people. We are the ones that are out there in the Arctic tundra. Indigenous people we are out on the land, we know that there are a lot of dead trees and there is weird behavior. The Indigenous people on the islands are seeing sea levels rise. The Indigenous peoples are the first ones to see and are also the first ones to feel the detrimental effects of climate change."

**"It's bleak"**

When asked about the future in relation to climate change there was fair mix of optimism and dread. For some of the participants the thought of the future ignited stories of policy and the need for planning. For others it was more about love, spirituality and teaching future generations good values.

The environmental assessment coordinator (02.07.15) explained how the government of Canada is trying to obtain carbon credits by greening up areas that are already disturbed instead of protecting pristine areas, such as where the participants live and where the ENGP would go through. As a solution he looked to Europe, "I think in reality Canada has to change their look of climate change and start looking at how the European Union made their changes to make the drastic changes to reduce the greenhouse gases. Right now Canada itself is reluctant to go into that realm." The tribal chief (07.07.15) likewise emphasized Canada's need to make a strategy to get out of fossil fuel dependence, conserve the tar sands, and protect wildlife, "There is just zero I guess you could say vision or planning to conserve for the future. It's all take, take now and worry about the repercussions later."

Some of the participants were more pessimistic in their portrayal of the world in a future with projected climate change. The recognition and reconciliation coordinator (13.07.15) was generally worried about the abundance disappearing and specifically about the speed of the changes seen.

> "Its scary that you can't see how fast its happening, its almost like its happening and you are just like 'Was this just sort of like a bad year?' And I think that was

what people were thinking for a long time, 'Maybe just a bad year, maybe next year will be better.' […]. But its not, it's a continuing trend. […]. Its really concerning."

The YDA co-founder (14.07.15) is equally anxious about the future and again, like many of the other participants, brings it back to a point of good versus evil, "But it all returns back to the mass evil, which are corporations and their greed. Until more people start taking a stand, that's the only way these people are going to realize the true impacts." The fascinating thing about talking to people and asking them similar questions is that the answers given vary. For a couple of the participants the future in relation to climate change is positive in that eventually love will persevere and humanity together has to make changes.

> "I'm positive because I feel that love changes people. Love for our planet, love for each other, love for our children and there is no way that in the hearts and minds of those people that once they get that epiphany of true care, it might take the earth to shake us. You know like when somebody is out of it and you want to smack them because they are like loosing it mentally. Well maybe the earth has to do that on a large scale and is." (Grassroots activist 26.06.15).

Likewise the Aboriginal artist (19.07.15) thought of the future as a time when greater spiritual awakening would be needed and how this should be taught to our children.

> "On a spiritual level I think more and more people are kind of getting it. You hear more and more about laws of attraction and manifesting. […]. So you are sending out the vibration and your connection to the earth is like a frequency from your brain. My eyes are for my mind, not for me. I am not a body that has a spirit; I am a spirit that has a body. And that's the difference. You have to be on this side to understand to change things and make things happen and those things are starting to happen, more people are starting to understand that. And I think that's a good place to start with our children, right?"

## 6.4  Summary

This chapter has shown how the participants link the effects of the ENGP to nature, or the land, as they most often refer to it.

The participants elaborated on the way they use the land that the pipeline potentially will cross. It is used to *hunt and harvest* food for personal consumption and for ceremonies. It is used to teach the younger generation about the interconnectedness of things and how to survive. Some participants also highlighted the use of the land in form of it *being a part of oneself*. The intimacy many Aboriginal peoples feel with the land is linked to the land being healthy. The pipeline could put the health of the land, and in extension of that, the health of the people themselves, in danger.

This chapter also showed how the participants view the effects of the pipeline. This could then be separated into two relating viewpoints, the effects of the *construction* of the pipeline, which impact both the people as they no longer can cross into that area because the land will be owned by Enbridge, and the animals as it creates both corridors and barriers for wildlife effectively changing the migration routes of the animals. This could harm Aboriginal peoples knowledge of knowing where to look for what animals and what to expect in the bush. The second viewpoint is *fear* of what the future could bring if the pipeline is built.

*Climate change* was also an issue brought up my many of the participants, as well as being included in the interview guide. The ENGP was seen as a symbol of the continued industrial attack on both the climate and their lands. Effects of climate change already visible to them included the pine beetle infestation along with changes in weather prediction.

As reviewed in chapter 3, the Western view on nature is greatly bound to the Judaeo-Christian tradition of man versus nature (White 2004). However, changes within the Western world are present. Posthumanism and bodily natures offer some optimism, where the human and environment can no longer be considered separate. This lies closer to an Aboriginal view on nature. When supporting Aboriginal peoples in their resistance against the ENGP through a view-on-nature perspective, it is crucial to both understand and acknowledge where they are coming from and respect it. Their continued resistance against the ENGP is anchored within a specific view of the land and the entirety of the chapter has shown that the land is extremely important to the participants. They rely on it for most aspects of their lives. Opposing the pipeline for the sake of nature is, according to the participants, crucial.

# 7 Aboriginal view of the world

The empirical data this chapter is built on mostly comes from stories told to me by the participants during interviews. Some of these stories were sparked by initial questions asked by me, but the majority of them are turns the participants took away from the question to tell me what they really wanted to share. I think this is perhaps the most interesting information to gain, as it was their *choice* to tell me those stories. Silverman (2010:225) writes of how accessing narratives through which people describe their world is an important step in abandoning "the attempt to treat respondents' accounts as potentially 'true' pictures of 'reality,'" instead, by analyzing the culturally rich stories told by interviewees, "general accounts of the world" can be explored. Examples of the questions I asked that headed the conversation into interesting directions are:

- What is the most important reason to say no to the pipeline?
- If you think about the future and the pipeline has not been built, how is your life then?

In answering these questions, the participants told stories of resistance, hope, fears and connecting to the Earth. In analyzing the empirical data from the interview transcripts it is clear that the answers and stories reflect their worldview. The first part of this chapter therefore places some of the stories told to me within the structures that make up a worldview according to Hedlund-de Witt (2013). Section 7.2 looks at the reasons for opposing the pipeline given by the participants, while the final section examines what a future without the pipeline would look like.

## 7.1 Seeing and understanding the world from an Aboriginal worldview

Within every answer given and conversation held throughout this research an underlying worldview exists both on the part of the participants and with me as the researcher. As brought up in chapter 3, all worldviews are complex, subtle and multifaceted (Pichette et al. 1999). This section will still, in a quite box-like manner, arrange the aspects that make up the structure of worldviews as described by Hedlund-de Witt (2013) – namely, ontology, epistemology, axiology, anthropology, and societal vision. This will be helpful for the rest of the chapter to better understand why participants choose certain aspects as being most

important to oppose the pipeline, how they explain their resistance to the pipeline, and what they think of when they were asked to think about a future without the ENGP. This section will include some longer quotes than earlier in the thesis. I have chosen not to shorten or crop them as much for two reasons. First, because it crucial to get their full story and context of what they are explaining for this section of the chapter, and second, because it is their voices, and as thoroughly discussed in the methods chapter, I don't want to minimize their voice.

**"The spirits are real"**
What exists in the world, *ontology*, is a substantial question both in terms of scientific inquiry and as a regular person in the world. Some of the participants brought up how Aboriginal peoples believe all things exist in relation to one another, how they are all connected. The healing camp founder (15.07.15) even saw a move towards that type of thinking from the rest of the world as well.

> "We are starting to realize now, through all the years of science and the quantum physics and all that, they are starting to catch up to the Indian way of thought and how we saw the universe. The interconnectedness of all life and all things. They are starting to find that through mathematics and chaos theory. The grand unified theory is not so much an equation of thought or anything else, it is a feeling."

Although most people living on this planet would agree that it is a living planet compared to other 'dead' planets. What differs with Aboriginal peoples is that the planet is a living entity in the form of a Mother, someone that sustains us and takes care of us as long as we take care of her. The medicine man (08.07.15) emphasized this, "But Mother Earth is you know, I mean she is such a *living* entity." Other ways their conception of what exists expresses itself is through what traditional medicine can do. They believe in a healing power that connects people with the Earth and that is sacred. To exemplify this to me, the Elder (29.06.15) told me a personal story about his wife's pregnancy with one of his children. His wife got ill and the doctors wanted to terminate the pregnancy. He made some medicine for her and came back the next day.

> "And when I got there at 10 o'clock in the morning she is lying down, smiling there. I don't know how to explain this to the doctors, they ask me and I don't

know what to say to them. Now my girl she is graduating, she is 16-17 years old. And that's the one they wanted to abort."

The belief in the existence of a cure for pregnancy complications like this is absent from most of the Western world. But whether or not this is the correct way to deal with issues like this is beside the point. What this story is trying to tell is that they believe in their own methods - methods that stem from a worldview where medicine prepared by Elders or medicine men can heal. The grassroots activist (26.06.15) explained this belief to me. She admits it can seem unreal and implausible to many Westerners. But to her and many other Aboriginal peoples, it is what exists in the world.

"The spirits are real. […]. I know its kind of far-fetched way of people thinking of things, but to us we believe in magic. And there are things that we don't do. It's taboo. You don't hurt the earth, you don't pollute the land, you don't, its taboo. It's wrong. It's like a sin. And they do, the government does these things every day. They are taboo and they are going against earth protocol which is the protocol of our people."

A man I met at a meeting in the community town hall told a similar story. I told him I was attending a sweat lodge later that day and he shared his first experience with a sweat. He had gone there with his brother and his brother had put an eagle wing down on the side of the floor and as they were doing the sweat he could feel the eagle brushing against his head and the wind it made from flapping. Inside the sweat there is total darkness except from small glows from the warm stones in the middle so he couldn't see anything. After the sweat was done he asked his brother who was waving the eagle wing. His brother said that no one touches the wing; the wing goes where it wants to go and if it doesn't want to go anywhere it stays on the ground.

**"A vision came to me"**
Assumptions about how we can know the world, *epistemology*, vary around the world. Some parts of the Western world ascribe to a quite positivistic and masculine scientific method to come to know the 'truth' about the world. This has been challenged on a number of fronts (Hubbard et al. 2002). One of these fronts is by Aboriginal peoples.

As touched upon in the methods chapter, the search for knowledge among Aboriginal peoples is not just a physical aspect of life, but also spiritual. Knowledge can be accessed through many different forms such as prayer, ceremony, vision quests and dreams. An example of this brought up by the medicine man (08.07.15), was looking to animals and other living and non-living entities for knowledge. "There is rituals and spirituality that deal a lot with yourself and deal a lot with the land and our four legged, our winged and our plant brothers and sisters. You know, and the communication that we once had with these entities was strong." He had, as many other Aboriginal peoples in Canada, been through an addiction. He continued this line of thought with a story.

> "When I was out there I chose between all the drugs and alcohol and then a vision came to me and I was given this choice. In this hand there is all the drugs and alcohol and everything you wanted to make your life, you know, self-medicate yourself for the rest of your life. And in this hand there is water. You can choose what you want and I chose water. And it cured that urge, eh?"

How to know the world from an Aboriginal standpoint arises from the interconnections between the human world, the spirit, and inanimate entities (Kovack 2005). The hereditary chief (13.07.15) spoke of this many times throughout our interview. One of the stories he told that stands out is the following one.

> "Currently I am the last living high chief that went through the *boy to man*. We drop you off in the fall time between two mountains and they come and get you in the spring. So I spent 7 months between two mountains when I was a teenager. […]. You are supposed to learn it all to survive all the way through. And what to watch for, how do you know weather is going to change? We watch the animals, we watch the birds, and then every little animal will tell you something about the weather. So, that's what we watched."

It might seem like what they are watching for when trying to survive on the land is what any one person would look for as well. But there is a stronger sense of listening deeply, not just to know where your next meal could come from but to understand the surroundings and connections between you and the world around you. The hereditary chief explained that such initiation rights are no longer carried out for legal reasons. "They would probably call it child abuse because we were young teenagers but by that time we should be able to look after

ourselves out in the territory." A misunderstanding or lack of willingness to understand what such rituals encompass might be an explanation for why they are no longer carried out.

**"We have to look after it because this is home"**

Ideas about what a good life is, *axiology*, both in terms of morals and quality of life differ between people in the world. The Western idea of a good life can, very generalized, be one where material needs are fulfilled and financial security is assured. One of the people I spent a lot of time with during the fieldwork, a retired logger, talked to me a lot about his life and how he appreciated what he had. The ability for him to just get in his pick-up truck, drive onto the back roads of the bush and hunt his dinner is a valued part of his life. Similarly the medicine man (08.07.15) when overlooking the view from where we did the interview said, "I always come up here because it is so beautiful. And it's just a magical place." He, and many of the other participants, explained how the land is a big part of what constitutes a good life. Not only is it used for hunting and harvesting foods, it is also a place to connect and let go of what is no longer useful in life.

> "When I'm out of balance, if I don't use ceremony, I come up here and we say we lean into the land, eh? We lean into the land to, 'Here, take this off me, take this, I don't need this today.' You know, take this negative feeling and put it through where its not gonna harm me or anybody else and burry it somewhere. You ask it of Mother Earth. That's why you are supposed to walk around bare feet all the time. Ground yourself. That's why we used to wear a lot of skins. We're the original hippies, eh?" (Medicine man 08.07.15).

A part of knowing what amounts to a good life is knowing what you have and how to take care of it. A common line of thought among many of the participants was the ignorance of both the government and Enbridge in understanding this. The hereditary chief (13.07.15) clarified that this is home for them, and that they have to look after it, "They get to go home. We don't." Likewise, the Aboriginal artist (19.07.15) explained with irony how none of the Enbridge executives would ever dream of actually living near an oil production plant:

> "How many Enbridge executives you know live right on the plant? 'Oh yeah, we are making so much money I am just going to live here and watch this beautiful oil plant make me money! Yeah, I am going to get a front sun decked view of all of

this beauty.' No, it is out of sight, out of mind. They have no connection to the Earth."

The hereditary chief (13.07.15) made it clear that a good life includes a healthy land. "We still want to save our land, our water, our freedom, our rights. The air that we breathe, there are many places that don't have the air that we breathe. Without air, nothing. Without water, nothing, without food, nothing." It became clear when speaking with many of the participants that because the pipeline threatens water, air and land quality, it is also threatens their way of life, their sense of what makes up a good life.

**"Only one reason to be and that is to protect the Mother"**
Who the human being is and what his or her role, purpose and position are in the universe is what Hedlund-de Witt (2013:158) calls *anthropology*. The medicine man (08.07.15) talked a lot about the purpose of human beings.

> "You know you are forgetting that this was left for us to care for. We are not owners of the land, we are just caretakers, we are spirit of the land, eh? You look at the history of Indigenous people in this country; the primary goal of the government was to separate us from the land. So we couldn't speak for the land. But now we've come to a point where we are back the full circle and we realize our proper roles, many of us do anyway. We speak for the land, I mean the land is silent in many ways but our job is to speak for it so that we can protect it. That's our role. Protect this environment. Not for ourselves or for any glory, its for generations to come because this is what's gonna sustain them. A pipeline is not gonna sustain anybody. A select few jobs and that's it."

The part in his quote about knowing our proper roles really goes into the question of anthropology. For many people in the Western world, human's role on earth is to repopulate and make life as comfortable as possible for ones family. As accounted for in chapter 3, the worldview of the Western world is very much being changed and challenged, still, a tangible way of recognizing that the way the Western world has organized life might not be as sustainable and prosperous as once thought, is the recognition of a move towards the *anthropocene*. The growing interference of human beings with the Earth's metabolism and the variability of the Earth System have made some scientists believe we are entering a new era. Mauser (2006:3) explains that the human interference has now reached a level "which is

of the same order of magnitude as many natural processes on Earth." Growing segments of the Western world are realizing that humans role on Earth in the future must be towards planetary stewardship. Steffen et al. (2011:749) call this challenge unique and explains that it will demand a global-scale solution that "transcends national boundaries and cultural divides."

In the Aboriginal worldview I was given a look at through conversations with the participants, the role of humans is much more and much less at the same time, as explained by one of the participants:

> "We have only one purpose to exist in this world and only one reason to be and that is to protect the Mother and to give voice to those that have none, and to teach the meaning behind all my relations. All my relations, to understand that everything is a living thing. Every rock, every branch, every raindrop has a spirit and a personality and in the end a right to respect and freedom." (Healing camp founder 15.07.15).

When your role in the universe is no longer to care so much for yourself it might seem as if your purpose is less than you thought it would be. But once an understanding of what that really means takes form, there are other responsibilities that take over, like protecting the Earth and speaking for those who cannot speak, as mentioned by the healing camp founder. This type of role in the universe is lacking in many parts of the Western world, but might be evolving more quickly with the realization of the anthropocene.

**"They got it all backwards"**
A *societal vision* is explained by Hedlund-de Witt (2013:158) as "fundamental assumptions on how society should be organized and how societal problems should be addressed." This, like all the other structures that make up a worldview, will vary not only from country to country but also from person to person. However, through interviews and conversations with participants some phrases and stories surfaced again and again. They talk about a society where love and the land is center stage, not greed or money as they attribute to Western society. The medicine man (08.17.15) explained:

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> "I was brought up by a stepfather and I was treated like a dog, eh? And I was told one thing every day and through fasting and ceremony I've been able to unshackle that and teach about love and you know, I truly believe that love is the common denominator for all the cures. To love someone, I mean, you don't have to like someone you just have to love them."

Having a love for all things around you is part of an Aboriginal worldview; still there is a certain order in what you prioritize. An order that, according to one of the participants, is wrong in many parts of the Western world. "Countries are all business, then people, then the Earth. That's the way it is. And it is not the way we were, it was the other way around. First the Earth, then us, not the other way around. They got it all backwards." (Aboriginal artist 19.07.15). The resistance camp manager (03.07.15) exemplified what a societal vision is with the story of her own life. She left a well-paying job after 14 years because she wasn't happy. She explained how she is now back on the land and how invigorating that feels. The societal problems that she sees are a result of assaults made by colonial powers. "They have tried to put us out of our culture for many years with the residential school system. People have lost their purpose." She attributed the high suicide rate among youths to their loss of connection to the land. Recently, the chief of an Aboriginal community in Attawapiskat, in northern Ontario, declared a state of emergency because of the high rate of suicide attempts among the young community members, one as young as 9 years old (Cook 2016). One of the explanations given for this was that young people might not feel like they belong anywhere. The resistance camp the participant runs not only stands in the way of the pipeline, it is also a place for youth to come and learn about their story and history and how to live off the land. "I do this work for the generations to come." The healing camp manager (15.07.15) who has similar plans for his camp told the same story.

> "A lot of the things that we do are based on politeness and respect. Most of the laws and most of the things that we have have to do with that. And most of the infringements against it has to do with trespass. Because you can trespass on people in many different ways. On our emotions, on the way they make their lives, how they feel about themselves. You can impose yourself on them by making them do things they don't want to do, living a way that is foreign to them, that's a trespass of the worst sort, because you kill their spirit. And our spirit was wounded for all that time. And people wonder now why it is so easy for a young Indian to become a drunk or a junkie or a criminal. It is all they know."

Some of the participants spoke directly about worldviews and how there are two at odds. According to the tribal chief (07.07.15), and very similar to the points made in this project, on the one side there is a worldview where humans are the dominant species and is trying to control everything. The other worldview, belonging more to Aboriginal peoples, he explained as following.

"Whereas if you go in the Indigenous view not only in Canada, but elsewhere around the world is that we were a product of our environment. We were there for thousands of years and we survived thousands of years because we were in harmony with the world. You know in our culture, in our potlatch system, in our governance, our traditional way of governance we took on those things that were in our environments. […]. I am hearing everywhere in modern day Canada is that really we should be living how the Indigenous people live. The ironic part is that we are coming back to that worldview where we are trying to live within our environment. We are trying to change a lot of things that are happening in the cities, we are trying to green up cities, we are trying to lower our carbon emissions, meaning that some of the technologies that were there for thousands of years by our people are seen as very viable to the modern world. And I think as a result of thousands of years of living within our environment we are seeing that we are a part of that circle. We have a role to play and we can't have this worldview as dominant over Mother Nature, because Mother Nature will always win. And I think that's what government has to come to terms with. For far too long we have been living this way […]. And obviously it's not working. So I think there is a lesson to be learned here and a lesson to be learned in terms of a perspective, I think these are the two worlds that are at odds and what's gonna win over? I hope the worldview that we are not separate from nature, which is in many respects our view."

As discussed in the theory chapter, a growing number of people in the Western world are moving away from a worldview where people are separate from nature (Alaimo 2011; Hedlund-de Witt 2011; Ray & Anderson 2000). The increasing volume of work on new materialism show that breaking away from the dualism inherent in much Western thinking, especially between humans and nature, brings the Western worldview closer to a sustainable way of thinking and acting. Radical ecology, as explained by Merchant (1992), is also a

contributing part in this endeavor. She makes clear how radical ecology "raises public consciousness concerning the dangers to human health and to nonhuman nature of maintaining the status quo" (1992:235). The Aboriginal artist (19.07.15) saw this type of slow change in the collective thinking of people around the world. He explained:

> "But now there is more of a collective group of people who are feeling these things and are moving to make that change. But while this is going on there is another collective group that is still hanging on, so you have this spiritual battle going on between the two different collectives. One that is all about money, and one that is all about earth and people and what's in the future. So you have these two collectives clashing all the time."

## 7.2 Opposing the pipeline

Throughout the interviews I had with the participants reasons to oppose the pipeline were discussed. I still included a direct question of what the most important reason for resisting the pipeline would be. This question gave a range of answers depending on what they hold most dear in their lives. But a common denominator among the answers was that they all came from a similar worldview. As mentioned in earlier chapters, capturing an Aboriginal worldview is too big a task for this research. Yet, in conversation with the participants it became clear that they talk from the same place of connection to the land, of sacredness of things most Westerners hardly will think about twice, and of having their rights and title respected.

This section of the chapter is divided into three subsections covering the topics they touched upon while answering this question.

**The land**

The hereditary chief (13.07.15) said the land was the most important reason for him to oppose the pipeline. He sees the beauty in the land and questions the idea of sacrificing it for money. "I can't quantify it by putting a dollar bill on soapberries. How much is a pint of soapberries? Well, I don't know but what is your child worth?" The resistance camp manager (03.07.15) also explicitly cited the land as the most important reason for opposing the pipeline. To her the expansion of the Alberta tar sands, something the pipeline will contribute

to, is not the way to go. She is afraid it will facilitate more industry coming through their territory, the burning of ever-more fossil fuels, and poisoning of their waters.

> "The environment is already unpredictable. We see less snow and faster snow melt. It will melt away, then freeze again. So then the harvest will be ruined because you can't predict anything anymore. This stuff you see all around the world. Places that used to have rain now have drought, and places that used to be dry now get tons of water that lead to flooding. We need water to survive. Not just for drinking, but for growing food. The future looks bleak and grim. […]. There will be wars over water. People will fight each other to get food and water. And they call us crazy environmentalists? I am not an environmentalist; I am of the land. I was taught to live sustainably so that the Earth could sustain the generations coming after me."

Just as there are a myriad of different types of Western environmentalists, there are also distinctive types of Aboriginal environmentalists. As explained in chapter 3, in many parts of the Western world, the environment is seen as something separate from humans, something that needs protection and to be saved. The framing of the natural world as an "environment-to-be-managed" is incompatible for many Aboriginal people (Coombes et al. 2012:815). As stated by the resistance camp manager (03.07.15) above, "I am of the land." Although this was a way many of the participants in this project identified themselves, there are cautions to be aware of. The common stereotype based on the assumption that all Aboriginal peoples live in perfect harmony with the environment is at best wrong, and at worst racist. Those who subscribe to this view observe Aboriginal people as the original conservationists (Dove 2006). This view denies the realities of Aboriginal people's lives, "reducing the rich diversity of their beliefs, values, social relations, and practices to a one-dimensional caricature" (Nadasdy 2005:293). Additionally, they are often judged harshly when they fail to live up to the impossible standards, portrayed as guilty of betraying their own cultural beliefs and values.

None of the participants I interviewed for this project went deeper into the unfair placement of Aboriginal peoples as the original environmentalists, and some of them actually used similar phrases to talk about themselves, but because of the many connotations attached to Aboriginal peoples as stewards of the land, I am tentative in proclaiming that 'Aboriginal

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people had it right all along' and 'we should be more like them'. This strips them of their right and privilege to be able to make different choices, unfavorable choices, and even mistakes. Viewing Aboriginal peoples as figures that hold the philosophical key to environmental revolution is too big a step to take in this research. However, recognizing that they see themselves as part of the land and in constant contact with it, and therefore feel a desire to protect the land from exploitative industrial projects, while simultaneously acknowledge that understandings of this change in a constantly evolving process, which presents a host of contradictions at any given time, is more in line with what several authors (Coombes et al. 2012; Dove 2006; Krech 2005; Nadasdy 2005) see as accepted.

**Future generations**

Many of the people I talked to in this research were worried about the lives their future generations would have. Because they explain that their identity is so closely linked to the land and the wellbeing of the land that a destruction of it could be felt like a destruction of them as a people. The medicine man (08.07.15) talked about this.

> "Most important reason is for the children. You wanna leave an environment where they are able to sustain themselves. […]. It's not about us right now, we're important but really it's about the grandchildren and their children. How are they gonna live, you know? How are they gonna sustain themselves? The land is so powerful, you can come up here and psychologically you can be healed. Mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, you feel it here don't you?"

Similarly, the Elder (29.06.15) was scared for his grandchildren's lives. He was worried the ensuing unrest after ruining all natural resources would make Canada become like the Middle East. "I wanne see my grandchildren do their thing and go to Fraser Lake, go fish for salmon or char. If that happens then there wouldn't be no char or no salmon. There'd be nothing. […]. They'll have a war over here. Be just like down south."

**The earth and its resources**

As mentioned in chapter 3, Aboriginal worldviews emerged as a result of people's close relationship with the environment and the belief that the Earth is a living entity (Morrissette et al. 1993; Smith 1999). It is no wonder then that many of the participants talked about the Earth and the resources it inhabits as important reasons for resisting the ENGP. The

Aboriginal artist (19.07.15) for example, quickly responded "First and foremost for the Earth. For the Earth and the things that are connected to the Earth." In the same way another participant was swift to talk about one of the most important reasons for her.

> "The salmon. Right now our salmon is at risk, the early Stuart run has been dwindling for years. […]. Our fish is taking its toll right now and there are so many factors that are coming into play and Enbridge will always be that looming threat. And the worst part about it is that Enbridge doesn't live here. Enbridge has absolutely no idea of what it is to live within such pristine beauty. Our way of life is still who we are and it is so important to us." (YDA co-founder 14.07.15).

The healing camp founder (15.07.15) in a similar manner pointed to the possibilities available without the pipeline. For him, the reason to oppose it is because the Aboriginal peoples of the area have more opportunities if the pipeline is never laid down. "I feel that this point in time, this enlightened age of awareness that we are supposed to be living in, that we should be smart enough to realize that we have enough resources already out of the ground. […]. The days of building something that is going to last has to come back again. We can do this on a large scale, even locally through specialization." Interestingly, he continued this answer by getting into health issues as well. "There is going to come a time when we can't make all these antibiotics and everything else. We got to step away from that. Use the environment to make our immune systems strong again." This speaks to the strong bond many of the participants explained between the health of the land and their own health. The connections between treating the environment badly and, in consequence, treat yourself poorly as well, are strong.

## 7.3  A future without a pipeline

The preceding chapters and sections show a concern among the participants for the future. Some of them sketched out nightmare scenarios of an Earth destroyed by greed, fossil fuels and disregard of the land. An interesting point was therefore to ask them what they thought life would be like if the pipeline was *not* built. All the participants agreed it would be a good thing but they clarified it in three interrelated ways.

**Not over yet**

The resistance camp manager (03.07.15) said that they would still be fighting. She told a story of how under the Great Depression Canadians needed help from Aboriginal peoples to get food because they were starving. When the depression was over they went right back to ignoring them and didn't show any signs of gratitude. She sees tendencies of this happening now.

> "We now joke about how we should have just let them die. That is what it will come to again when things go bad. When there is no more water to grow food or drink. The big money won't do any good then. People need to be educated, the public school system doesn't teach about climate change so people wont wake up until the grocery store shelves are empty, the water is poisoned and their car won't go any further. Mother Earth will be here forever, she will survive, but we will not. We need her. […]. If we don't make a sustainable economy, a sustainable food system and connect with the land. We can't continue this boom and bust. Canadians have raped and destroyed this land for too long, and they will continue to do so unless we get together and stop it."

Again, there is a clear binary between how the world is organized: a money-obsessed West and a land-defending Aboriginal community. There are great differences within these as seen in many parts of the Western world with an upsurge in interests in green economy, sustainable living, and ecological food growing. However, the participants in this project still see it that way because that is what they experience on a day-to-day basis. The medicine man (08.07.15), when thinking about the future without the pipeline similarly saw contrasts between Aboriginal peoples and the Western world.

> "I don't think we'll get up on a pedestal and bang a drum. I think we're all about truly interconnectedness. You know we have this view of our brothers and sisters right across the globe and I think we created an environment that really is sustainable. […]. I mean if you have enough small things around that can sustain you, then you are okay. It's not like this giant title wave of 'oh, lets make a million bucks' and you know and put this pipeline in. Then once they put the pipeline in we're relegated back to marginalized status again because we are not the shareholders, we're not the owners."

**Work ahead**

Some participants saw the end of the ENGP as a starting point for continued work. The grassroots activist (26.06.15) believed that Aboriginal peoples easily could phase out fossil fuels. She saw a future where money could be put into projects for sustainable energy on the reservations. She admitted it is easier said than done and got to what might be the root of many of the problems facing Aboriginal peoples today.

> "Obviously we need to take the power back and stop allowing the government to give us hand-outs and feeding us, educating our children. We need to take the power back. Start building our own homes, growing our own gardens, all the things that a human truly requires in life the land provides. So if we focus our energy back to the land in that way we will survive and we will help the future generations."

Power, as defined by Bugge (2002) in his interpretation of Pierre Bourdieu, is scarce social resources that have been given a specific value by a social community, and by virtue of its scarcity is capable of creating, enhancing or maintaining inequalities between actors. The social resource that has created a conflict of power relations in this case is both the material and economic power the government has in the form of approving the pipeline and the lack of power Aboriginal peoples has in opposing it. As explained in chapter 2, the approval process disregarded Aboriginal people's stories and wishes. When talking to some of the people that potentially will be affected by the pipeline it becomes transparent that they place their right to power within a different worldview than the government, the industry, and large portions of the Western world.

The tribal chief (07.07.15) also saw lots of work ahead even if the pipeline project was shut down.

> "Well, I think its much more than just the pipeline. The pipeline is a symptom of the chronic issue of governance on our traditional territory. For far too long it's been business as usual. With court cases such as Delgamuukw, Haida and Tsilqot'en I think that really has brought us back into the picture where companies and governments need our consent for development projects. We are not totally against development, but I think it has to make sense, it has to be sustainable, it has to be culturally and sensitive to our people. And it also has to be a part of a

bigger plan. […]. So we need to have the same vision of the future of not only our generation but many generations ahead. We simply can't exploit resources now and worry about it later. You can't do that."

His, and some of the other participant's insistence on planning for the future represents their wish of being able to have a say in what the future is going to be. As he mentions, there have been great leaps done legally to include Aboriginal peoples in processes that affect their lands and livelihood. But there is still a view held by mainstream Canadian society that the social and spiritual importance of Aboriginal land don't matter as much as the economic benefits of the pipeline. This is also why many of the participants saw the future without the pipeline as a strong message of Aboriginal power as will be explained in the following section.

**"It would send such a strong message"**
The recognition and reconciliation coordinator (13.07.15) felt that a future without the ENGP would be good for both the land and for future generations but she emphasized a reason that speaks to conflicts of power as mentioned in the above section.

"When we first started there were people that were concerned, they wanted to know more information but they also had this attitude that was like 'There is nothing we can do, what's the point of even trying? It's going to be built anyways.' And you still hear that, despite the fact that Enbridge, for sure, has shown that you *can* do something. And yes, even though they approve it, there is a lot you can do. And so just having that, it's a feeling of insecurity or that we are not worth it and that comes from colonialism, and so for me that would be one of the best outcomes aside from protecting the land, is that people don't feel like that anymore. Like if there is something that isn't right, that if it is not in interest of our communities in the future, we can say no. And yeah, it might be hard and it might be a fight but the alternative of just letting industry have a blind check is not good anymore."

The feeling of realizing you have a voice and more importantly, a voice that matters is a powerful thing for Aboriginal peoples. The YDA co-founder (14.07.15) was thrilled with the thought of the ENGP project being closed down for good. She imagined the positive effects it could have for Indigenous peoples all around the world, the industry, and the government.

"That would send such a *strong* message to indigenous people all around the world. And I am so proud of other nations across the world that are taking a stand and standing up to corporations. […]. It would be a huge precedence and the reason why Enbridge is fighting as hard as they are is because they got so many other applications on the table. Like with the Keystone, with the Line number 9 that is going out east, and it is also going to send a strong message to the tar sands, to all those corporations in the tar sands."

The symbolic significance of the pipeline is noteworthy. Both the monetary resources, and energy put into this project by Enbridge and the government is substantial. For Aboriginal peoples in BC to have their voices triumph the power of the state and industry is a victory that will be with them for a long time, possibly invigorating them to continue to stand up for their rights. As pointed out in chapter 3, there are different forms of empowerment. If the ENGP project were shut down for good, Aboriginal peoples in BC would have been able to gain *power to* change something. Alsop et al. (2007:16) note that prerequisite to empowerment is an opportunity structure "that allows people to translate their asset base into effective agency." An opportunity to make a choice must exist, along with ability of the group to use the opportunity to choose, and a desired outcome of the choice. Opportunities for participation in the ENGP process have been present, albeit undemocratic as stated by some of the participants. Some of the participants were part of the process (e.g. the hearings in the JRP). The last measure identified by Alsop et al. (2007), achievement of choice, didn't go in the Aboriginal peoples favor as the project was approved. However, opportunities still exist to resist the project and in the end have it closed down. And as the authors mention, these degrees of empowerment should not be seen as a continuum with the final degree – the achievement of choice – deemed as the most desirable. Their agency, their ability to make purposeful choices, is still strong and the pipeline is a means of fulfilling this agency. They have already sent a strong message by being part of the conversation, shaping the discourse around the pipeline and offering alternative voices within the discussion.

## 7.4  Summary

In this chapter I have examined the way the Aboriginal participants in this project view the world around them within in a worldview structure, why they choose to oppose the pipeline, and how they think of a future without the ENGP. Many of the participants believe that the way they see the world is not compatible with how large and important parts of today's

modern society is organized. This is justified with examples of continued colonialism and disregard for their stories. It is also why I chose to have the first section of this chapter dealing with worldviews explicitly.

In the first section a review of ontology, epistemology, axiology, anthropology and societal vision was given. It became apparent that the way they describe and explain these aspects of worldviews is quite different from how it would be explained in many parts of the Western world. This is an important point to make as it speaks directly to the whole thesis. The way they use the land, the potential effects of the ENGP they highlight, how they perceived the approval process, and what they think of bill C-51 – these are all important issues that come back to worldview.

The second section of this chapter examined the reasons given by the participants for opposing the ENGP. Most of them saw the land, future generations, and the Earth and its resources as grounds to resist the pipeline. This section is also connected to worldviews as many of the participants seemed to be speaking from the same place of love and protection of *all my relations*.

The final section of this chapter, and also the final question asked at each interview, talked about a hypothetical future without a pipeline. All of the participants expressed joy with the thought of putting the ENGP to bed for good. Variations in the answers pertained to what they highlighted, whether it was a lot of work left to do or the symbolic message such a victory could send.

Although not spoken in exact words by any participant, they complicitly communicated that it is crucial the Canadian government, the industry, and other people involved in Aboriginal peoples lives are able to look beyond their own worldviews and see the issue at hand from an Aboriginal perspective in order to handle it respectfully and inclusively. The often-experienced lack of this together with a turbulent history of colonialism makes the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and various bodies of the Western world difficult and uneven. The power to have a say in what happens in your life is important for all human beings and for centuries Aboriginal peoples have had this power withdrawn. A rising resistance against exploitative industry on their lands and the governmental support that follows it, it apparent and optimistic.

# 8 Conclusions

While in the field, I was able to attend a sweat lodge. It was a dome-shaped hut made of natural materials. Stones are heated and placed in the middle of the hut and water poured over them to create steam. It is a ceremonial ritual accompanied by traditional prayers and songs. A pipe is passed around in the lodge and you have the opportunity to give thanks or pray for something. If you don't have anything to say, saying '*all my relations*' is enough. With those words you are thanking, appreciating, and praying for every single thing in the world. It might seem very unspecific and mundane, but by truly embodying the words you can feel the vibrations they send out. This experience speaks to the entirety of this study. The stories told to me by the participants all hold an element of all my relations. How they live and explain their life is a continuation of all my relations, and how they hope for the future and wish for improvement is in line with all my relations.

This concluding chapter consists of six parts. The first three parts answers the research questions posed in the introduction. Section 8.4 summarizes significant conclusions for the thesis' overarching research question. In section 8.5, I conclude on how this thesis can contribute to the research field linked to Aboriginal resistance and worldviews, and comment on relevant further research. Lastly, I offer final reflections.

## 8.1  Bill C-51

*How could bill C-51 affect the opposition against the pipeline and how is the Canadian government's involvement in the approval process perceived by Aboriginal peoples?*

The analysis has demonstrated that bill C-51 is exclusively unwanted among the Aboriginal participants in this research. They view it as a democracy issue where being labeled as a terrorist for protecting their lands and lifeways is unfair and unjust. The participants explain that the bill is really about protecting industry and other critical infrastructure. The question then becomes who is to say what critical infrastructure is? As the resistance camp manager explained, to her, critical infrastructure is hunting, fishing, and future generations. Her, and other Aboriginal people's knowledge of what is considered worth saving and protecting goes against what the government and industry deem worth sacrificing.

Most of the participants clarified that the bill could have a negative impact on continued resistance against the ENGP. People don't want to risk going to jail or being labeled as terrorists. Another perspective, voiced by some of the participants, is that the bill could have some positive effects. It can motivate people to stand up even more, to fiercely protect their land and way of living.

The process leading up to the approval of the ENGP was largely seen as a decision made without them. Although some of the participants were part of the JRP process, they already knew the outcome of the process going into it. Many of them explained the approval process in direct opposition to their own governmental structure, the hereditary system. Their own knowledge of how to hear each other out, settle disputes, and come to an agreement was ignored by the government. A general mistrust in the government was expressed because of a history where Aboriginal people over and over again are neglected. Their knowledge is sidelined, and some of the participants expressed a desire for the Canadian government to learn from their hereditary system where the law of the land is more important than job creation and foreign investment. Western institutions too often ignore Aboriginal knowledge. However, some of the legislation recently passed is in favor of Aboriginal peoples. The legislation states that if companies want to be safe and lower their risk, they should seek consent. The wish to be included and sought after for consent, along with the ability to say no, and have that decision respected was the general message given by the participants.

## 8.2   Effects of ENGP

*What are the potential effects of the ENGP affecting Aboriginal people's relationship with nature?*

The effects of the ENGP go directly into the discussion of land. The participants in this research explained their use of the land in two interrelated perspectives. The first was a *livelihood and traditions* perspective, where using the land both as a means to survive through hunting and fishing, and for cultural and ceremonial purposes is highlighted. The second was a *being-of-the-land* perspective, where the connection many of the participants feel to the land and nature is stressed.

The effects of the ENGP were, from the participant's stories divided into two consequences: those pertaining to the *construction* part of the pipeline, and those relating to *fears* the

participants had for the future. The construction of the pipeline will include devastation and interference of the land and the animals that migrate and live on it. The participants explained that once a shovel is put in the ground, they can no longer make use of the land they way they usually do. Thoughts about what life would be like if the pipeline is put down were usually dark and filled with fears of what has already happened in other communities where invasive natural resource projects have been implemented.

According to most of the participants, *climate change* is obvious and happening right now. The most cited example of their experience of climate change was the pine beetle infestation along with changes in weather and prediction of berries and salmon runs. The ENGP represents a continuation and amplification of climate change. When thinking about the future in relation to climate change, the participants mostly talked from either a view of better planning and adaptation, or teaching future generations about love and spirituality.

By the government and Enbridge, the land is merely viewed as a route for transporting the oil. For the Aboriginal people part of this research the land is a great deal more. It is where their identity is linked, where their history is laid, and where their future wellbeing will come from. When you see the land in such a way, it is no longer a surprise that they so strongly defend it. In resisting the ENGP through a defense of the land, Aboriginal people are simultaneously resisting the mystification and glorification of their people. Although many of the participants emphasized the strong connection they have with the land, the struggle they are enduring does not have to fall into a mystic battle between people and nature, the Western developments found in posthumanism and bodily natures offer some optimism in that regard.

## 8.3   Opposing ENGP

*What is viewed as the most important reason to oppose the pipeline by Aboriginal peoples? How do they think about a future and life without the pipeline?*

The land was, by many of the participants, cited as the most important reason to oppose the ENGP. In chapter 7 the idea of Aboriginal peoples as 'stewards of the land' was challenged but it is still important to recognize that they see themselves as part of the land as opposed to seeing the land as something to be saved and protected. Making sure future generations have the same opportunities as people do now was also a central reason for resisting the pipeline, along with the Earth itself and the resources found within it. Because of the strong ties the

participants have with the land, the effects of the ENGP on the land are felt like an attack on them.

When thinking about a future without the pipeline, three interrelated perspectives emerged. The first was an acknowledgement of the fight *not being over yet*. Even if the ENGP is shut down, many other pipeline projects are up for approval in BC.[3] The second was recognition of the *work ahead*. Phasing out fossil fuel dependence, gaining back power to have a say over what occurs on their lands, and working towards new business opportunities was mentioned by the participants. The third perspective was an admission of the *strong message* the victory over the ENGP would send, both within their own communities in the form of renewed belief in themselves and their cause and to other Indigenous communities around the world.

## 8.4   Input on resistance against the ENGP

To answer the thesis' overarching research question about *how Aboriginal peoples explain their resistance against the ENGP*, it is necessary to identify where the answers are coming from and what worldview it is spoken from. As explained throughout this thesis, there is no single Aboriginal worldview, but through speaking and spending time with the participants it was possible to tentatively place some of their stories within a worldview structure. From that, what exists in the world are not only what is observable, spirits along with connections between entities are very much present for the participants in this research. How to know the world was exemplified with visions, dreams, ceremonies and prayer. A good life was emphasized as being in nature and taking care of what matters to you. Human's purpose and role in the universe is to take care of the things that don't have a voice and to protect the Earth. A societal vision was, from answers given by the participants, pointed out as caring for the Earth first and working for the generations to come.

In line with the theoretical framework given and the analysis presented, the participant's explanations for opposing the pipeline can be placed within three interconnected positions. The first is through *knowledge*. The participants knowledge of the land, how to take care and make use of it was often marginalized in favor of the government's or industry's knowledge of how to reap the most benefits from the land. Western knowledge expressed through weakened environmental legislation and enhanced surveillance acts emphasize the divide

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[3] https://engage.gov.bc.ca/lnginbc/lng-projects/

between Aboriginal and Western knowledge. The ENGP is viewed by many of the participants as a persistent undermining of their own knowledges. Continuing to work with their own systems of governance and transmitting their own knowledge to future generations stands as examples of resisting the ENGP through a knowledge perspective.

The second is resistance through *nature*. The intimacy and connection many of the participants feel with the land stand in a direct opposition to how many parts of the Western world, especially governmental institutions and extraction industries, view nature. Large parts of the participant's wellbeing come from the land being healthy. The ENGP threatens this health and a resistance against it for the sake of nature was therefore widely highlighted by many of the participants.

Lastly, the participants described a resistance through *worldview*. This point is present within the former explanations for resistance as well because drawing attention to knowledge and nature over other explanations is part of a worldview. Because Aboriginal worldviews have been assailed for centuries, restoring them is part of a resistance. Although intergenerational trauma has wreaked havoc on many Aboriginal communities and the worldviews that sustain them, intergenerational wisdom is also present.

Implicit in most of the stories given by participants was that their very existence is a resistance. Every Aboriginal person born and living in this world is a victory against colonialism and eradication of their way of life; they are hope made flesh, and their grandmother's answered prayer. The anger and frustrations felt by many of the participants are often seen by Western people as proof of their irrationality and lack of looking beyond feelings, but expecting marginalized peoples to disregard their own emotions to calmly educate the Western world is the epitome of entitlement. Acknowledging their history, their worldview and their voices is necessary, but limiting it and repacking it to fit a Western agenda falls into a continued undermining of Aboriginal peoples. The ENGP is a symbol of this struggle.

## 8.5   Suggestions for further research

This thesis has included the voices of Aboriginal people affected by the ENGP, which is important when doing research with Aboriginal peoples. To enhance this study and potential

future research, a larger emphasis on decolonizing methodologies should be given. Especially including research participants in a greater sense. As explained in the introduction, I was pulled back and forth between the stories told by the participants and my own situatedness within academia. As described by Getty (2009:6), "it is possible to be so caught up with the desire to help right the wrongs that were done to First Nations people that we repeat the wrongs." In good intentions, wanting to help and be of assistance to the participants in this study does not obviate the need to identify the wishes and strengths of the people I aim to help. This point should be crystallized to future researchers wanting to do research with Aboriginal peoples.

The theoretical and empirical work I have done in this study, by linking the empirical explanations for opposing the pipeline to a theoretical structure of knowledge, nature, and worldview, forms a basis for comparison between this study and an equivalent study of Aboriginal resistance against industrial resource development. Such a study can use the same context or look at the other parts of the pipeline, for example the starting point in Alberta with the tar sands or the ending point in Kitimat with tanker traffic.

Thinking about how the scientific inquiry can open up spaces that work with different ways of knowing and understanding the world is important. In this thesis I have tried to make an effort to not just answer questions of validity or reliability but also consider how I, as a researcher, am fulfilling my role in the relationship.

## 8.6   Final reflections

Because the way we live in and understand the world informs our actions on a daily basis, acknowledging and understanding where these understandings come from and challenging them are essential to the progress of humankind. The ENGP is a symptom of a disease found in the world today; a warming planet fueled by, among others, the coal, oil, and gas industry. The challenges society faces at any given historical moment tend also to become burning questions and challenges for practicing social scientists (Scott 2000). The pipeline is a facilitation of the continuation of climate change. Aboriginal peoples, not only in Canada but also all around the world are taking a stand of resistance against the maintenance of the status quo. Recognizing that the challenges faced by the world community today are consequences of our own claim to knowledge, how we view nature, and our worldviews is crucial. Within

this recognition there needs to be an acknowledgement and respect for people who have a say different from the existing conditions. Aboriginal peoples are offering some of these 'new' perspectives. Making sure they have both the philosophical and physical space to exercise these perspectives is important. It is fitting to end with the words of the grassroots activist (26.06.15) and her account of the future of Aboriginal resistance.

> "I truly believe that new leaders are emerging in very large numbers. It's almost as though each person is realizing their full potential. And in that way there is no stopping the resistance, and the resistance is more like a gathering of likeminded people who want to change this world. […] We are welcoming people to join in our survival."

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Example of interview guide:

1. **Yinka Dene Alliance**

   1.1 Can you tell me about the work of the YDA

   1.2 What has been your role with the YDA?

   1.3 Through the YDA the ENGP has been banned, what is the reason for this do you think?

2. **ENGP**

   2.1 Can you tell me about the pipeline

   2.2 If the pipeline was built, how would that effect you/your community?

       2.2.1   If there was an oil spill how would that effect you/your community?

       2.2.2   At the other end of the pipeline we find the Alberta tar sands production, how do you feel about that?

3. **Government involvement**

   3.1 How do you perceive the government's involvement in the approval process?

   3.2 It has been approved with 209 conditions, in the process leading up to this decision how has the government's involvement been compared to other natural resource projects in the state?

4. **Bill C-51**

   4.1 Can you tell me about bill C-51.

       4.1.1 How do you think colonialism plays into this?

   4.2 How do you think the bill could affect the resistance against the ENGP?

   4.3 How do you think it could affect the YDA?

5. **Climate change**

   5.1 The pipeline will carry tar sands from the Alberta mining operations and the use of this oil will contribute to climate change. What is climate change to you?

   5.2 How do you feel about the future in relation to climate change?

6. **Looking a head**

   6.1 Imagine yourself somewhere in the future and the pipeline has not been built, how is your life then?

6.2 Anything you want to add?

## Appendix II: List of participants, organized by dates:

| | |
|---|---|
| Grassroots activist 26.06.15 | Worked freelance with the Yinka Dene Alliance. |
| Elder 29.06.15 | |
| Environmental assessment coordinator 02.07.15 | Works at a hereditary chief office. |
| Senior campaigner 02.07.15 | Works at an environmental organization |
| Resistance camp manager 03.07.15 | Manager of a resistance camp that protects sacred headwaters from invasive natural resource development |
| Tribal chief 07.07.15 | The tribal council he is chief of represent 8 communities in North Central British Columbia. They provide political and technical support to the 8 member nations.<br>Worked with the YDA |
| Medicine man 08.07.15 | Holds weekly sweat lodges free to anyone who wants to participate.<br>Also a hereditary chief. |
| Healing camp founder 10.07.15 | Building a camp for a social outreach program for youth at risk to deal with the repercussions of the residential schools and bring back spirituality and pride. |
| Recognition and reconciliation implementation coordinator for a hereditary chief office 13.07.15 | Worked with the Yinka Dene Alliance |
| Hereditary chief 13.07.15 | Worked with the YDA. Was part of the JRP process. |
| YDA co-founder 14.07.15 | Community activist, co-founded the YDA. |
| Aboriginal artist 19.07.15 | |
| Farmer – throughout fieldwork | |
| Retired logger – throughout fieldwork | |

## Appendix III: Informant consent letter:

My name is Hanna Høiland and I am a Human Geography student at the University of Oslo in Norway. I am currently working on my MA thesis writing about climate change and aboriginal peoples with a case study of the First Nations opposition to the proposed construction of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline. The purpose of this thesis is to better understand how aboriginal people place their view on climate change and also how they use climate change as a concern when opposing the pipeline construction.

I would like to interview people from First Nations communities along the proposed pipeline. I have a special interest in the Yinka Dene Alliance as they have already voiced their concern for the pipeline and have been working against it for the past 4 years. The interviews will concern how they think and feel about climate change and how they build that into their resistance of the proposed pipeline. The interviews are expected to take from half an hour to an hour and will take place in summer of 2015, depending on when the informants are available for interviews. The interviews will be sound recorded and I will take notes throughout the duration of the interviews.

The information gained from the interviews will be anonymous as you will not be directly identified in the thesis if not otherwise agreed upon. However, your identity may be recognized by your affiliation with a First Nation or official position. The interviews are optional and you have the opportunity to withdraw your participation as an informant at any time, without further explanation. If you withdraw, the data concerning your participation will be excluded from the data collection. After my thesis is completed in May 2016, personal identifications in the entire data collected will be obliterated.

If you would like to participate as an informant for my thesis and would like to be interviewed please sign the informed consent agreement below.

If you have any questions please call me (+4797141297) or send me an email at hannahoi@student.sv.uio.no. You can also contact my advisor, Karen O'Brien at karen.obrien@sosgeo.uio.no or +47-22858480.

My MA thesis is affirmed by the Data Protection Official for Research in Norway (http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/om/english.html).

Sincerely,
Hanna Høiland


Informed Consent Agreement:
I have received written information regarding Hanna Høiland's MA thesis and I would like to be interviewed.

Signature…………………………….Phone number………………………….