

Putting gender on the line: Examining the role of gender in social movement resistance to the Energy East pipeline

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Abstract

This thesis assesses the role of gender in social movement contestation of TransCanada's Energy East pipeline. By understanding gender as a social construction and social position from which political action and transformation can occur, the study examines how hegemonic understandings and performances of femininity and masculinity influenced social movement engagement, tactics employed, and activist spaces and dynamics, if at all, within the climate movement in Canada. Using a snowball recruitment method, I interviewed 10 activists from November 2017 to May 2018 from four provinces, all of whom were engaged in the Energy East fight. I found that while particular gendered tactics, such as direct action, were not pivotal in the movement's ultimate victory, gender did influence how people engaged in activism and how spaces within the movement were structured. Areas such as feminist leadership, non-profit versus grassroots spaces, and the ways in which movement members took up space were where gender played the clearest role. Moreover, some of the findings do reflect what has been found in available literature: that women make up the majority of the environmental base yet are underrepresented in high level spaces and traditional leadership. This thesis also explores potential next steps to make the climate justice movement more inclusive and equitable. While it remains unclear to what extent gender played a decisive role in the ultimate defeat of the pipeline project, it did influence internal dynamics, leadership, and recruitment.

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And to everyone on the frontline fighting against climate change and the systems that are destroying our home – this thesis is dedicated to you. I am honored and humbled to work alongside you, and learn from you, in trying to make our planet livable and sustainable for generations to come. I believe that we will win.

Introduction and Methodology

Across the world, social movement responses to natural resource extraction are contesting major infrastructure projects that carry detrimental social and environmental side effects. In Canada there has been a significant amount of mobilization across the country to try to stop numerous pipelines, including TransCanada's proposed Energy East pipeline. If built, Energy East would have been the largest pipeline in North America, spanning from Alberta to New Brunswick and carrying 1.1 million barrels of oil per day. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), activists, Indigenous communities, and those on the front line created a nationally coordinated effort to halt the project, focusing their efforts on the particularly destructive consequences of expansion of tar sands in Alberta¹². The defeat of Energy East and Northern Gateway, along with the initial defeat of Keystone XL in the United States and the recent quashing of Trans Mountain, are a few examples that showcase the victories of the climate justice movement.

I chose to research and write about Energy East because it was the first pipeline that I learned about back in 2015 while attending a youth activism conference put on by my undergraduate school in rural Nova Scotia. Moreover, being from Nova Scotia myself it was this particular pipeline project that would have impacted my province the most. So while I could

¹ While I recognize that the First Peoples of Canada/Turtle Island are by no means homogenous, nor do all First Nations Métis, and Inuit peoples identify with the term Indigenous, I will use the term Indigenous as an umbrella term for non-settlers. Where needed, I will identify individual Nations and Territories by their original name. On this debate, see, for example, Alfred, T., & Corntassel, J. (2005). Being indigenous: Resurgences against contemporary colonialism. *Government and Opposition*, 40(4), 597-614.

² The use of 'tar sands' versus 'oil sands' is politically semantic. I use tar sands in my thesis because of the political description of it being intense and not conventional, whereas pro-industry groups use 'oil' because it softens the imagery of the fossil fuel industry

have chosen any pipeline to study, I chose to examine one that was closest to my home and to my own backyard. Additionally, when I moved to Ottawa to start my graduate studies, it was environmental activism trying to stop TransCanada's project that got me connected to grassroots organizing in the city. Therefore, I also chose this particular project because it was the catalyst for my own climate justice activism, and a fight that I myself was a part of.

At a time when there is an overwhelming consensus within the scientific community that climate change is real, human made, and causing major environmental change and destruction, for many critical scholars and activists, we have no choice but to transition away from an oil dependent lifestyle and economy (Barlow, 2016; Klein, 2014; Sachs, 2017). Expanding tar sands infrastructure by building new pipelines and expanding old ones is therefore a potentially lethal idea in light of this industry's direct contribution to climate change. Additionally, the potential consequences to ecosystems, land, and water given the high chances of oil leaks and spills are grave.

However, despite the hard facts surrounding the very real, dangerous consequences of climate change and pipeline expansion, many of us feel that politicians are not doing enough. In light of political inaction, many environmental activists in Canada have called attention to the tendency of governments to prioritize profit over people, and more specifically, to push 'development' projects in First Nations, Inuit, Innu, and Métis communities. Resistance to tar sands projects has become a major opportunity to build alliances between environmental and Indigenous organizations. Such alliances have successfully defeated, halted, and/or raised public awareness about the negative consequences of pipeline projects like Kinder Morgan, Line 3, Keystone XL, Dakota Access, and Energy East, amongst others.

A key component of how people relate to, and act on, issues of environmental and economic concern is through gendered socialization. Social constructions of masculinity and femininity influence people's understanding of, and interaction with, the world around them and movement work around pipelines is no exception. My thesis examines the gendered dimensions of environmental and social justice activism focusing on the social movement contestation of the Energy East pipeline in Canada. Questions to be explored include: What did resistance to Energy East look like in Canada? To what extent, if any, did gender influence the ways in which people engaged in resistance to the Energy East pipeline? How have these gendered performances helped to garner success and build the movement, if at all? How do the gender roles vary amongst the different groups who form part of the broader movement?

By investigating 'promising practices' (Baines & Armstrong, 2015)¹ within the social movement responses to the Energy East pipeline, I seek to illuminate how gender is understood, performed, and leveraged in the Canadian climate justice movement. Analyzing gender helps to unpack the ways in which the social and colonial constructs of the male/female binary influences acts of resistance and helps to frame my understanding of how gender is mobilized within social movement resistance tactics and strategies.

My research on resisting Energy East

The risk of oil spills and leaks, violation of Indigenous rights, threats to the land and water, and contributing to runaway climate are all reasons as to why people resisted TransCanada's Energy East pipeline. These concerns were all raised at different points in my

¹ The term 'promising practices' connotes that there are no models in social scientific research for either policy or practice, which can simply be repeated elsewhere. All lessons that we learn from each other's experience are to some extent context-specific.

interviews with activists, movement leaders, and people on the front line of battles against pipelines. In total, I interviewed 10 participants from Nova Scotia, Québec, Ontario, and Manitoba about their thoughts and experiences on organizing against Energy East and what role, if any, gender played in resisting TransCanada (see Annex 1). Nine of my research participants were women, and only one was a man. All of my participants were sent an approved copy of my thesis so they could see how I used their voice and experience to make sure they were comfortable with how I cited them and shared their stories.

I recognize this gender imbalance in my research subjects is a possible limitation of my work, as it would have been interesting to see if more men held similar views to women on the gendered dynamics within environmental spaces. The one man I did talk did not hold differing opinions from the women, but one person is of course too small a sample size from which to draw conclusions. Similarly, only two of my research participants were Indigenous, posing another potential limitation in the representation of resistance to the project. However, regardless of how many people of varying identities I interviewed or would have interviewed, my work can only ever reflect the conversations I did have. In other words, what is presented in this thesis cannot be taken as a firm generalization of every movement member's thoughts on gender and the ultimate victory.

My interviews were between a half hour and one and a half hours and were conducted over an extended period of time from November 2017 to May 2018. Because I am involved in climate justice organizing, I sought out friends and people I had done volunteer work with against Energy East as my first interviews. From there, I used the snowball method and asked my participants for the names of other people they thought would be good to talk to and got them to put me in touch with future participants. This method was useful, as it allowed me to get in

contact with activists and movement members I otherwise would not have known about. It also helped establish a baseline relationship with participants, as they were referred to me by someone they are close to.

However, my use of this methodology also meant that I got activists who often worked together and so generally had common experiences and understandings of the movement, resulting in a potential sample bias. For example, the one man I did interview I knew personally and so reached out to him. But none of the people I interviewed, including the man, referred me to other men. As such, I had little control over who I ended up having contact with because my interviews were dependent on recommendations from people I had already spoken to.

My conversations with participants took place in offices and coffee shops if they were in Ottawa, and via Skype or over the phone if they were outside of the city. The interviews were semi-structured, and all were consensually recorded. I used the following guiding questions:

1. How did you get involved with resisting the Energy East pipeline? What were your motivations?
2. What have you/your group done to resist TransCanada's project?
3. What do you think was so successful about stopping the project?
4. What role, if any, do you think gender played in trying to stop the pipeline?
5. Do you think gender plays a role in how people engage in activism around climate change and pipelines? Why or why not?
6. What needs to change in the climate movement to make it more gender equitable?

The issue of anonymity did surface in many of my interviews. All my participants were given the option to decide how they wanted to be named and referenced in my research and

writing. It was a bit complicated because only one wanted to be anonymous, but then let me use her traditional name instead. Others were concerned about potential professional backlash since they discussed gender dynamics in their workplace, and so did not want their organization to be named. Some did not want their last names used. Because of the varying requests and comfort with anonymity, I have given all my interviewees pseudonyms and the organizations which they belong to or work for will not be divulged. The two Indigenous participants I did have said they were comfortable with me using their traditional names, so they did not get pseudonyms in the same way that my settler participants did. The organizations that participants work for did range from national coalition work and larger ENGOs to grassroots community driven efforts.

While much of my evidence does suggest similar patterns to what the literature at large says about gender and environmentalism, like the demographic makeup of the movement, I found many of my conversations ended up focusing more on gendered dynamics within the movement rather than tactics used for stopping the pipeline. Common themes that emerged across many discussions with my research participants included men taking up more space, misogyny within the climate movement and environmentalism, and the gendered makeup of different styles of organizing. Gender did still influence tactics and resistance strategies, but my research ended up focusing more on the style of leadership and who assumed leadership roles.

What I thought would be a thesis analyzing movement strategies has become a thesis that focuses more on the gendered dimensions within the climate movement, using the fight against Energy East as an example of how gender shapes movement dynamics. While specific tactics were gendered, gendered strategy was not something intentionally done or really strategically thought out. Rather, in my conversations with movement members about the influence of gender

in the successful fight against Energy East, feminist leadership and the need for an intersectional approach were brought up.

Outline of the thesis

This thesis is organized as follows. Chapter One provides the history and context of tar sands development in Alberta and the Energy East pipeline. Chapter Two discusses the theoretical framework used for this thesis, which is rooted in understanding the social construction and performance of gender. In Chapter Three, I will present an analysis of my research findings. In this analysis, I focus on the role of feminist leadership, questions around hegemonic masculinity, and provide a comparative analysis of the differences in gendered performances in grassroots versus NGO spaces. In the final chapter I provide concluding thoughts on how to make the climate movement more equitable, as well an assessment of the roles that gender played in the movement's recent victory.

CHAPTER ONE: *Tar Sands History and Context*

We live in a capitalist economy driven by, and dependent on, fossil fuels. It is therefore unsurprising that since the discovery of oil in 1947 in Leduc, Alberta, the Albertan economy and political structure of that province have been dependent on fossil capitalism, especially since 95% of Canadian oil can be found in the tar sands. Alberta is central in the Canadian political economy since it is home to the world's second largest oil reserve (Adkin, 2016). The mid-century discovery of oil drastically shifted the economic landscape in Alberta, moving the economy away from agriculture and towards the extractive industries.

This chapter provides a brief history of Alberta's tar sands so as to contextualize TransCanada's pipeline project and the perceived dichotomy of the environment versus the economy. It includes an overview of key political decisions, gender and the tar sands, environmental concerns and consequences of the fossil fuel industry, and the impacts on Indigenous communities. I then specifically discuss the Energy East pipeline, including the concerns with the projects and why some were in favor of it.

The tar sands

The tar sands underlie about 140,200 km² of boreal forest concentrated mostly in three major deposits in northern Alberta – located in the Athabasca watershed, Cold Lake, and Peace River (Carter, 2016). The Alberta Crown owns 97% of tar sands mineral rights, so the vast majority of environmental regulation for the tar sands is within Alberta's jurisdiction (Carter, 2016). While tar sands production started in 1967, exploitation of this controversial resource intensified in the early 1990s, following the election of Premier Ralph Klein. Klein introduced

neoliberal policies resulting in the triumph of market ideology. For critics such as Laurie Adkin (2016) and Angela Carter and Anna Zalik (2016), the triumph of neoliberalism also meant a promotion of self-interested instrumentalism and cutbacks to social services in an attempt to eliminate provincial debt. As Adkin (2016) notes, Klein's policies "undermined state capacity for environmental regulation and intensified the ecologically destructive model of growth" (p. 85).

Part of the neoliberal shift in policy included cuts to public spending on environmental protection. For example, in 1999, Alberta's Environment Department's budget was drastically cut at a time when they had five different tar sands projects on the table that would have needed the Department's environmental assessment, while the industry received \$31 billion of investment in that year alone (Carter & Zalik, 2016). A few years later the Environment budget was increased by about \$15 million per year but this money was specifically allocated towards fast-tracking environmental assessments (Carter & Zalik, 2016). Today many of the government departments that are geared towards regulation and assessment for the tar sands are closely aligned with the industry itself, including Alberta Energy, a cabinet-level agency in the provincial government, which sees oil companies, not citizens, as their principle stakeholders (Carter, 2015). The priorities of Alberta Energy also tend to override the concerns of Alberta Environment, which also rarely rejects proposals for new tar sands projects (Carter, 2016).

Alberta has been described by critics as a "petro-state" because a large portion of their gross domestic product (GDP) and government revenues derive from oil and gas. Investment in that sector generates substantial direct and indirect employment and tax revenue; in 2010 gross revenues from all hydrocarbons in Alberta were \$73.2 billion, two-thirds of which were from crude oil (Adkin, 2016). The oil and gas sector is also said to contribute approximately 42% of Alberta's overall GDP (Carter & Zalik, 2016). Even under the new regime (the New Democratic

Party (NDP) government), the Alberta government is planning significant expansion in the tar sands, predicting upwards of \$2 trillion in reinvestments, revenues, and investments from 2011–2035 (Carter & Zalik, 2016). These investments come from the provincial NDP government in Alberta (who despite historically being on the left are in many ways just like the Conservatives), the federal government, various research firms and institutes, as well as industry itself.

The money from fossil fuel energy production allows Alberta to have the lowest tax rate in Canada, which is more colloquially known as the “Alberta Advantage” (Carter & Zalik, 2016). However, this Advantage caters specifically to social and political forces that support an increase in tar sands development, as it creates a dependence on the industry rather than diversifying the tax base to better serve its citizens in a broader sense in the long run. The dependence on oil companies creates an environment in which the Alberta government, and to a lesser extent the federal government, is more accountable to corporations and private developers than to its own citizens. Moreover, this dependence on oil and gas is not without other costs. Since Alberta’s economy is dependent on fossil fuels it is also subject to the boom and bust cycles linked to global oil prices.

The Alberta government has also invested significant public funds into research and development specifically for mining bitumen since the early-mid 2000s, with some estimates being over \$1 billion. Because bitumen is a non-conventional source of oil, it is more difficult to extract. In the period of initial development, the up-front costs of bitumen mining were quite high and so the National Oil Sands Task Force urged Alberta to reduce royalties to 1% until companies had covered their capital costs (Carter & Zalik, 2016). According to the Global Subsidies Initiative, direct subsidies from both the provincial and federal government amount to approximately \$2.8 billion, which includes spending on research programs, low-cost loans,

insurance, and tax breaks (Carter & Zalik, 2016). Most of the subsidies aim to increase exploration and development while simultaneously lowering the costs of operation.

The federal government policy also promotes the development of the tar sands in various ways. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2012 omnibus Bill C-38 made it more difficult for the public to have their say on major energy projects. Bill C-38 also meant that massive projects would not need a federal environmental assessment or independent information about the project's risks or alternatives; that responsibility now falls on the National Energy Board (NEB), the body responsible for reviewing and approving or denying energy projects (The Council of Canadians, 2014c). NEB regulations and environmental protection policy was drastically overhauled at the recommendation of fossil fuel industry lobbyists. The Liberal government in 2018 has also directly propped up Alberta's energy sector with the Kinder Morgan buyout, further demonstrating the deep political and social ties that exist between the federal government and the fossil fuel industry.

One of the leading lobbyists for the industry is the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), which leads and coordinates the fight to protect access to resources for the industry (Carter, 2016). CAPP has also lobbied against emission reductions, pushing instead the option for voluntary or intensity-based greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction targets, which will not ensure an absolute decline in emissions (Carter, 2016). Many companies in the tar sands also fund political campaigns, parties, and public and private institutions to ensure their interests are heard. The intense lobbying from the oil and gas sector was a major influence in the creation of the omnibus bill that was passed by the Harper government in 2012 and continues to influence political decisions provincially and federally. Moreover, one of the most under-looked reasons for the stronghold of the oil and gas sector on Alberta and Canada is the fact that Alberta spent

\$25 million on a branding campaign to counter the ‘environmental bad guy’ image the province has internationally (McLeod-Kilmurray & Smith, 2010). CAPP was also at the forefront of creating the message that ‘Alberta is Energy,’ which has become the identity of the province and part of the reason why trying to push for a socio-economic political shift around the tar sands is so challenging (Haluza-Delay & Carter, 2016). An attack on, or critique of, the tar sands to some Albertans feels like an attack on them personally.

The main reason that the government of Alberta and the federal government specifically want pipelines going to the coasts is to reach international markets. As it currently stands, the majority of oil from the tar sands is being exported to the United States – around 70% (Carter & Zalik, 2016), with some estimates claiming that 99% of Canadian crude oil goes to the US (Greaves, 2013). If Alberta’s bitumen were to make it to tidewater, the tar sands would be able to expand. Oil production already nearly doubled from 2002 to 2010, when the tar sands produced roughly 1.9 million barrels per day; that number is predicted to climb to three million barrels per day in 2020 and five million in 2030 (Carter, 2016). The Canadian government has claimed that getting our oil to tidewater will keep Canada’s oil prices low (Hughes, 2016). But oil is globally priced – so the industry’s assertion that getting tar sands diluted bitumen (colloquially known as dilbit) and synthetic crude oil to tidewater is necessary for maintaining the price of Canadian oil ignores the fact that the cost per barrel is set by two core pricing mechanisms that refer to pricing benchmarks for different global regions: Brent Crude and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) pricing.⁴

Many supporters of the tar sands adamantly claim that the industry is necessary for job creation. A study examining the economic impacts of new tar sands projects from 2010–2035 by

⁴ Brent Crude refers to oil produced in the Brent Fields and North Sea and is the pricing benchmark for Europe, Africa, and Asia. WTI is the benchmark for North America.

the Canadian Energy Research Institute estimated that 75,000 full and part time jobs would be created and preserved in 2010, with a possibility of seeing 900,000 jobs in 2035 (Honarvar, 2011). While it is true that the oil and gas sector is a significant employer, especially in Alberta, the renewable energy sector actually employs more people than the oil and gas industry. Some sources indicate that there are as many as six to eight times more employment opportunities in energy efficiency and renewable energy than there are in the tar sands (The Council of Canadians, 2014a). In fact, it has been found that a shift to a green economy could see as many as four million new and sustained jobs in Canada (Bridge & Gilbert, 2017).

Gender and Tar Sands Development

While the focus of this research is not on gender in the fossil fuel industry as a whole, understanding the gendered dynamics in the tar sands of Alberta is important for this study. Many of the dynamics found in Fort McMurray, for example, are also replicated in the climate justice movement. As I argue in further detail below, women are finding their way into traditionally masculine spaces and roles, while simultaneously still being objectified and devalued. Moreover, the hyper-masculine identity of the fossil fuel industry influences the sexist and misogynistic backlash climate activists often receive, particularly female activists.

The demographic makeup and skills required for employment in the tar sands is highly gendered, and more specifically, segregated by sex. As Sara O'Shaughnessy and Göze Doğu (2016) have noted:

The unprecedented scale and pace of development in the Athabasca oil sands is altering, for some, the ways in which gender roles are performed in northern

Canadian resource communities. For others, the transformations associated with the oil sands are reinforcing traditional gender practices. (p. 264)

The demand for labour created a space where women could, and would, work in traditionally male-dominated fields. However, women who do work in the tar sands minimize their femininity in order to fit in. Simultaneously, the hyper-masculinity of the tar sands continues to reflect traditional gendered divisions of labour. Women are still overrepresented in lower paying jobs and oil workers are still overwhelmingly men, particularly in Alberta's tar sands.

Because of the need for labour in Fort McMurray, there has been a mass migration of Atlantic Canadians to Alberta leaving many women to raise their families and manage their households on their own, further reinforcing gendered divisions of labour based on gendered expectations (O'Shaughnessy & Doğu, 2016). There has also been an increased demand in temporary foreign workers, which are overrepresented in feminized and precarious work (Dorow, 2015; O'Shaughnessy & Doğu, 2016).

The gendered understanding of labour in Fort McMurray is emblematic of how working-class communities are usually defined by what the men do (Dorow, 2015; O'Shaughnessy & Doğu, 2016). Rarely, if ever, will a city or community be known as a 'nursing town' or have an identity built on teachers. But 'mining town' and 'steel town' are identities often associated with communities, demonstrating how masculine employment is a defining characteristic while more feminine jobs are not. The hyper-masculine image of the tar sands influences the community, the industry, policies, and government, while also reinforcing gendered divisions of labour by devaluing non-extractive (read feminine) work like social work or health work.

Environmental concerns and consequences with the tar sands: spills and climate change

The lack of environmental review and consideration when it comes to the extractive industry is a key reason that various communities have opposed the tar sands. Beyond the obvious issue of carbon emissions, the bitumen extraction process itself is incredibly resource intensive. Rhetoric from all levels of government and the energy industry itself all claim that bitumen mining, transportation, and processing can all be done in an environmentally sustainable way, but these claims have little scientific backing (Carter & Zalik, 2016). Current predictions from Alberta also show rising emissions until 2020, and then see a gradual decrease to 2008 level emissions by 2035 (Carter, 2016). Climate science asserts that the rise and decline of emissions over that period of time is insufficient to address the current climate crisis.

The oil extracted from the tar sands also has to be mixed with highly toxic corrosive chemicals to liquefy the molasses-like consistency of the bitumen oil (hence ‘dilbit’ and ‘tar’ sands), adding to the severe environmental toll the extraction process takes. To make a single barrel of oil takes three barrels of water, and the process of extracting bitumen from the sand results in the creation of tailings ponds with 480 million gallons of contaminated waste being dumped every single day (Huseman & Short, 2012). Shots are fired every few minutes to scare away birds who would die upon impact were they to land on the ponds (Barlow, 2016). There is a lack of proven technology and methods to clear up tailing ponds and reclamation rates are incredibly poor (Carter, 2016). In fact, the first major scientific study of the effects of bitumen in water took place in the Summer of 2018 in the Experimental Lakes Area (Bath, 2017; Kives, 2018).

There are also major concerns with the industry’s inability to return land and forest to their pre-mined conditions. After 40 years, the first reclamation certificate was given in 2008 to Syncrude Canada for reclaiming only 1 km² of land (Carter, 2016). By some estimates, less than

1% of the 50,000 km² mined by the largest lease holders has been reclaimed (Parlee, 2015). The tar sands also have a license to divert 349 million cubic metres of water per year from 2008, which is double Calgary's yearly volume (Carter, 2016).

Compared to conventional oil, which tends to float on water's surface, dilbit both evaporates and sinks. The chemical additives evaporate, while the bitumen sinks, especially when it mixes with sediment and dirt that form into little balls of tar. The most recent bitumen spill that many cite as reason to halt pipeline construction because of the threat of leaks is the Enbridge spill in Kalamazoo, Missouri in 2010. Enbridge stated that their response time to leaks and spills was seven minutes, but it took the company 17 hours to confirm the spill (The Council of Canadians, 2014c). The spill cost Enbridge roughly \$1 billion and there are still bitumen tar balls at the bottom of the Kalamazoo river. Most spills are first detected by citizens rather than the oil company that operates a pipeline. Local communities also pay the price of having the tar sands in full operation, especially Indigenous communities. The land, air, water, and subsistence food supplies are compromised and there is increased illness in areas downstream from tar sands production (Carter, 2016; Huseman & Short, 2012). In the affected communities, cases of lymphoma and intestinal cancers, which are both typically rare, have spiked since 1999 (Carter, 2016).

In addition to localized threats of the intensive extractive process, the tar sands are also Canada's largest source of GHG emissions and one of, if not the, dirtiest sources of oil in the world. Climate science has shown that in order for us to have even a 50% chance of keeping global warming below 2C of warming, 85% of known fossil fuel reserves need to stay in the ground (Muttitt, 2016). However, despite knowing the causes of climate change and the very real consequences of global temperatures rising, we continue to extract and burn fossil fuels at

alarming rates that are counter to climate science. Any new pipeline infrastructure that is built allows for an expansion of the tar sands. For example, if Energy East were to have been built, it would have meant a 40% increase in tar sands production.

The reason that climate change is such an urgent issue is because of the timeline that we are on. As Oil Change International (2016) has noted, “[a]t current rates of emissions, the carbon budget for a likely chance of limiting warming to 2C will be fully exhausted by 2037, and by 2025 for a medium [(50%)] at 0.5C” (p. 13). The consequences of climate change are already being experienced and will only worsen over time. The effects of an increase in global temperature are irreversible. An increase in extreme weather events, droughts, crop failure, famine, and extinction of known species are but some of the heightened risks associated with climate change (Le, 2013; Muttitt, 2016).

In December 2015, Canada signed on to the Paris Climate Agreement alongside 175 other countries. By doing so, Canada committed itself to reducing its GHG emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 (Government of Canada, 2017). However, Environment Canada has found that under current energy and climate policies, Canada’s emissions will be 55% above the targets set out by the Paris Agreement (Hughes, 2016). If Canada is to meet its Paris commitments by 2030, the oil and gas sector will have to reduce their emissions by 52% from 2014 levels, which is no easy task (Hughes, 2016). But what would make it even more difficult is expanding production in the tar sands. If industry and government put billions of dollars into an infrastructure project, the expectation is that the project will run for a while, locking us into an unsustainable energy model well beyond the timeline we have to have even a 50% chance of keeping global warming within livable means.

Impacts on First Nations and Indigenous peoples

Colonialism and imperialism have helped facilitate access to territories by oil companies, as Indigenous groups have involuntarily subsidized the development of the Canadian economy and the Canadian state since the arrival of settlers. The tar sands have been cited as an unequivocal example of ongoing colonization (Huseman & Short, 2012). For one, the tar sands land and land used for all projects related to their development is traditional Indigenous territory, whose Treaty agreements never intended to have the land violated in the ways that it currently is. Secondly, the massive environmental toll of tar sands development threatens the cultural identity and spiritual fabric of many First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Innu groups. Thirdly, the lack of thorough and proper consultation with impacted Indigenous communities violates Treaty Rights, Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada signed on to in 2016 with a promise by Prime Minister Trudeau to be implemented in 2017. According to the UNDRIP, in articles 10, 11, 19, 28, 29, and 32, all Indigenous peoples have the right to free, prior, and informed consent when it comes to projects on their land (United Nations, 2008).

As such, the decision to build new pipelines by law has to adequately consult and get the consent of the Nations whose path it crosses. By not gaining the explicit consent of Indigenous groups across a proposed project route, or even in the tar sands itself, the Canadian government is violating Indigenous rights and furthering the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land and culture. There have been countless issues around consultation including whose responsibility it is to consult (federal or provincial), what constitutes thorough consultation, and whether consultation is conflated with consent⁵.

⁵ A recent example is the court case against the expansion of Kinder Morgan's (now the government of Canada's) Trans Mountain pipeline. The federal court found that there was inadequate consultation with Indigenous

It is of course important to note that Indigenous peoples and communities are not homogenous with respect to their opinions about extractive development. There are some First Nations groups, such as Huu-ay-aht First Nations, who support pipeline infrastructure because of the jobs and economic opportunities it provides (Peters & Dennis, 2016). But there does seem to be a larger group of Indigenous peoples who are adamantly opposed to the tar sands and their expansion, citing violation of Treaty and Indigenous rights due to lack of consultation and the immense threat to the environment (Huseman & Short, 2012; Klein, 2014). It has been because of Indigenous opposition to projects that cause harm to the land, water, and environment that other people have paid attention.

Movements like Idle No More, which was started by Indigenous women, is one example where Indigenous peoples brought national attention to political attacks on environmental protection, namely Bill C-45, which, amongst other laws, overhauled the Navigable Waters Act. Shale-gas extraction in New Brunswick became a nationwide concern after members of the Elsipogtog First Nation erected a barricade preventing workers from entering the fracking site. Recently in the United States, the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota set up a camp in opposition to construction of the Dakota Access pipeline in order to protect the land and water resources on their traditional territory. More recently, as part of the fight against Kinder Morgan in Coast Salish territory, members of the Tsleil-Watuth and other Nations have erected a 'Kwekwecnewtxw,' or watch house, which is traditionally used to watch for enemies, 50 meters from the injunction zone. These examples illustrate the role that Indigenous communities play

communities and so overturned the government's approval of the project. Issues included communities not being given enough time to read project documents, no meaningful two-way dialogue, and no consultation before the Liberal cabinet made their decision.

within the environmental movement, particularly when it comes to challenging the energy sector, as is the case with resistance to Energy East and other Canadian tar sands' pipelines.

Many scholars and activists, like Pamela Palmater (2015), Naomi Klein (2015), and Clayton Thomas-Muller (2014) note that Indigenous resistance not only has the legal standing to stop pipelines, but also has the organizational and cultural capacity to protest and resist oil projects. According to this narrative, “to be Indigenous is to resist,” and to be part of an ongoing ‘movement’ of reclamation and decolonization that has been happening since the beginning of colonization. Indeed, according to some Indigenous Creation stories, “resurgence is [their] original instruction” (Simpson, 2011, p. 66). As such, fighting the extractive industry and pipelines is part of a larger battle for decolonization and cultural survival. From a legal standpoint, the Canadian government has time and time again failed to uphold Treaty agreements that include land rights and entitlements, and the right to hunt and fish, which are dependent on a healthy environment. As mentioned earlier, thanks to the Section 35 of the Canadian constitution, Treaties, and international commitments like UNDRIP, without proper consultation and explicit consent from Indigenous communities, pipelines cannot be built, giving Indigenous Nations a unique legal framework with which to fight pipelines. In 2008, Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7, and 8 of Alberta met and passed a resolution that stated that no new tar sands projects should be approved until a comprehensive watershed management plan was in place and approved by their nations (Parlee, 2015). The Treaty Alliance has also emerged as a national Indigenous treaty opposed to all tar sands projects, including Energy East (Treaty Alliance, 2016).

All across Canada (Turtle Island⁶), Indigenous communities are asserting their treaty rights and Indigenous rights when it comes to tar sands projects. As discussed in greater detail

⁶ Turtle Island is the Indigenous name for North America, stemming from Origin stories

further below, these efforts are mostly led by women because of the cultural and spiritual roles they have as water protectors and life givers. There are countless examples of female-led Indigenous struggles on the frontlines of battles for climate justice from Idle No More to the Unist'ot'en camp to the Tiny House Warriors against Kinder Morgan to the fight against TransCanada's Energy East.

TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline

In order for an energy project to be approved, it has to go through the National Energy Board (NEB). Founded in 1959, the NEB is the national regulator of energy production, including pipeline construction, operation, and abandonment through international or provincial boundaries (The National Energy Board, 2018). They are also responsible for environmental assessments on certain projects and they monitor various aspects of energy such as supply, demand, development, production, and trade (NEB, 2018). The responsibilities of the board are laid out in the National Energy Board Act, the Canadian Petroleum Producer's Act, and the Canada Oil and Gas Sector Act (NEB, 2018). As such, the NEB creates panels to seek out public input on major energy projects they are in charge of, including TransCanada's Energy East.

TransCanada submitted their application to the NEB for Energy East in 2013. The proposed pipeline would have transported approximately 1.1 million barrels per day of tar sands dilbit from Hardisty, Alberta to St. John, New Brunswick crossing at least 90 watersheds and 916 waterways (The Council of Canadians, 2014d). The plan for the pipeline was to convert 3,000 km of existing old natural gas pipelines to be able to carry dilbit and build 1,500 km of new pipelines (Garcia, Obeidi, & Hipel, 2015). The pipeline would have had 71 pump stations across its route, marine tanker loading facilities, a pressure control station in Saskatchewan, and two

delivery meter stations in Quebec (Garcia, et. al., 2015). The emissions created from the upstream emission⁷ of Energy East would have been equivalent to putting seven million new cars on the road (MacLean, 2015), as the pipeline would have created a 40% increase in tar sands production (The Council of Canadians, 2015b).

Energy East of course was not exempt from being critiqued on the risk of oil spills. Even though TransCanada claimed that their response time to malfunctions is less than 10 minutes, the amount of oil that could contaminate an area within that timeframe is enormous (The Council of Canadians, 2014c). Within that 10-minute period, over one million liters of oil from Energy East could be spilled. That response time is also only in place for detectable spills and ignores the more frequent pin-hole leaks that occur, particularly with older infrastructure. Moreover, TransCanada claims that it has a 99.9% safety record in Canada. But with Energy East's carrying capacity being as large as it is, that 0.01% safety risk still equates to 6.4 million liters of spilled oil (The Council of Canadians, 2014b).

The self-proclaimed ensured safety of TransCanada's energy projects is also faulty. Pipeline rupture data from the NEB shows that TransCanada has had 17 full bore ruptures since 1992, with eight of those being from 2009 – 2015 and four of those eight being from 2014 – 2015 (The Council of Canadians, 2015a). Additionally, since 1991, TransCanada had nine major and catastrophic pipeline failures (The Council of Canadians, 2014a). In fact, on January 25, 2014 there was a major pipeline rupture in one of the pipelines TransCanada was going to convert in Otterburne, Manitoba that sent balls of flames 300 feet in the air and created a ten-

⁷ Upstream emissions are all emissions in the life cycle of a product up to the point of sale. Downstream emissions are all the emissions in the life cycle of a product after the point of sale. For example, tar sands oil upstream emissions are until it gets to market and its downstream emissions would be the use of the product once exported.

foot-deep crater leaving 4,000 natural gas customers in the cold (The Council of Canadians, 2014c).

There is a heightened risk for spills and malfunctions when transporting substances through pipelines that were not originally designed for said substance. Because Energy East was supposed to have pipeline converted from natural gas transportation to dilbit transportation, TransCanada's project was already at a heightened risk of potential disaster, especially since some of the pipeline that was to be converted was over 40 years old putting it at greater risk of cracking. Safety-related incidents have risen from one incident per 1,000 km of pipeline to two. Because of Energy East's proposed length clocking in at 4,400 km, the project could have seen as many as nine incidents per year (The Council of Canadians, 2014b).

The Energy East pipeline was not immune to the debate of its apparent benefit to the Canadian economy. A study by Deloitte, for example, estimated that the pipeline would contribute \$10 billion CDN to Canadian GDP within its first six years during the development and construction phase and \$25.3 billion CDN during an operating period of about 40 years (Purdon & Breton, 2015). The same study also estimated that thousands of new jobs would be created throughout the pipeline's lifetime (Purdon & Breton, 2015). However, the tar sands industry has a history of overestimating the employment their projects would generate. For example, the Keystone XL pipeline was originally going to create 20,000 jobs, but it ended up looking more like 50 to 100 (The Council of Canadians, 2014a). Plus, any economic gain ultimately pales in comparison to the environmental damage pipelines cause, let alone the irreversible harm it does to the climate.

In TransCanada's attempt to win over public support of their project, they asserted that Energy East would create greater energy independence in Atlantic Canada, would be a beneficial

nation building project, that their regulations ensure pipeline safety and prioritize environmental safety, and would not dramatically impact Canada's emissions (The Council of Canadians, 2014a). However, around 750,000 barrels of the 1.1 million barrels per day quantity was going to be shipped unrefined internationally because Atlantic Canada does not have the refining capacity for the quantity of tar sands dilbit that would have been transported and it would have been too costly to build new refineries in the region (The Council of Canadians, 2014a). As aforementioned, TransCanada's track record on safety is questionable at best and does not appear to prioritize the environment or regulatory safety as closely as they should. Nor does the company support adequate climate adaptation or climate justice.

Another major component in the context of Energy East's defeat was the NEB review process. In theory, the NEB is an independent regulator. But the NEB threw out their initial decision in January 2017 after it was brought to light that the panelists for Energy East had connections to the industry and were therefore not neutral observers. Both the chair and the vice-chair were accused of conflict of interest for having private meetings with a paid TransCanada consultant to discuss public opinion about the pipeline (CBC, 2017). The demand of a new, unbiased board was in large part because of community activism and diligent town hall attendees. A new board was assembled and was a major setback in TransCanada's plans for building. In August 2017, during the review of the new board, both upstream and downstream emissions were taken into consideration for the pipeline's environmental assessment, adding yet another hurdle to TransCanada's project. In September 2017, it was announced that because of the new climate test being put on the pipeline, TransCanada applied for a 30-day suspension in order to reconsider their project.

Finally, in October 2017, after their 30-day suspension was over, TransCanada announced they would no longer be going ahead with their proposed Energy East pipeline. With ongoing resistance from the day their project was announced, a review panel riddled with conflict of interest, the decision to consider up and downstream emissions in the environmental assessment, and other projects being proposed and approved, it was a major victory for Indigenous rights, climate change, land, water, communities, and justice. While TransCanada and the federal government claim that their decision to withdraw their application was based on economic principles, the huge wave of coordinated national action that brought the NEB to its knees and demanded more of the review process, coupled with ongoing resistance, organizing, mobilizing, and educating on the ground, are what truly defeated the project.

The tar sands has helped the Albertan economy, and subsequently parts of the Canadian economy, flourish. It provides jobs and high income to people working in the fossil fuel industry. However, the process of extracting the bitumen from the ground is resource intensive and environmentally destructive and hires less people than renewable energy and retrofitting. It poses immense risk to the land and water, threatens the cultural fabric of many Indigenous communities, and directly impacts climate change. This chapter explored those economy-environment debates, including an overview of key policy decisions and a brief history of how we got to where we are today, as well as a quick exploration of how the industry simultaneously upholds and challenges gender norms and roles. The Energy East pipeline is a result of that history and context, and I discussed the pros and cons of the project and key milestones in its ultimate defeat. In the following chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework used for this thesis

and discuss debates in gender theory, the environment and social movements, and gender's influence in activist engagement.

CHAPTER TWO: Debates in gender theory, the environment and social movements, and gender's influence in activist engagement

This chapter examines the literature on gender, the environment, Indigenous perspectives, and social movements to help frame the analysis that will be found in later chapters around the strategies activists have employed to resist the Energy East pipeline.

I will first delve into dominant theories of sex and gender, using Judith Butler's (1990) seminal work "Gender Trouble" as a starting point. I will also explore critiques raised by Nancy Fraser (2007; 2013; 2014; 2017) and other key theorists on gender, such as R. Connell (1990) and Linda Alcoff (1988). This debate will frame the discussion on how social constructions and understandings of gender play out within environmental discourse, including ecofeminism. Building on these understandings, I consider the literature on intersectionality and anti-oppression to further unpack the ways in which gender operates in lived experience and social understandings. The next section explores Indigenous perspectives on gender and the environment, highlighting that both concepts are usually discussed within a colonial framework that is counter to Indigenous ways of being and knowing. I will end the chapter with a discussion on gender and social movements, focusing on theoretical debates concerned with how and why women engage in activism.

Gender: A social construction and structure

As feminist scholarship over the past few decades has firmly established, gender is not biologically determined, and the term 'gender' is not synonymous with women. The theoretical perspective applied throughout this thesis builds from this knowledge and uses the work of

Judith Butler (1990) as a starting point. It is based on the view that gender is a social construct and performance that influences social hierarchies through the interactions of different genders. In other words, while sex generally has a biological basis, gender is a social construction and a 'performance.' According to this understanding both femininity and masculinity – ways of being that are informed by a binary conception of the female and male genders – are powerful social performances that influence identity and experiences of the world, including in activism and social change. Within societies like ours that are shaped by patriarchal and colonial structures, traits that are thought of as 'masculine' are privileged and those that are perceived to be 'feminine' are devalued (Connell, 1990). Understanding gender as an oppositional duality sustains unequal power relations between men and women as it pertains to their embodiment of gender (Connell, 1990). Consequently, the current hegemonic understanding of gender views it as a binary in which only femininity and masculinity exist, when in fact, our gender expressions and identities fall across a spectrum.

The main argument here is that gender is not an identity or construct that is always completely masculine or completely feminine, and that the common assumption that men and women are inherent opposites has dangerous consequences (Serano, 2007). Because of the deviation from hegemonic gender identity and performance, there is a belief that these identities are 'unnatural' and therefore highly suspect, resulting in transphobic accusations of fraud because of legal names not 'reflecting' perceived sex and dehumanizing processes to 'verify' gender, for example. Cisheteronormativity and cissexism therefore enable violence against trans and gender 'deviant' communities. Many people deviate in multiple and various ways from hegemonic understandings of what it means to perform masculinity and femininity. Some reject affiliating with masculinity and femininity entirely and instead identify and/or perform as non-

gender identities. The social construction of hegemonic genders and their corresponding attributes shape the way people interpret the world and respond to their surroundings.

Based on the biological capabilities of differently sexed bodies, corresponding genders are assigned, which in turn socially prescribes a set of actions and expectations. Because the majority of bodies that are sexed female have the ability to reproduce, females are socialized to be more compassionate, caring, nurturing, cooperative, and helpful. They are therefore seen to embody a stronger ‘ethic of care’ than their male counterparts, who are conditioned to be more competitive, assertive and independent (Ortner, 1972; Zelezný & Bailey, 2006). Men and women are expected to act according to the traditional understandings of gendered performance. Since women do more nurturing and care-giving work (e.g. reproductive work), they are said to be more socially-oriented, to be more concerned for others, and to have a higher value of cooperation (Tindall, Scott, & Mauboules, 2003). These expectations create and sustain a gendered division of labour in which we (women) have historically dominated in ‘caring’ professions such as nursing, teaching, and social work.

On the other hand, since male bodies tend to not have the ability to give birth, they are expected to provide for their family in other ways, including by providing economic security. Besides the physical differences owing to size and muscle mass, men typically have more power in comparison to women because of their greater access to resources, capital, and the social sphere. Since men are not expected to do domestic work, they are socialized to be more individualistic, competitive and less ‘emotional’ or empathetic. In turn, the apparent correlation between our biological roles (sex) and social behavior (gender) creates a set of stereotypes that continue to be reproduced and reinforced, leading to an essentialist and hegemonic view of what the male and female genders should be. This correlation is what creates the “performative”

aspects of gender, showcasing how it is not innate or ‘natural’ but socially constructed and varied.

According to post-structuralist theorists, one cannot know what ‘woman’ is because of the inherent subjectivity that gender holds. In other words, ‘woman’ does not exist because it can so easily be pulled apart due to its inability to be universally grounded in anything real or material. Celebrating diversity and difference and moving away from universalism is a core tenant of post-structural feminist understandings of gender. As feminist theorists like Denise Riley (1988) note:

‘[W]omen’ is a volatile collectivity in which female persons can be very differently positioned so that the apparent continuity of the subject ‘women’ isn’t to be relied on; ‘women’ is both synchronically and diachronically erratic as a collectivity, while for the individual, ‘being a woman’ is also inconstant, and can’t provide an ontological foundation. (p. 2)

Riley (1988) further discusses how historical changes and contextual shifts make it difficult to pinpoint what a ‘woman’ is, and what ‘women’ are as a collective. While anticolonial, pro-queer, anti-racist Marxist feminists also view gender within contextual shifts, post-structuralism ignores the material existence of gender in those contexts and instead views gender as something abstract. One of the main tenants of post-structural theory is that “meaning is made through implicit or explicit contrast” and figuring out where meaning comes from is based on specific contexts (Scott, 1988, p. 36).

With the contrasted understanding of masculine/feminine, post-structural feminist theorists argue that:

[S]exual difference... serves to encode or establish meanings that are literally unrelated to gender or the body... meanings of gender become tied to many kinds of cultural representations, and these in turn establish terms by which relations between women and men are organized and understood. (Scott, 1988, p. 37)

Moreover, since the meanings of gender and understanding of gender change throughout history and context, post-structuralism maintains that having a universal meaning and understanding of gender is impossible.

One of the main criticisms of the post-structural understandings of gender, comes from feminists inspired by Marx's historical materialism. Nancy Fraser (2007) critiques the understanding of gender as solely a social performance. She argues that it negates social struggles for material gains in favor of 'cultural' struggles for individual identity, thus favouring a politics of recognition over a politics of redistribution. She additionally criticizes cultural understandings of gender because viewing gender solely within a cultural context ignores its historic links to Marxism and political economy. The argument of the impossibility of a universal understanding of gender shifts the focus to sexual difference instead of the gendered division of labour related to (re)production.

While not directly discussing feminism or gender, Glen Sean Coulthard's (2014) work similarly critiques the politics of recognition through a Marxist-Indigenous lens:

[A]dvocates of the left-materialist critique challenge the affirmative relationship drawn between recognition and freedom by many defenders of identity/ difference politics on the grounds that such a politics has proven incapable of transforming the generative material conditions that so often work to foreclose the realization of self-determination in the lives of ordinary citizens. (p. 19)

Coulthard (2014) argues that the colonial state of Canada uses the politics of recognition when dealing with Indigenous communities and claims. However, just acknowledging Indigenous identity and claims ignores the extent to which Indigenous cultural claims go, as they “always involve demands for a more equitable distribution of land, political power, and economic resources,” and so “the left-materialist claim regarding the displacement of economic concerns by cultural ones is misplaced when applied to settler-colonial contexts,” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 19). Citing Fanon, Coulthard (2014) explains how the terms of recognition are made by and for those with power. The work of recognition theorists, “offers little insight into how to address the more overtly structural and/ or economic features of social oppression,” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 34). So in a state like Canada, the terms of recognition are defined by and continue to benefit settler-colonialism rather than a transformative approach to decolonize meaningfully.

Fraser (2007) does see value in social understandings of gender, but warns that it is a double-edged sword:

On the one hand, the turn to recognition represents a broadening of gender struggle a new understanding of gender justice. ... [O]n the other hand, it is no longer clear that feminist struggles for recognition are serving to deepen and enrich struggles for egalitarian redistribution. (p. 24)

She is wary that by viewing gender only in terms of the recognition of difference that feminism could become complicit with neoliberalism’s focus on the individual. She therefore suggests that our understanding of gender must be grounded in material relations of production and reproduction linked to a politics of redistribution. The redistribution camp views gender as a class-like differentiation rooted in economic structures of society. It takes into consideration the division between paid and unpaid labour and productive and reproductive

labour. In contrast, the recognition camp considers the gender system as a status differentiation rooted in the status order of society. In other words, theories of recognition do not take as a point of departure an analysis of class-based social structure, instead depending on the status identity of an individual that is severed from its material relations, thus negating any grounded analysis of power and social stratification. Fraser (2007) claims that combining these two views of gender creates a political-economic face, one which recognizes the importance of redistribution while also bringing forth a cultural-discursive component that acknowledges the need for recognition.

Linda Alcoff (1988) furthers this discussion by arguing that the main dilemma facing feminist theory is that its core subject matter (woman) is defined by a category tainted by misogyny and sexism, and so feminist theorists have rightly aimed to deconstruct it to avoid essentialization. To accomplish this analytical task, feminists have moved in to two major camps: cultural feminism and post-structuralism. Cultural feminists purport that the main problem in patriarchal cultures is the process that affords men the power to define women, resulting in the devaluation of femininity. Their reappraisal, according to Alcoff (1988), is to “construe woman’s passivity as her peacefulness, her sentimentality as her proclivity to nurture” (p. 407). The post-structural response to the dilemma of ‘woman’ within feminist theorizing is to reject entirely the possibility of defining the term to begin with.

In response to the limitations of both the cultural and post-structural approaches to gender, Alcoff (1988) claims that:

If we combine the concept of identity politics with a conception of the subject as positionality, we can conceive of the subject as nonessentialized and emergent from a historical experience and yet retain our political ability to take gender as an important point of departure. Thus we can say at one and the same time that

gender is not natural, biological, universal, ahistorical, or essential and yet still claim that gender is relevant because we are taking gender as a position from which to act politically. (p. 433)

She understands gender to be a position everyone has that is relative to “an existing cultural and social network” (Alcoff, 1988, p. 434). ‘Woman,’ as a gendered concept is therefore a relational term that can only be identified within a specific context, while also being a place for the construction of meaning. Consequently, gender is a positionality from which one experiences their own context and from which values can be constructed and interpreted instead of assumed.

Understanding gender as a positionality is echoed in Fraser’s (2013) more recent analysis. She leans further towards understanding gender as a marker of social status, which helps in framing gender as a way of viewing femininity and masculinity and in understanding hierarchies and power structures. When one sees gender as a positionality, the identity affiliated with ‘woman,’ for example, shifts depending on the context. In the process, it negates the essentializing gendered identity. So as economic, cultural, and political contexts shift, so does the experience of being a man or a woman. By viewing gender as a contextual position from which reality is experienced, one not only avoids essentialism but simultaneously recognizes gender as a real experience with material existence.

Intersectionality and anti-oppression

To view gender as a siloed identity—divorced from other identities grounded in relations of oppression and exploitation such as race and class—fundamentally misses how it is experienced by different people and influenced by other identities. The experience of being a poor, white woman is different than being a wealthy, black woman, and the experience of being

a queer Indigenous woman is different than being a disabled Middle Eastern woman. People's lives are not uniquely informed by just one component of their identity and lived experience, but by how all facets of their life work together to create their reality and experience of the world. Gender is at times viewed as the shorthand for other differences, but to ignore issues like race, dis/ability, sexuality, religion, class, and ethnicity creates a monolithic image of 'woman', which, because of the way hegemonic identities operates, is defaulted to white, cis-hetero, and able-bodied (Mohanty, 2003; Molett & Faria, 2012).

Intersectionality is a crucial tool that helps to unpack the ways different people experience the world. The term was first popularized by Black legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) in her article 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics'. In this article, she explores how viewing discrimination from a single-axis distorts the experience of Black women and creates the erasure of Black women's oppression. Patrica Hill-Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016) define the core insight of intersectionality to be:

[T]hat major axes of social decisions in a given society at a given time, for example, race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, and age operate not as discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but build on each other and work together. (p. 13)

These academics suggest anyone "can draw upon intersectionality as an analytical tool when they recognize that they need better frameworks to grapple with the complex discriminations that they face" (Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 12). To assume singular identities and singular experiences erases the complexity of the multitude of influences on one's lived experience. For a racialized woman, for example, liberation from patriarchy without liberation from white

supremacy would not equate to full freedom because of how race and gender work together to form the reality of her experiences.

Beyond offering deeper insight into how gender operates day to day, intersectionality is an important lens with which to view environmental and social issues. As Molett and Faria (2013) note, “patriarchy and racism are mutually imbued in shaping human-environmental relationships” (p. 117). Molett and Faria (2013), focusing on the importance and need for an intersectional lens in feminist political ecology, note that “[l]ike gendered oppression and patriarchal practice, race and racialization operate through everyday practices where struggles over rights and resources are spatialized in reference to and through the presumed essence within racialized and gendered bodies,” (p. 119).

Gender and Indigenous Feminisms

Joyce Green (2007) purports that Aboriginal feminism is employed to counter and challenge racism and colonialism. Feminist theorists such as Butler or Fraser view gender as a social position, both within a gender hierarchy and/or as a materialist identity linked to class position. For Indigenous communities, gender also has cultural and spiritual meanings unique to each nation. Wanda Nanibush (2014) explains:

The earth, for us, is considered a mother; mothering and creation is foregrounded for our identity. This does not mean that women cannot choose men’s roles or have sexual relations with women. It does mean that there are specific knowledges within the acts of creation for both earth and women that are essential to the sustenance of our world and humanity. Creation is also an act of futural imagining which is what is at the heart of women’s work. The creativity of the

actions and the focus on our children's children's etc. future is part of what is expected of a woman living in a good way. (p. 343)

As traditionally matrilineal societies, First Nations women of Turtle Island are the cultural keepers of language and knowledge. Indigenous scholar and activist Pam Palmater (2015) explains:

My identity as a Mi'kmaw woman means that I am a Teacher, who is responsible to pass on our history, language, culture, and law. I am a Warrior, who is responsible to protect our nations, territories, trees, animals, and citizens. (p. 44)

Andrea Smith (2005) also states that:

Indian societies for the most part were not male dominated. Women served as spiritual, political, and military leaders, and many societies were matrilineal.

Although there existed a division of [labour] between women and men, women's [labour] and men's [labour] were accorded similar status. (p. 18)

The roles of women in their Nations gives them far reaching power and influence. Because of the life-giving capabilities of most women, they are seen as responsible for the nation's survival and wellbeing (Wagner, 2015). Through the (ongoing) processes of colonization, Indigenous social structures were forcefully changed, and one of the most prominent changes was the imposition of patriarchal and European gender norms and roles, as will be discussed further.

The important role women have in Indigenous communities is further exemplified by their relationship and responsibility to land (Nason, 2014). For Indigenous women, their sense of justice is grounded by a translation of culture and tradition into political and social spheres (Suzack, 2015). Women are the heart of ongoing Indigenous resistance, as can be seen from social movement struggles such as Idle No More, the fight against Dakota Access, or

constructing tiny houses in the face of Kinder Morgan. The world view of many Indigenous communities is that they are part and parcel of the land. The land is not something that is separate from them, but rather “an essential part of [their] identity, culture, and understanding of place and spirituality” (Palmater, 2015, p. 45).

Renowned Indigenous rights and environmental activist, Winona Laduke (1999), says her Nation’s “creation stories, cultures, and way of life are entirely based on forest, source of our medicinal plants and food, forest animals, and birch-bark baskets,” (p. 4) exemplifying the deep connections Indigenous communities have to the land and their territories. She explains further that:

Native American teachings describe the relations all around – animals, fish, trees, and rocks – as our brothers, sisters, uncles, and grandpas. Our relations to each other, our prayers whispered across generations to our relatives, are what bind our cultures together. The protection, teachings, and gifts of our relatives have for generations preserved our families. These relations are honored in ceremony, song, and life that keep relations close – to buffalo, sturgeon, salmon, turtles, bears, wolves, and panthers. These are our older relatives – the ones who came before and taught us how to live. Their obliteration by dams, guns, and bounties is an immense loss to Native families and cultures. Their absence may mean that a people sing to a barren river, a caged bear, or a buffalo far away. It is the struggle to preserve that which remains and the struggle to recover that characterizes much of Native environmentalism. It is these relationships that industrialism seeks to disrupt. Native communities will resist with great determination. (Laduke, 1999, p. 2)

Indigenous feminism and understandings of gender are therefore inherently political, even though some individuals are reluctant to identify as ‘feminist’ within Indigenous spaces. As Green (2007) claims, “Aboriginal feminism is a theoretical engagement with history and politics, as well as a practical engagement with contemporary social, economic, cultural, and political issues” (p. 25). Gendered identities and performances carry political weight and therefore aid in forging forward in decolonizing, anti-racist work, including in environmental movements.

Many Indigenous women do not identify with the term ‘feminist’ because of its colonial history. The historical canon of feminism as understood by the mainstream is quite white and has tended to leave out the stories and voices of non-white non-cisgendered women. Prominent Indigenous scholar Lee Maracle (1996) claims, “[r]acist ideology had defined womanhood for the Native woman as nonexistent, therefore neither the woman question nor the European rebels’ response held any meaning for me” (p. 15). Additionally, feminism has tended to view itself as a movement for women’s individual rights, which “is a colonized way of thinking, because for Aboriginal peoples the individuals are always part of the collective, not outside of, or contrary to it” (Sunseri, 2011, p. 159). Lina Sunseri (2011) points out that for most Aboriginal women “the Canadian law is at the center of [their] problems,” and “to fully understand how patriarchy works in Canada, we must look at the oppressive role that the Canadian state has had, and continues to have, in the everyday lives of Aboriginal women” (p. 158). Feminism from an Indigenous standpoint therefore cannot be seen as separate from decolonization processes.

Colonialism is inherently gendered and sexualized (Smith, 2005). European colonization of Turtle Island was only possible because of the explicit assault on Indigenous women (Smith, 2005; Smith, 2011). One example of this is the gendered regulation of the Indian Act, which policed membership and marriage of Indigenous women and continues to regulate various facets

of on-reserve life. Andrea Smith (2005) explains the colonial construction of Native “bodies [as] ‘dirty’” and that “they are considered sexually violable and ‘rapable’ and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count” (p. 10). Smith (2005) further notes how “colonization = thingification” (p. 12). By reducing Indigenous peoples to ‘things,’ colonizers and the colonial lens perpetuates racist and sexist ideas of Indigenous peoples as disposable, dehumanized groups, particularly in the context of colonial ideas of land use and social structures.

Because the important and central role women play in Indigenous communities differed drastically from European understandings of society and gendered roles, Indigenous women were “bearers of a counter-imperial order and pose[d] a supreme threat to the [colonial] culture” (Smith, 2005, p. 15). As Paula Gunn Allen (as cited in Smith, 2005) argues, colonizers realized that in order to subjugate Indigenous nations they would have to first subjugate the women in these nations. Gendered colonial violence continues to this day. The epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is another example of ongoing gendered colonial violence. The epidemic was made possible because of colonial understanding of Indigenous people – specifically women and girls – as disposable. Consequently, any act of Indigenous resistance fundamentally addresses the history of gendered colonial violence and aims to restore and decolonize gender roles within their Nations and communities.

Gender and the Environment

As can be seen above, there can be a very distinct and powerful connection between ideas surrounding environmental responsibility and womanhood. The cultural expectations of women within many Indigenous communities is that they should be on the frontline to defend the water

and the land. The association with women and femininity with environmental protection is not unique to Indigenous communities, however. While the clear duty and birthright responsibilities to be stewards of the land are not part of settler society, environmental movements and those concerned with the environment more broadly are majority women (Epstein, 1997; Stover & Cable, 2017).

Ecofeminism posits that there is a theoretical overlap that exists between gender, feminism, and the environment, such that the same social structures oppress women and destroy the environment (Norgaard & York, 2005; Shiva, 1988; Shiva, 2013; Smith, 2005). For rural communities, particularly rural Indigenous communities, this connection is clear and unfortunately quite tangible. One of the many fears affiliated with the construction of pipelines and other rural extractive projects is the prospect that they will be surrounded by ‘man camps,’ or isolated work camps in remote areas. Some Nations, such as Lake Babine, in preparation for the influx of industry workers ensured that all their health stations were stocked with rape kits (Markusoff, 2018). RCMP in Fort St. James experienced a 38% increase in reports of sexual assault within the first year of a project alone (Markusoff, 2018). A United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, came forth at the 2014 UN International Expert Group Meeting on sexual health and reproductive rights to say that particular attention needs to be paid to communities that are near oil, gas, and mining companies (Rickert, 2014). He noted how Indigenous women have reported that when there is an influx of workers for an extractive project near their communities, it leads to increased incidents of sexual violence and harassment. These camps also create a demand for sex work and sex trafficking, which has come up as a concern in the context of the national inquiring of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Moreover, ecofeminists assert that the simultaneous devaluing of nature and of women reinforce one another under patriarchy; the domination of man over nature is synonymous with the domination of man over woman (King, 1989). One of the leading ecofeminist theorists, Vandana Shiva (1988), offers insight into what she sees as fundamental connections between economic development and resource extraction with the devaluing of femininity and oppression of women's social, cultural, and political role in many contexts. Shiva (1988) argues that because of the interdependent relationship of capitalism and colonialism, the process of economic growth that is dependent on resource extraction simultaneously imposes patriarchal standards and expectations on development, which in turn oppresses women while also destroying the natural environment.

Shiva (1988) states that:

The displacement of women from productive activity by the expansion of development was rooted largely in the manner in which development projects appropriated or destroyed the natural resource base for the production of sustenance and survival. It destroyed women's productivity both by removing the land, water and forests from their management and control, as well as through the ecological destruction of soil, water and vegetation systems so that nature's productivity and renewability was impaired. While gender subordination and patriarchy are the oldest of oppressions, they have taken on new and more violent forms through the project of development. (p. 3)

Ecofeminism therefore understands that the ideology that underpins mainstream notions of 'development' have been structured by patriarchal and colonial frameworks that view the natural world as a thing to be used for economic gain, while also devaluing women in part because of

their historical connection to the land. According to ecofeminists, under the patriarchal and colonial model of development women's work is devalued because it is intrinsically connected to processes of nature (King, 1989; Shiva, 1989). By viewing ecology and feminism as interconnected, ecofeminism posits that a restructuring of political and economic power and transformation can occur.

Critics of ecofeminism have argued that in its extreme forms, ecofeminism tends to assume that all females are powerless victims under patriarchal control and that all women are biologically hardwired to have a unique position to relate to the environment and nature because they are sexed female, or, in short are 'closer to the Earth.' Somewhat paradoxically, ecofeminism simultaneously celebrates women as 'saviors' who can protect the environment and Mother Nature with our feminine attributes and mothering capabilities. Women are on one hand the hero, while on the other, the victim. The main critique of ecofeminist thinking is its tendency towards essentialism. Ecofeminism assumes that women are more in tune with nature because of the similar oppression both face under patriarchal systems (Gupte, 2002).

Further, because of the gendered division of labour that is predicated on reproductive and life-giving capacity, women are seen as the embodiment of nature. The essentialism that emerges from ecofeminist thinking assumes that because of biological expectations of what it means to be a woman and female, women and females are inherently and universally wired in distinct ways (Gupte, 2002). The implicit bridge between ecofeminism and maternal 'instincts' of women is what Sherilyn MacGregor (2009) has called 'ecomaternalism'.

The discussion around essentialism in ecofeminism reflects the broader discussion of essentializing what it means to be a woman. As previously discussed, I view gender as a social construction and performance that situates individuals within social hierarchies while also

creating a positionality from which political, social, and economic structures are experienced. It is impossible to have a universal experience of womanhood, for example, because of the multiple experiences of womanhood that exist. However, that does not negate potential commonalities of experience, nor does it mean there is a preferred experience. While the experience of an innate connection to nature might be true for some women, one cannot assume that experience for all women.

In many Indigenous cultures in Turtle Island and around the world, “the Earth is [their] mother” (Laduke, 2010, p. 469). Many Indigenous cultures view it as their responsibility to protect the land as a way of both taking care of the Earth and themselves. It is their belief that “women, all females, are the manifestation of Mother Earth in human form” and “[their] cultural instructions are to care for her” (Laduke, 2010, p. 469-470). Indigenous feminists reiterate similar analyses that are found in ecofeminist thinking as a descriptor for their experience of environmental degradation and the oppression of Indigenous women. These examples of Indigenous communities highlight how gendered experiences are based on context and because of that there are countless ways to experience womanhood and a connection with nature.

Another important facet of this conversation around gender, the environment, and social movements harks back to the discussion of intersectionality. When environmental activism and motherhood are discussed, they tend to be racialized and classed in specific ways. In the United States and Canada, most major environmental groups and movements are majority white (Epstein, 1997), even though racialized groups experience environmental destruction in distinctly different ways than those with white privilege. As Gupte (2002) notes, essentializing environmental activism as something that is only done by white women threatens to obscure the distinct cultural connection and inherent rights that Indigenous peoples have to the land.

The erasure of diversity in environmentalism also ignores how Indigenous communities have been engaged in activism and resistance around these issues for over five hundred years. Moreover, racialized communities tend to live in closer proximity to toxic waste sites and landfills (Gupte, 2002). One recent and clear example of environmental racism is the Dakota Access Pipeline. The original route of the project was moved downstream to the Standing Rock Sioux tribe because it would have posed a threat to the water of Bismarck, a mostly white community (Dalrymple, 2016). Essentializing the environmental movement and caregiving ignores the different realities that women of color, for example, face in comparison to white women. This is not to say that environmental movements and Indigenous activism, for example, are mutually exclusive. Rather, it is to highlight how environmentalism can be whitewashed, thus ignoring certain cultural relationships non-(white) settler communities have to the land and environment.

Hegemonic masculinity

It is not just ‘the feminine’ nor ‘women’ that get essentialized into restrictive gender roles. Traditional forms of masculinity are hegemonically seen as lacking compassion, exuding toughness, holding more conservative values, and are expected to not show feelings or emotions. Rather than be nurturing caregivers, hegemonic masculinity encourages men to be economic providers and to be the fiscal and rational head of their household⁸. Since masculinity is often seen as femininity’s opposite, it is socially expected that those who embody the masculine are incapable of care giving and nurturing, and therefore are removed from an innate connection

⁸ Following the work of Gramsci, hegemony here refers to the established and maintained control of the ruling class. In this case, the analysis is around masculine identities under patriarchy and uses the term hegemonic masculinity to demonstrate the cultural and ideological power yielded to men and masculinity so long as they perform it within the aforementioned perceived binary, usually unconsciously because of social expectation

with nature or the environment. At the very least, it is not expected for men to have those instincts and interests.

On a more macro level, the same gendered traits associated with men and masculinity are associated with the extractive industry, which is a key site for activism and resistance. It is no surprise that because of the power yielded to men and masculinity, that those in positions to make decisions are also men and masculine people, including in the powerful realm of resource extraction. Here, discourses of destruction and economic prosperity come to the forefront, carrying with them masculine connotations. Indeed, the very calculation of gross domestic product (GDP) is a gendered exercise. Marilyn Waring (1988) notes how during the post-World War II era, patriarchal values infused income counting, showcasing the masculinized economy in which the world operates. Within GDP calculation, the unpaid domestic labour, that is so often done by women, and the value of nature is not included, further exemplifying masculine tendencies.

In regions where the extractive industry has historically been, and continues to be, a key economic driver, hegemonic masculinity tends to be tied to the industry (Bell & Braun, 2010; Dorow, 2015). In 2007 in Fort McMurray there was a campaign called Big Spirit that was launched by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Dorow, 2015). The purpose of the campaign, in part, was to curtail the negative reputation the municipality had built as a town filled with single men who partied and made a lot of money. In fact, a research participant in Sarah Dorow's (2015) study on gendered dynamics in oil extraction in Fort McMurray noted that, "there really is an energy here and it's almost a male energy" (p. 276). In the Appalachian region where coal mining is a large employer, the mining industry is synonymous with local identity, particularly for the men who work there. Masculinity in the Appalachian region and in

the tar sands of northern Alberta where there is a strong dependence on mining and resource extraction becomes synonymous with environmentally unsustainable industries. Willingness to work in dangerous situations, hands-on jobs, and large mechanized equipment all come to assist in forming hegemonic masculinity in resource dependent economies.

Gender and Social Movements

With the exception of women's movements and feminist movements, the gendered nature of social movements and activism has largely gone unstudied despite there being evidence that all social movements are gendered (Taylor, 1999). As with society at large, gender influences hierarchies and power dynamics within movement spaces and activism. Verta Taylor (1999) argues that a theory is needed to address the intersection of gender and social movements for a variety of reasons including organizing principles of gender and its intersections with race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality and explaining collective action thoroughly and accurately. When examining movements from a gendered perspective, invaluable and overlooked insights comes to light, including organizing structure, power dynamics, and entry points into activism. Often elements of organizing such as recruiting, mobilizing, and action design are influenced by, and therefore cannot be understood without examining, gendered dynamics within movement spaces. Gendered processes within social movements of all sorts are highly influential in outcome but rarely reflected upon.

Mothering is often seen as an entry point in all stripes of activism because of the apparent heightened awareness of the future for the sake of their children. Once mothers become aware of the health consequences to their children because of environmental destruction, many enter the activist scene (Epstein, 1997). Women activists fighting coal top mining in Appalachian region,

for example, claim that their activism is an extension of their identity, and obligation, as mothers to protect their children and community (Bell & Braun, 2010). In other areas, such as some small mining towns in Arizona, women have had to ‘hold the line’ during strikes in their communities when men (husbands) were barred from picketing and so the women, who previously needed spousal permission to leave house, started to picket in their husband’s place (Kingsolver, 1989), exemplifying how reproductive and domestic work can be unique spaces of resistance. There are some women who argue that because of their motherly capabilities, they have a heightened sense of moral obligation to protect the environment and are therefore more aware of the effects of environmental issues in comparison to men (Bell & Braun, 2010). Moreover, because women are socialized to value cooperation and have a higher degree of concern for others, it is thought that these characteristics are then conducive to women being more involved in environmentalist work than men (Tindall, et. al., 2003). Interestingly, at least within environmental movements, men make up the majority of the leadership despite the base of support dominantly being women.

Mothering as activism is not solely related to the realm of environmental concern. Other pressing social issues such as gun control in America utilize mothering as a recruitment tactic and as imagery in actions and protests, as can be seen with the Million Mom March (Wallack, Winett, & Nettekoven, 2003). Sara Hayden (2003) notes:

[T]he vast majority of the speakers were women, almost all of whom referred to their status as mothers... By appealing to maternity in support of their political aims, the Million Moms followed a long line of women activists. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women commonly appealed to their maternal roles in order to justify demands for suffrage, peace, welfare reforms, and workers’ rights. Subsequently, women activists invoked maternal appeals to influence

drunk driving legislation, to protect the environment, to promote peace, and to challenge oppressive political regimes. (p. 196)

The use of mothering across activist circles acts as a justification historically for women to be in the public sphere and assert their existence as political.

There is no inherent problem with being a mother and using that as motivation for political involvement. Rather, what is problematic is the assumption that motherhood, or the possibility of motherhood, is the only reason to take up environmental and social concerns. The idea that women's engagement in environmental activism, or political involvement more broadly, is rooted solely in their socialized existence as care givers and nurturers negates the reality that women are political beings, regardless of their possible reproductive capabilities. After all, not all women can or want to reproduce, and caring 'for the children' is not the only reason women become politically engaged, nor is it a reason for some women at all. As the popular women's union labour protest song "Bread and Roses" says, "the rising of the women means the rising of them all," (Oppenheim, 1911).

However, part of the reason that many activist groups comprised of mothers utilize their social position as life-givers is its ability to gain social traction without seeming overly radical, resulting in less political backlash. Women utilize their roles as wives and mothers to legitimize their confrontational actions (Bell & Braun, 2010). Perhaps this leveraging of motherhood is because confrontational behavior is a not socially and culturally acceptable form of femininity and using gendered identities that are acceptable softens their image to a point of acceptability. The use of motherhood and womanhood adds legitimacy to their actions as when women act for themselves it seen as selfish, thus further entrenching female gender norms and activist performativity of motherhood.

However, it is important to note that many women face a subtle societal pressure to link their activism to benefitting their children rather than for larger and more radical political gain (Epstein, 1997), linking back to what are socially acceptable performances of femininity for mothers. Most environmental movements in the late 1800s and early 1900s were led by economically privileged women in attempts to clean up urban environments (Bell & Braun, 2010). Their activism, however, was “culturally expected as an ‘extension of traditionally feminine responsibilities’” making women “municipal housekeepers” (Bell & Braun, 2010, p. 797). It is also strategic, as male cops are less likely to assault a mother because of the perception of women being dainty and needing protection. The use of strategic essentialism as an organizing tactic can be used to mobilize a collective identity to pursue a common political end goal (Spivak, 1988).

Moreover, women’s perceived role as cultural protectors also influences their engagement in environmental activism. As discussed earlier, Indigenous women have a different connection to the land and to the earth that is a deeply-held belief rooted in practice and tradition since time immemorial. Women in non-Indigenous communities also have a cultural connection to the environment and site that as reason for environmental engagement. The Appalachian region’s identity is founded on their geographical location and landscape. Many women from the area perceive the destructiveness of the coal industry to be a threat to their image as Appalachian people because of the intense environmental toll of mountaintop mining (Bell & Braun, 2010). These two examples showcase how women use their environmental surroundings and their connection to their homeland as reason for engagement in environmental work and protection.

The gendered division of labour also influences the ways in which women can participate in activism, especially when considering how gender hierarchies inform and influence class

structure and women's position within class and labour categorization. The domestic sphere is a space in which everyday actions linked to social change occurs. For example, working in the home can provide more free time to engage with political representatives during their work hours through in person meetings or phone calls. People who stay home to take care of their kids or tend to other domestic duties are generally more apt to fulfill these tasks than people who work outside of the home (Epstein, 1997). Kitchens and church basements are also key sites for activism in North America and tend to be the domains of women. And because women tend to do more childcare and domestic labour, they are traditionally positioned in a way that enables them to do that type of organizing more than their husbands or partners. So, while many might view those who stay at home as somewhat politically inactive, it can be quite the opposite.

These social understandings of gendered identity, as discussed earlier, influences expectations of, and responses to, performing gendered traits. The work of Thomas Klubock (1998) and Susan Braedley (2009) illustrate the utility of hegemonic masculinity in advancing the interests of select groups. In his work in the mining sector in Chile at the turn of the 20th century, Klubock (1998) observes that powerful miners' unions were centered on constructs of masculinity due to the construction of miners as masculine heroes who perform dangerous work. Feminist scholar Braedley (2009) observes similar dynamics in her work comparing the contentious politics of firefighters and nurses in Ontario in the 1990s. Nurses' position in neoliberal health care policies are more insecure despite higher levels of education and training and higher rates of job injury than firefighters:

This comparison demonstrates that firefighters' compensation and working conditions cannot be accounted for by market dynamics, and illustrates differences between public safety and public care employment. The comparison

also highlights the gendered division of labour, and demonstrates that pay equity remains a battle worth fighting. (Braedly, 2009, p. 133)

Braedley (2009) further argues that firefighters have been able to maintain and improve their working conditions in contract negotiations based on their powerful construct of masculinity, while nurses have continually accepted concessions. Andrea Cornwall (1997) observes similar insights that can be applied in the study of development initiatives, which tend to construct men as ‘the problem’ and women as ‘the oppressed,’ which can obscure both the complex nature of gendered relations and the power relations at the basis of these gendered performances. These are but some examples of how social understandings and constructions of gender influence power dynamics.

Gender also influences what Jessica Horn (2013) refers to as a movement’s “deep structure,” or “hidden layers within organisations and movements where unconscious or even conscious but hidden processes occur, including assumptions taken for granted about gender roles and the place of women” (p. 4). The barriers society creates based on gendered expectations influences the way that men and women participate in movement spaces, as will be thoroughly discussed in the following chapters.

Throughout this thesis I will use a framing of gender that purports gender as a performance that embodies specific gendered qualities and a marker of status. Simultaneously, I recognize the limitations of post-structural feminism’s recognition politics’ inability to transform systems of oppression. My research focuses on gendered power structures within the Energy East movement, and so understanding gender in a similar fashion to Fraser and Alcoff is important. Moreover, because a significant part of climate justice work is led by Indigenous communities

and seeks to decolonize and restructure capitalism, focusing more on a politics of redistribution, like Coulthard and Fraser, is crucial.

I view gender as an identity that influences behaviors and traits embodied by different people. The performance and construction of gender influences how a person is positioned within larger social structures of power and hierarchy. I will therefore be using this lens – one that understands gender to be socially constructed, yet materially consequential, especially with concern for transforming social structures to be less oppressive - to unpack how the tactics that were employed in the resistance of Energy East were gendered, drawing on the hegemonically understood performances of masculinity and femininity.

CHAPTER THREE: Research findings and analyzing gender in the fight against Energy East

This chapter highlights the key findings from my analysis of the interviews around the role gender played in resistance to the Energy East pipeline. It will also show how gender shaped individuals' organizing, recruitment, and involvement in the social movement against the TransCanada project, drawing from my 10 interviews with people from Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, and Nova Scotia who were involved in fighting TransCanada's Energy East pipeline. Where gender seemed the most influential was with traits embodied by both individuals and the movement as a whole, rather than gendered identities specifically. There were two exceptions, however: one organizing group was comprised mostly of young moms, and Indigenous resistance to the Energy East pipeline was led by women.

The resistance tactics that were employed varied by region. Activist in smaller communities, such as Kenora and the South Shore of Nova Scotia, focused more on participating in the National Energy Board (NEB) consultation process due to the smaller size of the groups, whereas activists in larger and more urban contexts relied more on door knocking and petitions. Other traditional forms of activism were used as well, such as protests and marches, in addition to more creative approaches to resistance including theatre and educational tours called 'water walks.' Based on my conversations with my research participants, all tactics that were employed were needed to successfully defeat the pipeline in conjunction with the other projects that were on the table; none was seen as more effective than the other.

I start by explaining the various entry points into climate activism and the fight against Energy East, which includes previous engagement, mothering, Indigenous identity, and viewing

the issue of pipelines as linked to broader systems of injustice. Next, the various tactics that were used in the movement are discussed, such as marches, protests, birddogging, bike rides, town halls, NEB interventions and intervenors, door knocking, coalition building, water walks, and petitions. I then analyze the role that gender played in the resistance, which focuses on how different movement spaces embodied different gendered characteristics, mothering, feminist leadership, hegemonic masculinity, the importance of intersectionality, and the role of gender in Indigenous resistance.

As discussed in the introduction, I used the snowballing method to recruit my participants. I first contacted friends and people I had worked with myself, and then asked them to put me in touch with other people they thought would be good to talk to. In total, I interviewed nine women (two of whom are Indigenous) and one man. My interviewees had varying levels of comfort with anonymity, as some expressed concern about their discussion of colleagues and comrades, some did not want their organization named, and some did not want their last name used. As such, all participants were given pseudonyms except for the Indigenous participants who allowed me to use their traditional names.

Entry points into climate activism and the fight against Energy East

Previous Engagement

Everyone I interviewed got involved with the fight against Energy East because they were already engaged with environmental activism, climate justice, and/or Indigenous rights. Half of my participants were working for environmental organizations at the time of the pipeline announcement and so were thrown into the work via their jobs as paid activists and/or organizers. For many, the issue was also at an intersection with other interests they had such as

women's rights and a deep need for systemic political, social, and economic change. All participants said they participated in resistance because of a sense of urgency to act to protect the future. Where that urgency differed was the motivation behind wanting to act for the future. The Indigenous women I spoke to emphasized that they were fighting for future generations and to ensure that the next generations still have clean water and land, both for sustenance as well as for cultural and spiritual purposes. For settlers, there were some who tied their fight directly to their children and others who viewed it as part of a larger struggle against oppressive systems. Some of my participants were parents, which was part of their motivation. But even people I spoke with who did not have children of their own talked about a desire to protect the environment and the planet for future generations.

Participants in Québec reported that they were also fighting the Line 9 proposal when Energy East was announced. When TransCanada announced their project, many people were already engaged with fighting tar sands projects and so they carried on their work after Line 9 with Energy East (Abbie, personal communication, Feb 23, 2018; Jenn, personal communication, March 12, 2018). Connections were drawn between the two pipeline projects, garnering continued support in showcasing opposition to fossil fuel development. Québec passed an extended ban on hydraulic fracking in 2014 (Vendeville, 2014), so many activists in Québec had a "sense that if you mobilize massively you can win on environmental questions," (Abbie, personal communication, Feb 23, 2018). Students had also politically and socially reawakened with the 2012 Québec student strike, so young people were already mobilized and saw themselves as key political and social actors in the province (Abbie, personal communication, Feb 23, 2018).

Mothering and Gendered Engagement

Tess said that motherhood and the concern for her group's children's future was a key reason for participation in the pipeline battle (personal communication, Feb 22, 2018). The concern for the water and the concern for children's health often coincided as reason for getting involved. The fear of an unsustainable future for the next generation – be it contaminated water sheds, unlivable environments, or extreme weather events – were core motivations for new and young mothers in some communities. However, Leslie disregarded the maternal argument entirely, for she was equally as motivated by a will to safeguard the future but does not have children (personal communication, March 19, 2018). Similarly, other participants were persuaded by a desire to protect the planet for future generations but did not have children either.

Indigenous Engagement

The two Indigenous women I spoke to noted how it was not a fight against Energy East per se, but a fight for their inherent rights, land, and culture that motivated them. For them, fighting against TransCanada was an innate and inherent duty they fulfilled as water protectors and land defenders. The maternal argument of safeguarding the future for generations to come was a core motivation for Cedar Woman and Azouwa. Indigenous movements and resurgence that is happening now with Idle No More, for example, “has a special spiritual significance in that this was prophesied – that the seventh generation would rise and restore the strength of our nations, bring balance, and see that justice was restored to our peoples” (Palmater, 2015, p. 80).

Azouwa, who belongs to the Wolf Clan, which means ‘protector of the people,’ grew up in a traditional family that was close to the land with parents that were survivors of the residential school system, creating a sense of resiliency that she carries with her today. Her

family line also traces back to prominent leadership, which helps fuel her own leadership in her fight to help her community. Her motivation for fighting against pipelines stems from her desire and duty to protect the land. She notes how:

It's not a First Nations thing – this is not our land. We are here to be the keepers of it for everybody. So that means getting involved in current issues, find[ing] out what's happening to our water, which is our most important resource. (Azouwa, personal communication, May 18, 2018).

The reason that her and other Indigenous women specifically are at the fore of the fight is because of a prophecy:

In our traditional lodges it says it's time for women to take back their role. We look at it as man and woman – distinct roles. Women are life-givers. Feminine energy is water. Water is our lifeforce. We consider water to be the right of the woman, that we protect it and defend it for everyone. [There are] moral and traditional expectations when you claim to be a traditional woman. (Azouwa, personal communication, May 18, 2018)

Azouwa's motivation for engaging in land and water protection is therefore a cultural duty and a political and social obligation she has as an Indigenous woman to her community. The destruction of her land by “ignorance and capitalism and consumerism” is what “fuels our fire” (Azouwa, personal communication, May 18, 2018).

Cedar Woman, of the Bear Clan, said that when it came to protecting water for her “it's who I am, it's my birth duty as an Anishnaabe kwe” (personal communication, Feb 28, 2018). Her involvement in opposing extractive projects is part of a broader fight against colonization and settler systems that “don't allow for Indigenous voices to be heard” and have “no treaty

relationships, no consultation in regard to infrastructure, damming, [or] pipelines” (Cedar Woman, personal communication, Feb 28, 2018). She started doing more community organizing after Idle No More started in 2012. Cedar Woman also echoed Azouwa’s reflection on the importance of water, as she claimed that “water is life – it’s a slogan to some, but truth to us,” (personal communication, Feb 28, 2018). She continued, saying: “Water ceremony is so important as life givers. Water is being stopped, so life is being stopped. Water is our relative. As a woman, the teachings that come are important” (Cedar Woman, personal communication, Feb 28, 2018). For Azouwa and Cedar Woman, the fight against Energy East, and the extractive industry and colonial state as a whole, is a land protection and water protection issue that translates into broader social issues of decolonization and Indigenous rights.

A Fight Against Broader Injustice

For all, the fight against Energy East was a fight against a broader social, economic, and political system that tramples Indigenous rights and sustainable development. The ongoing violations of the rights of Indigenous communities and the prioritization of profit over people by both the government and TransCanada served as motivation for involvement in fighting against the pipeline all across the country and particularly those who live along the project’s route. The mainstream discussion around taking action to combat climate change is usually thought of on an individualistic level – recycle, walk or bike when you can, turn off the lights when they are not being used. Holly’s analysis, however, was “that there are systems and structures in society that are upheld with power, and climate change is a part of that. Oil being shipped across from the tar sands to Halifax was a symptom of that system,” (personal communication, Nov 10, 2017).

The threat to water was a key reason why so many got involved, including folks who had not previously been engaged with climate justice work. The direct threat TransCanada posed to the backyards of millions of Canadians was enough to get plenty of new activists on board for the fight against Energy East. The water angle touches on numerous other motivations for engagement, including protection of future generations, the spiritual and cultural importance of water for Indigenous communities, and local economies dependent on the water such as places in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. However, some were a bit disappointed that the water angle got so much traction, as a few of the people I spoke with were hoping for the movement to take a stronger anti-capitalism stance rather than one of ‘don’t poison my water.’ In the end, however, it was the water angle that mobilized the most people to action.

A major concern around the world when it comes to the extractive industry is the work camps that are set up for a project’s operation. As discussed in the previous chapter, the establishment of work camps in remote communities poses a huge threat to the safety and well-being of local communities. There is often an increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, increases in substance abuse issues, and increases in sex trafficking. These work camps are a clear example of a connection between violence against the land and violence against women. With Energy East, there could have been a man camp but because the project never got that far it ended up not being a concern for the movement.

Tactics used in resistance and why they were successful

The vast majority of tactics that were employed in resisting and ultimately stopping the Energy East pipeline aimed to increase the profile of the project in order to raise awareness about the environmental and social damage that it would cause. Door knocking, protests, petition

circulation, theatre of the oppressed performances, marches, and pamphlet distribution are some of the ways in which information about the pipeline was circulated to communities. All of these tactics involved incredible amounts of local organizing and mobilizing, and many local groups sprang into action as soon as they caught wind of the proposed pipeline project. Canvassers and organizers were hired at many local environmental organizations to take on the bulk of the work and to organize and mobilize volunteers into action.

Québec Resistance

The strategies and tactics used differed from region to region. Québec was the most outspoken province against the pipeline with all political parties opposing, dozens of municipalities showing opposition, and a vigilant ground game of grassroots activism. Marches and town halls were of utmost importance in mobilizing communities. One of the main marches was 34 days long and went to many communities that were along the route to raise awareness. The people involved in this action in turn hosted town halls to inform people about the project and to encourage them to pressure their municipality to make a statement in opposition to the pipeline. The topics covered in the town hall included explaining what Energy East was, what climate change is, Canada's dependency on oil, and Indigenous rights and struggles. As Abbie, who was one of the lead organizers for the march, noted, "the march was definitely the highlight. The scale of ambition...really helped connect and bring a common thread to local resistance," (personal communication, Feb 23, 2018).

Connecting at the local level while simultaneously translating the issue of the pipeline to broader national and international issues was a core component of the resistance work that was done in Québec, and across Canada. In the end, over 300 municipal governments in Québec

came out against the project, including the mayor of Montréal. By the end of the campaign, there was no way Québec would allow a pipeline to go through their province. Jenn also stated that the citizen groups her organization helped build held 35 conferences and town halls that explained what the pipeline was, what climate change is, Indigenous rights, and some information on oil dependency and the Canadian petro-state (personal communication, March 12, 2018).

Québec also saw a huge victory with their resistance to the terminal that was initially going to be in the municipality of Cacouna, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. In TransCanada's initial plans, one of the terminals for shipping the bitumen to market was in Cacouna, which is home to beluga whale habitat. The terminal would have directly impacted the breeding grounds of belugas, creating an ecological crisis as the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada said that beluga numbers have plummeted from 10,000 down to 1,000 (The Canadian Press, 2014). TransCanada even admitted that their decision to cancel the Cacouna terminal was because of the whales (CBC News, 2015b). While they said that it was because of the government's decision to put the beluga whale on an endangered species list, the politicization of the connection between the pipeline and the belugas was because of opposition and movement building in the area. The switch in terminal plans was the first major hurdle Energy East saw, as it pushed back the deadline of the project by two years.

Coule pas chez nous, a grassroots organization in Québec, made a beer in opposition to the pipeline in partnership with local breweries (image below). The organization also received a donation from Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, the prominent co-leader of the socialist party, Québec Solidaire, who won the Governor General's Award and donated the money associated with his prize to Coule pas chez nous (CBC News, 2014). He then also helped to crowdfund \$400,000 for Coule pas chez nous. They also organized a loonie campaign, which was done in Ottawa and in

British Columbia in the fight against Northern Gateway. This campaign stickered loonies so that the loon on the coin was covered in black and below the image was a link to the campaign website where people could sign a petition and get more information on the dangers of the Energy East project (picture in the following section about Ontario resistance). Additionally, one of the largest climate marches in Canadian history took place in Québec City in 2015 with over 25,000 people marching to show their support for climate action and to say no to Energy East and the Tar Sands (image below).



(Coule pas chez nous, n.d.)



(Boissinot, 2015, as seen on 350.org)

East Coast Resistance

On the East Coast, TransCanada focused their narrative on job creation and the local economy. In response, many of the environmental activists in Nova Scotia, for example, spent a lot of energy and resources in countering that narrative and educating the public on the realities of the project. According to Claire, because the pro-Energy East argument “hinged on the job conversation more than other [pipelines]”, it “helped create the dialogue we still find ourselves in today” regarding jobs, prosperity, and the future of the economy (personal communication, Feb 12, 2018).

Halifax had a designated group operating out of Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group called Stop Energy East Halifax. The group hosted public media stunts to raise the profile of the pipeline in the area and also hosted an Energy East Resistance Ride. The Ride was from Sydney, Nova Scotia to Ottawa, Ontario to spread the word about the pipeline and to get people involved in the opposition. The Halifax group also held apply-a-thons, whereby impacted communities, such as fishing communities along the South Shore, were mobilized to apply to be intervenors in the NEB consultation process. They also used a tactic called birddogging, where whenever a politician makes a public appearance someone is present to question them or call them out on a particular issue. The Stop Energy East Halifax approach was “to try to disrupt the idea that Canada was a climate leader and [that]... Justin Trudeau is a climate leader, and that the pipeline could be compatible with environmental stewardship” (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). Through birddogging and inserting that narrative into any news story the group could, they tried to derail the mainstream discussion that supports tar sands expansion, in line with the broader awareness raising that was happening across the country.

Resistance in Ontario

In Ottawa, Ecology Ottawa launched a loonie campaign (image below), inspired by the work done by Dogwood in Victoria, British Columbia against the Northern Gateway pipeline, which, as mentioned earlier, was then copied in Québec by Coule pas chez nous. Ottawa residents were incredibly active in door knocking and petitioning against the pipeline project, as it directly threatened the Rideau river and local watersheds. Volunteers also made it an election issue in some of the by-elections that took place after the 2015 federal election. Like Québec, Ottawa also engaged with the municipal level, getting local groups to talk to their city councillors about Energy East to see if Ottawa would come out publicly in opposition to the project. The nation's capital also hosted a demonstration outside of a hotel where the city was hosting an industry breakfast (image below). Additionally, Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams came to Ottawa after viewing the tar sands herself to talk to local community members about how Energy East would impact them. Her visit gained media attention and helped to raise awareness about the project.



(Left to right: Gunn, 2016; Gunn, 2016)

Kenora also had a lot of mobilization against TransCanada's proposed project. The group that was established was comprised mostly of young moms who were trying to replicate birddogging tactics that were done in North Bay, Ontario. Their first experience with TransCanada representatives was filled with an imbalance of power between the company and the mothers. As Tess recalls:

We were young moms and we had our little pamphlets. The organization had a glossy display in a local hotel ballroom. But they had a security crew... [who] were basically bouncers, who had been trained to keep protesters out. We didn't go in but were outside handing out leaflets. The bouncers would come over and... cattle us. (Personal communication, Feb 22, 2018)

These intimidation tactics are part and parcel of trying to silence and deter activists from showcasing opposition and speaking out against fossil fuel projects. Women climate activists are constantly bombarded with sexist and misogynistic backlash for their activism, including being called incredibly derogatory names. For example, a picture from an Energy East is Dead victory party was circulated to pro-pipeline Facebook groups. Subsequently, the host of the victory party received derogatory comments on the photo and misogynistic remarks flooded her personal messages.

The group in Kenora saw the necessity to immediately start organizing more consistently, and so had monthly potlucks to learn more about the fossil fuel industry and strategize about what they could do to stop the pipeline. In the Spring of 2014, they were contacted by the Council of Canadians to be a part of their Prairie's tour in opposition to Energy East. The groups co-hosted a town hall to talk about how the pipeline posed an immense risk to the water and had

speakers from Environmental Defense and Indigenous Climate Action. Shortly after, Lead Now held a national day of action against Energy East, where Tess was able to connect with other women in the area. Having met other folks engaged in the fight, the Kenora group was able to get broader support and ended up receiving seed funding for legal counsel.

The main tactic employed by the young mothers in Kenora was to be an intervenor in the NEB process, which will be discussed in greater detail below. They were legally meticulous, whereas other groups were more invested in engagement organizing, providing a supportive balance of strategy for the movement overall.

National Level Organizing and Coalition Building

It took a while for environmental groups and activists across the country to catch wind of TransCanada's project, but once an environmental non-government organization (ENGO) on the East Coast found out, they reached out to people in Québec who had already heard of it, which resulted in a big strategy meeting with some of the larger national ENGOs. The coalition at the national level that resulted from the initial outreach was not necessarily a formal group, but rather a loose coalition that eventually had regional groups and national calls that provided a platform to share the different objectives and tactics that were being used by its members.

Organizing at the community level as well as the national level was crucial in stopping the Energy East project. Because of the sheer size of the proposed project, hundreds of communities were at risk of oil spills and environmental destruction. Larger organizations with a bigger capacity and more resources helped spread information to smaller organizations, particularly on the NEB procedures. Combining the resources of different group also happened at a local scale. Cedar Woman noted how in Manitoba there was a relationship built between the

Mennonite community and the Indigenous community because of their common interest in stopping the pipeline project (personal communication, Feb 28, 2018).

A significant portion of the actions and resistance that took place was targeting policy makers and those with political power at all levels of government. The campaigns that were launched in opposition to Energy East were able to get municipalities to make statements opposing the pipeline, and similar efforts were made at the provincial level as well. Higher level conversations were important in winning, as it allowed for activists and campaigners to persuade policy makers and influence elected officials. The lobbying paid off, as hundreds of municipalities across the country came out in opposition.

Coalition building was “fairly effective in Québec” (Abbie, personal communication, Feb 23, 2018) and there was a lot of spillover of networks, which was important for the movement’s victory. Holly also noted how the women that she knows and works with in the climate movement tend to “have more of a willingness to relinquish and to let go of their priorities to form coalitions. Men.... [are] less inclined to have that,” (personal communication, Nov 10, 2017). The prominent role of relationship building as a strategy was an area influenced by feminine traits, as many interviewees noted that the stronger relationships within and across the movement were fostered by women.

The National Energy Board

As mentioned throughout the previous discussion many of my research participants were intervenors and were involved with the legal procedures of the NEB case on Energy East, making the NEB approval system a huge focus and site of resistance. For one, the documents the NEB was producing were not adequately translated, which caused the regulating bodies

difficulty in the province that arguably was the most vocal in opposition. The use of NEB legal procedures allowed community groups to put pressure on TransCanada and the regulatory board to hold more rigorous environmental regulations.

TransCanada received just over 1,800 applications to participate in the NEB hearings across the country (CBC News, 2015a). The NEB then selected applicants to participate as either a commentator or an intervenor, all of whom must have been impacted by the project and/or have relevant experience and knowledge on the subject. The hearings started in May of 2016 and were supposed to last for the next 21 months. The NEB tour ended prematurely after activists took the stage in Montréal to call out the illegitimacy of the Board. Following the radical intervention, the NEB said they would not continue with the hearings until they further investigated the accusations against two of its board members. By December of that year, the Board members in question stepped down, creating yet another pivotal delay in the pipeline's construction as the review process had to essentially start from scratch. Part of the spotlight on the colluding between TransCanada and board members was brought forth by the National Observer, who broke the news story. The piece, written by managing editor Mike De Souza, received an 'outstanding investigation journalism prize' from the Canadian Association of Journalists (National Observer, 2017).

Following this major setback came the announcement by Prime Minister Trudeau to consider both up and down stream emissions of the project, resulting in TransCanada announcing a 30-day suspension of the project to assess what the new emission inclusion would mean. Shortly thereafter, on October 5, 2017 TransCanada announced they would no longer be going ahead with the project. The resistance to the TransCanada project ultimately used a variety of tactics ranging from old school organizing to creative actions to garner attention. The relentless

work done by activists and community organizers along the entirety of the pipeline route were what helped in making the campaign successful in the end.

Gender, climate activism, and engagement

Gender did not emerge in my conversations with participants the way I had initially thought it would. At the outset, I hypothesized there would be a clearer distinction between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ resistance tactics as well as more discussion around the roles that men and women occupied in the movement against Energy East. What I ended up finding, however, was that there was a gendered difference in activist spaces, that is, within ENGO versus grassroots organizations, but not necessarily with respect to tactics, such as policy analysis versus direct action. At the beginning of my research I anticipated participants talking about how specific tactics were gendered and the subsequent utility of them, but the movement members I spoke with did not really talk about tactics in specific and if/when they did it was not in the context of ‘this was masculine’ or ‘this was more feminine’. Moreover, it was the leadership style that was highlighted as a key difference. Centering women’s leadership and a feminist leadership style was core to the success of the movement and was where the most fruitful conversation on gender emerged in my research.

Grassroots vs. Non-governmental Spaces

The two main movement spaces that came up frequently were the non-profit/ENGO space and grassroots spaces. The former tended to be viewed as having marching orders and therefore was influenced by, and reflected, patriarchy and masculinity. The latter, however, tended to be non-hierarchical and operated on a basis of cooperation, thus subverting patriarchal

organizing structures and leaning more towards a feminist approach to organizing. Leadership within grassroots spaces tended to be filled by women, but when one looks at the makeup of ENGOs that dynamic changes and leadership tends to be male-dominated despite a woman-majority of supporters. Within grassroots spaces, it was noted that there was an excellent level of accountability and that there was more flexibility to problem-solve on the fly.

Rebecca had worked for an organization that had both a male and female director where gendered encounters were not uncommon (personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). She noted how the director she reported to was very masculine in his approach, as he was reliant on “cold logic, unclear communication, very haphazard communication, and a lot of overbearing things,” (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). This particular director caused a lot of emotional pain for the employees and would then go to the female director. In turn, these actions meant that part of the female director’s work became mediating between the other director and their staff. Rebecca’s experience here is indicative of how hegemonic gender traits influence and inform an organization’s work space and the paid and unpaid labour taken up by men and women in these contexts. Holly voiced similar dynamics in the environmental organization she works for, expressing that the leadership style where she works is very masculine because they go ahead and do what they want or need to do without thorough consultation all the time. (personal communication, Nov 10, 2017).

Mothering as Motivation

While the desire to protect the water and land for future generations was quite apparent in my interviews, a direct connection to children only came up in my conversations with Indigenous women and one settler. Tess commented how in her experience “at the local level,

the people who were earliest to join the climate movement were all young moms, all in their thirties who were worried about the future for their kid,” (personal communication, Feb 22, 2018). Because of this direct motivation with motherhood, all of the events in Kenora were inclusive of families and various abilities, creating an “intent to be inclusive and diverse,” (Tess, personal communication, Feb 22, 2018).

However, part of the reason that mothering did not come up more often could be because only a couple of the people I interviewed had kids of their own. An explicit connection to motherhood and mothering could also be reflective of a shift away from maternal instincts being affiliated with motivation for activism. In fact, from 1998 to 2007, Stoddart and Tindall (2011) found that ecomaternalism was cited less as a motivating factor for environmental engagement and within discourse of women and the environment.

Feminist Leadership and Centering Women’s Voices and Experiences

There was an intentional and concerted effort to center female leadership, to have women at the forefront of the movement, and to have women-only organizing spaces. Strong female leadership was found in the small towns resisting rurally, on the frontlines of Indigenous communities, and at the national coalition level. While men were active participants, “women were at the heart of organizing” (Holly, personal communication, Nov 10, 2017). One of the women I spoke with said that when she thought of those involved in the struggle, it was at least 75% women who put their hearts on the line ranging from heads of organizations, community organizers, unofficial network conveners, and campaign staff (Claire, personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). A significant portion of the organizing against Energy East happened at the local, grassroots, community level which usually finds women more at the fore. By default of the type

of movement that was built and the way in which it was organized, a lot of it ended up being led by women and embodying a more feminine spirit. Stop Energy East Halifax, for example, was largely made up of a mix of older retired women and young women and as previously mentioned, the Kenora group was mostly comprised of young moms.

Feminist leadership was a theme that came up time and time again in many of my conversations with movement members. It was the guiding principles of inclusivity and accountability that shaped a significant portion of the resistance that took place. Because of this approach, collaborative strategizing became “a hallmark of success of this the campaign” (Claire, personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). Around the world, women are the first to be impacted by climate catastrophes, so to some research participants it is no surprise that women tend to be more involved in environmentalism and take up leadership roles within those spaces. Moreover, some of the women I spoke with highlighted how making decisions and getting things done was often easier with groups comprised entirely of women rather than mixed gender groups (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). This sentiment was echoed by another participant who discussed how it was easier to have supportive conversations with other female peers (Abbie, personal communication, Feb 23, 2018). In fact, some women in Québec actually created their own 5-à-7 (happy hour) group to vent about movement organizing in a space free from men and masculinity.

Another participant highlighted how it is more important to use a feminist analysis rather than rely solely on women to come forward. Leslie noted how just because you have a shared anatomy with someone does not mean you have a shared analysis (personal communication, March 19, 2018). She went on to discuss how movements, including the climate justice movement, can use feminist leadership: “[feminists] are leading around the world now. Different

styles of working together, building relationships, communicating, ...valuing the relationship for the long haul rather than just the immediate product,” (Leslie, personal communication, March 19, 2018). Experts such as Jessica Horn (2013) have also noted how “social movements – led by feminists, women’s and gender justice activists and their movements – have been pivotal in envisioning, instigating, making and sustaining...changes,” (p. 9). Epstein (1997) similarly asserts that groups that are headed by women tend to last longer than those led by men, in part because women tend to be better at delegating whereas men tend to assume more responsibility and get more agitated by setbacks.

Despite the prominence of female leadership and taking a feminist approach to movement building, not everyone involved in the fight against Energy East was feminist. Many research participants talked about how there is an assumption that working in a progressive space is understood to translate to being progressive on all fronts, but that unfortunately is not the reality. As one participant succinctly put it, “just because you’re in the climate movement and know climate change is bad doesn’t mean you unlearn misogyny along the way” (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). Indeed, there is a tendency within progressive movements and spaces to support the idea that everyone is already equal within progressive spaces, leading to the idea that movement groups do not need to acknowledge gendered power dynamics. Moreover, many social movements whose focus is not directly gender-based tend to view gender justice as a moving priority that can be dealt with once the initial objective of the movement is achieved (Horn, 2013).

Claire noted how:

In progressive movements there’s an assumption that people are progressive on all fronts. You can’t assume they’re all feminists. You only have to look at how

many female executive directors' there are in Canada, yet most of the staff are women. (Personal communication, Feb 12, 2018)

Because opportunities for advancement tend to be given to men, or men take those opportunities more quickly and frequently than women, men get more experience and therefore rise to high ranking positions faster and more often, as exemplified by Braedley's (2009) research discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, the work required to partake in paid organizing is grueling, exhausting, and precarious, making it more difficult for women wanting to start families to partake (Claire, personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). And because of a lack of paternal care plans and the expectations for women to stay at home, women can be put at a disadvantage if they wanted to participate more deeply in movement building.

Individual women also made a huge impact at key moments in the lead up the cancelling of the project. The pivotal interruption of the NEB hearings in Montréal included a woman (whose arrest garnered more media attention) and women chained themselves to pipelines in rural areas to highlight the amount of time it takes for pipeline response teams to realize something is wrong. One participant thought that the narrative and image of the 'vulnerable' woman who does the right thing helped push the narrative forward (Jenn, personal communication, March 12, 2018). The juxtaposition of a feminine body participating in an assertive direct action helped gain wider attention to the cause and gain sympathetic media coverage. Here, gender emerged as a key player in galvanizing the discussion around the pipeline.

Hegemonic Masculinities

As previously mentioned, many found that primarily working with only women made organizing much easier. Rebecca even noticed a distinct difference when men were involved because they “just talked a lot and didn’t do a lot” (personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). It was expressed a few times throughout my interviews that men could be quite belittling to women organizers, creating a discouraging atmosphere for movement participation. One participant noted at the national level of the climate movement (separate from the national coalition) there were certain men who would make some women organizers feel stupid and incompetent, despite being perfectly adept at organizing. She thought that this was because of “insidious types of masculinity where the assumption is that he needs to be involved in all decision making... but also... a real lack of trust in my ability to either make a plan or execute the plan” (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). This experience ended up deterring her from partaking in further national movement building, and she ended that part of our conversation by saying that she would “be willing to say that every climate settler group has had one problematic man,” (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018).

Horn (2013) also expresses how:

Historically, most progressive social movements have not embraced a commitment to consider gender inequality or challenge patriarchy from the outset. Often gender analysis and action begin in such movements when women activists start to question why they are being left out of movement visions, or not acknowledged in movement leadership when they have risked their lives and/or worked just as actively for movement goals. (p. 44)

Movements in general experience this uncritical stance on the privileges members hold. There are plenty of examples of men who are engaged as ‘allies’ in movements who are uncritical of

their own gender-based power and the leadership they take up, in addition to claiming space and resources initially set aside for women and other underrepresented groups (Horn, 2013).

The systemic belittling of women and their ideas influences the way women do or do not take up space within the climate movement. Claire pointed out how women are treated poorly at times because movement work and activism is “not seen as women’s work, by both men and women” (personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). Abbie also noted how she had noticed that those who take up the most space, and do so forcefully, at conferences and meetings are men (personal communication, Feb 23, 2018). In some instances, particularly with Indigenous women, more extreme measures are taken to attempt to silence women and their power. Azouwa, for example, was locked out of her home and had her kids taken away because she was outspoken against some of the political leadership in her community. This violation “prevented [her] from taking as much action as [she] would’ve wanted to” (personal communication, May 18, 2018). Horn (2013) has similar ideas in her work on gender and movements, as she notes that women are active movement leaders and aid greatly in mobilizing protests and creating inclusive visions of democracy yet are also critiqued by society at large because of the non-traditional roles they take up, at times resulting in post-action harassment.

There were often cases of women doing most of the work, but decision making being done by men, thus replicating the oppressive social structures of patriarchy within ‘progressive’ climate justice spaces. There was a sense of entitlement by men to be heard at the expense of the group’s operations (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). Women within these spaces do a lot of “unvalued labour” and their ideas are credited to other participants, mostly by men, and are interrupted while speaking (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). Holly experienced similar dynamics as well, noting how men were taking up too much space or

making others feel uncomfortable (personal communication, Nov 10, 2017). Rebecca noted how this is:

A real barrier, especially in mainstream environmental organizations. It's a real problem that brilliant women get pushed out because they don't yell as loud. And then if they do they're called a bitch. It's a barrier because it's taking away a lot of knowledge. (Personal communication, Feb 21, 2018)

This type of behavior did deter some from participating, as inner politics took a turn resulting in some people not wanting to participate in organizing because of other people's involvement.

These gender dynamics are unfortunately not unique to pipeline activism, let alone environmentalism. The discussion around who takes up space is a dynamic within activism more broadly, and patriarchy as an entire system, as men are socially conditioned to take up more space and to take it up forcefully. As a few participants noted, women tend to hold back on expressing themselves unless they feel they are an expert which in turn leads to men taking up more space since they are not socialized to be as cautious about being outspoken; it takes a lot more to convince women that they are, in fact, experts and that they do hold important knowledge (Claire, personal communication, Feb 12, 2018; Jenn, personal communication, March 12, 2018). These sentiments were echoed by other interviewees who noted that "women at large are taught by society that we're worthless and our ideas and our work are worthless" (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018).

Gender and Intersectionality

Gender cannot be discussed in a vacuum void of an intersectional analysis. The mainstream environmental movement is incredibly white and tends to have male leadership at

the national and ENGO levels. As one participant shared, the climate and environmental movement is dominated by cis white people (Holly, personal communication, Nov 10, 2017), which is a sentiment reflected in academic work as well (Epstein, 1997). Race emerged as a site of movement tension, particularly around settler-Indigenous relations. When asked if gendered power dynamics impacted planning, Holly noted how those issues cannot be centered solely on gender because racial dynamics also play a role in how movements are shaped (personal communication, Nov 10, 2017). Within social justice circles, people tend to know more about oppression, colonialism, and sexism, for example, but that crucial analysis is sometimes lost in the climate movement because there can be a sole focus on the environment and the environmental movement's mostly white base (Jenn, personal communication, March 12, 2018). Especially within the context of decolonization, to view the environmental movement as solely about the environment negates its connection to Indigenous claims to territory and sovereignty.

Trans gender identities only came up in a few of my conversations, mostly with Indigenous women talking about the important role of two-spirit people. In the interviews with settlers where it was talked about, it was cited as another area where the environmental and climate movement need to be doing more. One person noted how there are very few queer folks in the environmental movement because it is so cisheteronormative and very white (Jenn, personal communication, March 12, 2018). A number of people I talked with did highlight their desire to do more anti-oppressive and decolonial work within their climate justice spaces. However, because those who are able to participate in environmental movement work tend to have a lot of privilege, utilizing an anti-oppressive framework can at times experience a lot of pushback. Rebecca similarly expressed how "if there's pushback when you're privileged, you

feel like you're oppressed. I get it, it's difficult. But that not's an excuse," (personal communication, Feb 21, 2018).

There is a strong need for furthering intersectional work within the climate movement, as at times the multiple forms of marginalization that actors experience are not recognized, leading to a failure to address these issues, as "movements still grapple with building and acting in intersectional ways," (Horn, 2013, p. 60). Ensuring inclusivity lessens the likelihood of movements fractioning off and increases the chances of strong alliances forming. Amnesty International, for example, who are currently a strong advocate for gender justice, equity, and equality, were hesitant in the early 1990s to including women's rights in their work because of the fear that it would dilute their overall message (Horn, 2013). This example illustrates the inability that exists at times to view gender as a core pillar in social justice work if a movement or group's focus is on broader issues.

The Occupy Movement also exemplifies the tensions that arise when ignoring intersectionality. Occupy was mostly based on class identities, and widely ignored the intersection of gender with class. Women, particularly women of color, created feminist caucuses within the movement to highlight women's issues that were otherwise being ignored (Sahasranaman, 2013). Angela Davis, when speaking to Occupy as part of their learning programming, urged the movement to think about how we can be together as the 99% "in unity that is not simplistic and oppressive" but rather "in a unity that is complex and emancipatory" (as quoted in Talcott & Collins, 2012, p. 485). Davis' council to Occupy highlights the foundational need for intersectionality within movements. The "complex unity" she refers to speaks to the importance of understanding how gender, race, ability, religion, etc. influence one's experience of classed identity. Her statement transcends Occupy to all movements.

As Talcott and Collins (2012) note, “women’s insertion of gender discourses thus opens up the experiences of the 99[%], illuminating how gender, race, immigration, sexuality, motherhood, and other social identities form the base of the 99[%],” (p. 495). Without that analysis, the liberation that movements like Occupy wish to bring to fruition will never happen because of its inability to understand the nuanced and intersectional makeup that creates various unique experiences of class for its membership. Vinita Sahasranaman (2013) rightfully asserts that, “for feminists, challenging patriarchy within Occupy is critical to its success” (p. 2), for if one is to successfully challenge Wall Street one must also challenge patriarchy. Similarly, the climate justice movement cannot achieve its goal of ending fossil fuels without understanding the multitude of identities within their movement and how it influences participation, organizing, and the visions members have of a post-carbon and sustainable economy.

Gender and Indigenous Resistance

Within Indigenous communities, men and women have distinct and equally important roles. Cedar Woman talked about how it is the duty of women and youth to be on the frontline and to be the voice of the movement, whereas young men and men are warriors there to protect, (personal communication, Feb 28, 2018). On the frontline, everyone has a duty and gift they carry with them. Tess noted the importance of waterkeepers as key mobilizers and organizers on the ground (personal communication, Feb 22, 2018). In Kenora, for example, a lot of the teaching and community building was because of waterkeepers, who held water ceremonies and taught others about the importance of the ceremonies and of water in the context of Energy East. Similar teachings, ceremonies, and walks happened with participants I spoke with in Québec and on the East Coast, all of which were led by Indigenous women. Abbie also noted how the

important and central role Indigenous women have in the climate movement “impacted the gender balance and listening,” further showcasing how Indigenous women are in many ways the foundation leading the resistance (personal communication, Feb 23, 2018).

Two-spirit Indigenous peoples also have a key role in land and water protection. As Cedar Woman shared with me, the voice of two-spirit peoples is the most important because of their embodiment of multiple genders simultaneously (personal communication, Feb 28, 2018). Moreover, water walks were always led by women, youth, and elders, and in some small communities was the main way that opposition was led by women.

Reflecting on Idle No More and Indigenous movements more broadly, Clayton Thomas-Muller (2014) notes that:

Our grassroots movement for energy and climate justice was being led by our Native women and, as such, our movement was just as much about fighting patriarchy and asserting as a core of our struggle the sacred feminine creative principle. (p. 367)

Indigenous women have been on the frontlines of numerous fights for the land and water, such as the fight against other pipelines like Dakota Access and Kinder Morgan, the Idle No More movement, fracking in Elsipogtog, deforestation in the Amazon, mining in Guatemala, and more.

In sum, the hegemonic socialization to which we have all been subject was reflected in the roles and work that men and women did in the movement against Energy East, as well as in the types of actions that were taken. Simultaneously, a lot of those expectations were intentionally subverted to make space for women-led and Indigenous-led leadership and

organizing. Some women did, however, lean in to the more domestic duties often affiliated with femininity, such as note-taking or cooking for conferences.

The deep structure of most movements reflects mainstream power dynamics that are influenced by gendered hierarchies and relations:

There are many examples of progressive social movement where women play active roles by making up the majority of the movement membership or acting as movement leaders, and yet they do not have an explicit gender focus. This underscores the point that the presence of women in a movement does not guarantee that they or the movement will have an explicit focus on women's rights and gender justice. Gendered politics in a movement need to be built.

(Horn, 2013, p. 46)

Indeed, there are still many common challenges, such as “recognition of gender equality as a key issue...; gendered attitudes and behaviors within the deep structure...; resistance to tackling gender power relations...; and the problems of sustaining gender-just changes in the longer term,” (Horn, 2013, p. 51), that exist within the environmental and climate movement when it comes to integrating gender justice and equity into organizing and mobilizing for change.

However, the concerted effort to have women, especially marginalized women, at the fore of the movement was successful. It remains unclear from my conversations with research participants whether or not gender played a decisive role in the movements victory. Had the group in Kenora been comprised of fathers instead of young moms would their intervention have been more or less successful? Would the outcome of high-level policy analysis from ENGOs been different if more were headed by women? These types of gendered questions are still unanswered.

As was discussed in this chapter, and will be further explored in the next chapter, gender did influence the way the movement operated. Tactics varied by size and makeup of the group and changed from grassroots to NGO spaces. Rallies, marches, birddogging, NEB interventions, op-eds and policy analysis, theatre, town halls, stickering loonies, craft beer, direct action, petitioning, and door knocking, amongst others, were core tactics employed in the ultimately successful four-year fight against Energy East.

The next chapter assesses the role that gender did or did not play in the pipeline fight. It then moves to an analysis of what my participants discussed when asked what should be done to make the climate movement more equitable and gender-equal moving forward.

CHAPTER FOUR: Concluding thoughts on next steps for inclusivity and assessing gender's role in resistance

As demonstrated in previous chapters, gender has great influence on people's lived experiences and how they navigate the world around them, including in social movements and activism. Based on the literature and my own research, I have found that men and women hold different spaces within movements, in turn gendering those spaces based on affiliated traits. For example, women tend to be better at relationship-building while men are usually more individualistic. Grassroots spaces tend to be viewed as more 'feminine,' whereas high level policy spaces are more 'masculine' because of their hierarchical leadership structure.

This chapter assesses the influence of gender in the different tactics employed by the movement to stop the Energy East pipeline, as well as discusses next steps that should be done to make the climate justice movement more gender equitable and inclusive. As was highlighted in the previous chapter, the activists that I talked to identified a desire to do more anti-oppressive and decolonial work within the climate movement. Other areas that came up in conversation about what needs to change in the movement to make it more inclusive were diversified funding models and ensuring equitable participation.

As aforementioned, it became increasingly clear after my first few interviews that people in the movement are fully cognizant of a need to be more inclusive and diverse within climate justice organizing. I started asking participants towards the end of our conversation about what they thought needed to be done to make the climate movement more inclusive and successful moving forward. The section that follows concludes my research by assessing the role that gender did or did not play in the ultimate victory of the fight against Energy East. Many of my

research participants did not feel that gender played a decisive role defeating the pipeline. Yet, feminist leadership and gendered spaces were also highlighted as key areas of success.

Ultimately, gender was influential in the outcome, but in more covert than explicit ways.

Next steps for a more inclusive and successful climate justice movement

A need to break through government jargon

While the tactics used in the fight against Energy East certainly did work, Abbie highlighted the need to at times put “strategy over tactics” and that the movement has “to find a way to break the double speak that is currently happening in the Canadian landscape” (personal communication, Feb 23, 2018). Groups like Stop Energy East Halifax tried to derail the climate savior image that the Liberal Party puts forward, but more work needs to be done to chip away at the fake identity the current government uses. In order for meaningful and impactful climate mitigation and adaptation to take place, governments need to step up and do the necessary policy work to stop fossil fuel extraction. As one of the world’s largest producers of oil, Canada has a huge role to play in ensuring that fossil fuels stay where they need to in order to have even a slight chance of salvaging a livable planet – in the ground.

While Energy East is dead, there are still other pipeline projects approved for construction and operation, such as Line 3, and others, like the Trans Mountain pipeline, are in legal limbo. The Liberal government, who approved both projects, has gone beyond the economy-environment dichotomy to say that they fundamentally go hand in hand. While technically true, the framing that the Liberals have used is counter to climate science. As mentioned in the first chapter, the energy sector with the most viable, sustainable, and employable future is renewables. In this sense, the environment and the economy do very much

go hand in hand. But the Liberals have claimed that the tar sands and the environment go hand in hand, and many people believe them. The current government in power does believe climate change is real and does have climate actions put in place. But their approval of further expanding the tar sands undermines any mitigation and adaptation they put in place. Trying to figure out and navigate effective campaigning that pokes holes through the Liberal's fallacious logic will be crucial.

The need for anti-oppression work

The biggest area for improvement that many participants noted was on anti-oppression. There is a great need to examine internalized patriarchy and colonialism at both the individual and movement levels. The belittling of women that participants spoke about in the previous chapter is a result of the internalization of oppressive systems and points of view, including misogyny, patriarchy, colonialism, and sexism. Moreover, the fact that mainstream environmentalism is mostly comprised of white people in turn means that the voices most amplified are white people, mostly men. Centering white voices and opinions negates the true diversity within the movement and further marginalizes the voices of those first impacted and most impacted. Many of the activists I spoke with highlighted their intention of using an anti-oppressive and decolonial lens in their work but found it difficult to scale to the movement as a whole. They also said that while they see the importance of self-education on these topics, not everyone does.

Rebecca noted how there is a responsibility to have systems in place to have anti-oppressive frameworks and accountability instilled within the movement (personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). Many groups agree, including a coalition in Québec with over

250,000 members. Jenn explained how there is an intention within the coalition to hold gender sensitivity trainings and workshops on decolonization (personal communication, March 12, 2018). The problem is when the groups meet, they are pressed for time and so they have yet to be able to actually schedule in these workshops, despite a self-identified need and interest, reflecting Horn's (2013) documentation of movements whose focus is not explicitly on gender viewing gender as a moving part that is not core to the movement's work otherwise. But in order to make the movement more sustainable and inclusive, a meaningful prioritization of those sorts of trainings must be central at larger gatherings. It has been found that anti-racism workshops have led to a positive disruption and awareness of white identity, as white people tend to assume that only everyone else (read: non-white folk) has an "ethnic" identity (Piatelli, 2009).

Deborah Piatelli (2009) asserts that within movements there is a sense of assimilation to care about the single cause of the movement – the movements "common good" (p. 3). She goes on to say that the common good tends to be defined by the dominant group in a given space, which denies the reality of oppressed groups in the same space by uplifting the ideas and experiences of the privileged (Piatelli, 2009). Because the environmental movement tends to be white and economically well-off, the dominant views of how to be environmentally conscious cater to those ideals and lifestyles. Instead, what needs to happen is a shift towards systems-thinking and addressing the root causes of climate change and pipeline construction which cannot be found in recycling or turning lights off when you are not in the room. For many Indigenous peoples and groups, climate activism is part and parcel of decolonization and a return to the land.

A lot of this work is going to be emotional, as Rebecca pointed out (personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). Jenn similarly questioned her own ability to be a better ally and

indicated that she “wants to work on anti-oppression, but when you’re in a system it’s hard to move outside that” (personal communication, March 12, 2018). Cedar Woman views part of the solution as a “need to reconcile with ourselves and our relatives” (personal communication, Feb 28, 2018). In this sense, there is a deep fundamental need to do the hard and emotional work of reconciliation and decolonization as settlers, and to use that to in turn build alliances and solidarity with Indigenous communities on the front line of climate change in Canada (and around the world).

Many participants also discussed how people do not realize their privilege, especially with male and settler identities (Abbie, personal communication, Feb 23, 2018; Holly, personal communication, Nov 10, 2017; Jenn, personal communication, March 12, 2018; Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). As Piatelli (2009) writes on her research with the peace movement, “by ignoring race and class, whites discount the impact whiteness and class status has on interpersonal relationships and organizing practices that gloss over difference” (p. 110). To ‘gloss over difference’ means to ignore a diversity of experience that would strengthen a movement as a whole and to work solely with a lens of whiteness or masculinity is unsustainable and unhealthy. In order for the climate movement to make meaningful relationships with frontline communities, there needs to be an unpacking of privilege and what it means, particularly within the context of climate change.

Parallels can be drawn between work done within the peace movement in the United States and the climate movement in Canada. Many peace activists are white, and racially marginalized members had noted that most middle-class white people joined as a way to make themselves feel good, rather than intentionally challenging power structures and addressing inequality (Piatelli, 2009). Similarly, the climate movement needs to challenge the root causes of

pipeline infrastructure and climate change systematically, instead of just being reactive to government decisions or individual projects. While there are some groups doing the difficult work of unravelling Canada's environmental narrative and challenging interlocking systems of oppression, such as Indigenous Climate Action, the more mainstream organizations and groups still do not connect with marginalized communities nor do they intentionally discuss issues of capitalism, consumption and production, or colonialism within the context of the climate crisis.

The way that white people experience climate change and interact with the topic is vastly different than other racialized people do. Definitions of community work and activism shifts depending on one's life experience and interactions with the subject matter at hand. To ignore those differences and focus on the voices who yell the loudest or who are most represented (usually middle-class white men), movements recreate the very power structures that created the need for activism and mobilization in the first place. By remaining insular and unaware of what other groups are doing can mean that privileged groups ignore and/or replicate the work that is being done in marginalized communities. To take leadership from others, and to pass the mic and amplify non-white voices in particular, creates a stronger and more diverse movement that shares power rather than replicates oppressive social structures.

Shifts in language to incorporate land acknowledgements in meetings, conferences, and actions, as well as pronoun check-ins are two very small ways in which the climate justice movement can work towards being more inclusive and culturally aware. These two examples would help remove potential barriers for non-binary folks to participate, in addition to starting the process of, and conversations around, decolonization. Ensuring inclusivity and accessibility of language is vital to ensuring participation. If meetings and organizing are done solely through white middle class vocabulary, a movement's ability to retain non-white non-middle-class

members, for example, is compromised. Particularly with climate organizing, it is important to understand how climate change and environmentalism is often framed and understood within a Eurocentric world view that is, at times, incoherent with Indigenous knowledge systems.

In my own experience organizing against the Trans Mountain project, for example, we were called out by an Indigenous elder for using colonial language to describe the issue of climate change. To her, our language of ‘planet earth’ was incoherent with her view of the earth as Mother – a living entity rather than a scientific thing. Indigenous Climate Action also works on climate language and is in the process of creating a climate change toolkit for Indigenous communities. Part of this toolkit will include local language to describe climate change from a position of Indigenous knowledge rather than just Eurocentric understandings. Moreover, environmental racism impacts different groups differently and to ignore those viewpoints undermines the environmental movement as a whole.

There is also a need to come to the table with vulnerability and compassion – to work together instead of trying to constantly lobby other organizations or members in the movement. Activists tend to yell things and yell them loudly. Claire mentioned how the ‘loud-yelling-switch’ is not always turned off when movement members speak to one another, leading to unproductive conversations about moving forward (personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). Activism and organizations are quite entrenched in an adversarial style that demands a level of institutional change. When people feel welcomed and encouraged to express opinions and ask questions without judgement, movements can grow and reach new demographics who previously were left out, whether intentional or not.

The need for equal access of experience and resources

When it comes to ensuring equitable and diverse participation in conferences, for example, quotas work. One of the women I interviewed said that when she organizes panels or conferences, she makes sure that it is 60% women (Claire, personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). Rebecca asserted how organizations need to recognize that having space for women is critical because it is within those spaces where those challenging and emotional issues can be discussed, (personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). She went on to say that it is “hard to have those spaces with men because they get defensive” (Rebecca, personal communication, Feb 21, 2018). Claire, reflecting on why it seems that it is also women doing most of the labour in movements, said that it is, “in part because we never talk about it” (personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). By ensuring more women are attending meetings and conferences, more honest conversations about oppressive movement habits can be discussed and worked through more productively than if men outnumbered women and other marginalized communities.

The issue of confidence arises here again. As discussed in the previous chapter, many women do not feel properly equipped to take on leadership roles or to speak up, whereas men will take chances regardless of whether or not they have all the necessary qualifications. In order to get more women at the fore, there needs to be a concerted effort to center those voices. Jenn mentioned how a lot of women she knows feel uncomfortable being interviewed or that they do not have the confidence to think they know enough to speak on an issue, while men are more willing to give things a try regardless of their knowledge base (personal communication, March 12, 2018). Ensuring women and other under-represented groups get the necessary trainings will help in broadening the representation of the movement.

Another issue when it comes to equitable participation is how different genders have different access to training and work. Jenn talked about the cycle of women not doing certain

types of work, which in turn means they do not get the necessary training, meaning that they do not get the same experiences as men: “the end justifies the means – so it is easier to have a trained man at the forefront because they have the training and experience already,” (personal communication, March 12, 2018). Leslie and Tess similarly mentioned that much of the exclusion that occurs is because of a lack of resources and money (personal communication, March 19, 2018; personal communication, Feb 22, 2018). Women tend to have less access to resources and power, resulting in less representation. The funding structure is a big problem precisely because the ways that people access resources and money is not dictated by the movement, but rather by those who have the resources and money. As Tess notes, the people who have the money are old white men, which is not reflective of the demographic makeup of the climate movement (personal communication, Feb 22, 2018). Because funding is based on a rigid system with many levels of accountability and authorization, grassroots spaces, which are mostly female-led, are doubted by funders (Leslie, personal communication, March 19, 2018). In this way, the funding structure is in and of itself a hierarchical and colonized system.

What led to the end of Energy East? Weighing the successes of different tactics and the role played by gender

Gender did not necessarily play a clear-cut, decisive role in defeating the pipeline. It definitely influenced the way the movement was organized because of the focus on feminist leadership, the central role of Indigenous women, and the gendered dynamics that emerged in meetings and various spaces. Masculinity and femininity as gendered identities were mostly irrelevant for mobilizing, with the possible exclusion of the groups primarily comprised of mothers. Rather, it was gendered traits that were levied for success, although whether that was

intentional or not remains unclear. Ultimately, a balance of approaches was needed to successfully defeat Energy East. As Holly said, moving at the speed of trust and centering nurturance in relationships is vital for the long term, but a movement also needs the dominance and directness of groups that are able to bring it all together (personal communication, Nov 10, 2017). Assertiveness is vital to challenging systems of power, in conjunction with creating a long game strategy built on respect and relationships. Leslie echoed the importance of diverse tactics, saying how it “wasn’t only the tactic of writing important reports and media releases. It was talking to people along the route” (personal communication, March 19, 2018). In other words, the ultimate success of the movement was not solely dependent on masculine or feminine strategies or spaces; rather, it was the simultaneous use of both.

Clear Areas of Gendered Influence

The disruption of assumed feminine behavior did help garner more media attention for certain actions, such as the intervention at the National Energy Board (NEB) panel hearing in Montréal. Having Indigenous women at the fore of the movement also disrupted settler-colonial assumptions of Indigeneity and patriarchal dominance. Within Indigenous prophecy, what is happening now is about a restoration of balance between masculine and feminine energies. The resistance to Energy East was part of that process of trying to rebalance and decolonize. Spaces and places of Indigenous resistance was where gender played the clearest and most direct role in organizing and tactics used. There are cultural, political, social, economic, and spiritual roles for men, women, and two-spirit people in Indigenous communities that informs their place in mobilization. When it comes to protecting water, Indigenous women are at the fore leading, which was important in the defeat of Energy East.

As earlier discussed, there was a concerted effort to promote women's leadership and to have a feminist approach to leadership built on relationships and an intersectional analysis. Leadership was the area that was most identified as being influenced by gender and feminism, which tends to be affiliated with the feminine by default of semantics and the theory's historic objective. In a literal sense, a lot of the key organizers and leaders in the movement against the pipeline were women. But beyond that, it was a feminist ethic built on trust and an intersectional approach that had the most impact on stopping the pipeline from a movement perspective because of its ability to create relationships with people previously disengaged with the issue.

The importance of relationship building came up in nearly every interview. When talking about her experience working on the theatre of the oppressed play that was toured in Québec, Abbie was more involved in facilitation, acting, and the process of creating the play, all of which was based on relationship building (personal communication, Feb 23, 2018). She "noticed a lot of other women in the same roles," exemplifying the type of movement labour that is usually taken up by women (Abbie, personal communication, Feb 23, 2018). Claire echoed Abbie, saying that Energy East organizing involved a lot of community engagement and that "that kind of engagement finds women at the fore, whether it's touching base with or making relationships or rising up to take on a leadership role" (personal communication, Feb 12, 2018).

The one place that showcased hegemonic gendered dynamics influenced by mainstream masculinity and femininity was the way that men and women took up space in discussions, meetings, and conferences. Many of my interviews included discussions of how men spoke more and spoke over others and tended to dominate conversations, whereas women tended to be quieter and had their ideas dismissed. These dynamics replicate the socialization of men and women into hegemonic masculinity and femininity. It exemplifies the relational power structures

created by gender and sustained by traditional gender norm as relations, as men in these circumstances felt a sense of entitlement to dominate a conversation, forcefully interject with their opinion, and speak up confidently regardless of their level of expertise. Women, on the other hand, were the ones who were spoken over and sometimes lacked the confidence to voice their opinion for fear of not being enough.

Motivation for engagement did appear to reflect the literature on environmental activism. Academics such as Epstein (1997) and Stoddart and Tindall (2011) have found that women tend to make up the majority of support for environmental causes. Because different gender identities are socialized differently, men and women have different engagement levels and interest in social causes. Claire mentioned how polls of crosstabs of gender identity and other demographic features showcase women and girls caring more about climate change than men and boys (personal communication, Feb 12, 2018). Concern for future generations, which showcase a stronger ethic of care and altruism, are considered to be more feminine traits, which were also reflected in the conversations I had, and the literature previously discussed.

Tess also referenced the importance of the environmental impact as a factor in successful recruitment (personal communication, Feb 22, 2018). She noticed how because of an increased level of awareness about climate change and the fear of polluting local waterways more people became engaged. The narrative of protecting water and land for the future is, in fact, gendered. As discussed in previous chapters, the motivation for engagement in environmental activism to protect the future is usually held by women and is seen as a feminine trait because of the altruistic ethic of care affiliated with the concern for future generations. And since the water angle and protect-the-environment-for-future-generations angle had the most traction in the fight

against Energy East, it could be argued that gendered motivations did help build momentum and expand movement membership, leading to the defeat of the project.

Abbie said that while “there was an intention of having women at the forefront [and] women only organizing,” she was unsure about whether the message that it communicated ended up being a decisive part of the victory (personal communication, Feb 23, 2018). Others also expressed a hesitancy to declare the victory against Energy East as defined by gendered dynamics or the influence of gender more broadly. Many of the women I spoke with were actually unsure if gender played any ultimate role in the success of the movement. Some questioned whether it had any influence in how the NEB hearings went, outside of the direct actions that were taken, and others recognized that the environmental movement tends to have its space taken up by men but were unsure how that influenced or changed the narrative or campaign designs.

Rather than binary gender identities influencing the climate movement and the fight against the Energy East pipeline, it was gendered qualities. The movement was neither entirely hegemonically masculine, nor was it hegemonically feminine. It therefore seems that while gender did influence dynamics within the fight against Energy East, it was not the deciding factor in the ultimate success of the resistance tactics employed at both the local and national levels.

Non-Gendered Successful Resistance Tactics

Other non-gendered factors played a large role in the movement’s victory. The sheer size of the project was ironically a core reason for its ultimate defeat. Being able to link the issue directly to people’s backyards was helpful. Leslie said that the “driving force was people

organizing all along the route and coordinating all along the line” (personal communication, March 19, 2018). Because it impacted so many Canadians, it was easier to make a local argument for an industry that so often feels out of sight and out of mind. Organizers and activists were able to directly talk about the threats to local water supplies and environmental destruction in a way that is usually isolated to the West coast. There were many more communities directly impacted by this project because it crossed five provinces, compared to only one or two like most Canadian pipeline projects.

Having a focused vision of the campaign was crucial. At the local levels that focused on municipalities, the focus was solely to end Energy East. The focus was important because “if we’re including everything and taking on everyone else’s campaign, you can’t get anything done” (Leslie, personal communication, March 19, 2018). The national strategizing was vital for the focused nature of the campaign, as it “really helped to have coordinated strategies and information sharing” (Leslie, personal communication, March 19, 2018).

Part of the victory was the broader political and economic climate Canada was in, as the success was also due to the fact that other pipeline projects were proposed and approved in Canada (such as Trans Mountain and Line 3), in addition to the price of oil at the time of TransCanada’s decision to scrap the project. However, as Greg mentioned there is a clear relationship between the economic and political feasibility of a project and opposition, as the grassroots and business communities are “coexisting and reinforcing” (personal communication, Jan 17, 2018). He explained that a “pipeline becomes unprofitable because of the future, and the future is shaped by how policy makers are forced to adopt measures. If policy makers didn’t care about greenhouse gases then business would be booming,” and that “the fact that it was cancelled

because of economics is reflective of efforts to make it not economically viable” (Greg, personal communication, Jan 17, 2018).

According to Holly, what stopped the project:

[W]ere organizations at a regional and national level that could see the complexity and see a way to unite all of those people with an ask that was climate specific.

We were able to break the NEB system by continually chipping away to the point that the system was not able to assess modern energy projects in a good way. It wasn’t a moment in specific... just constant chipping away. (Personal communication, Nov 10, 2017)

It ultimately was a diversity of tactics combined with unrelenting and diligent support across the country that successfully defeated TransCanada’s Energy East pipeline. Rebecca reflected how it was “so many different groups with so many different approaches. Grassroots anarchist organizing, NGO organizing, municipal action... [they] all set up so many road blocks and delayed it for so long. Relentless action by so many people made it possible” (personal communication, Feb 21, 2018) As Greg notes, “it was cancelled because it was a bad idea and it was becoming increasingly obvious that it was” (personal communication, Jan 17, 2018). While industry and government deny it, the social movement response to the project across its route was a without a doubt one of the driving forces behind making the pipeline look bad and economically unviable, leading to TransCanada pulling the plug on Energy East.

Concluding thoughts

TransCanada’s proposed Energy East pipeline mobilized a whole new slew of activists. Indeed, my own entry into climate justice was because of this project. Across Canada, groups

and organizations mobilized on the local and national level to create a coordinated front against the project. The movement was diverse, but mostly led by women, with some spaces being dominated by men. Tactics varied from traditional movement strategies such as protests and petitioning, to newer and more creative forms of resistance including the use of theatre and NEB apply-a-thons to be intervenors.

Gender did, in fact, influence the ways in which people engaged in resistance. The influence of patriarchal power structures was apparent and did deter some women from participating. However, there was also a concerted effort to center feminist leadership and women's leadership, particularly in Indigenous communities. Specific gendered performances, as theorized by Butler (1990), were not levied to garner success. While some groups were mostly comprised of moms, it is unclear if that demographic makeup influenced the group's success in the NEB interventions or with other local resistance strategies. Similarly, it is unclear if the gendered makeup of the leadership made any instrumental difference in the outcome of the movement's fight. Based on my interviews, it did not seem like specific gender traits or identities were intentionally levied for success. Rather, it seems to have been the centering of gendered approaches to movement mobilization that were the most successful.

The area where gender influenced the movement the most was in the gendered influence of specific spaces. Non-profit and NGO groups were seen by many of my participants to be more masculine because the assertive direction given in a top-down manner, while grassroots and community groups were seen as more feminine because of their stronger ethic of care and emphasis on relationship building and moving at the speed of trust. Again, however, it is unclear that if NGOs were more feminine, for example, if it would have made a huge difference in the length of the battle or outcome. So while gender did have clear influence how people engaged

with the movement and how movement spaces were structured, it remains unclear whether gender played a truly decisive role in the defeat against Energy East. This gap in my thesis sheds light on avenues for future research, in addition to understanding how other power structures, such as race, class, and dis/ability, influence movement mobilization within climate justice spaces.

As has been thoroughly explored in this research, gender influences the way people interact with and participate in social movements and activism. At a time where there is a real threat of runaway climate change, courts siding with Indigenous groups and activists, and governments still hell-bent on expanding resource-intensive, environment-destroying, and Indigenous rights-violating projects, understanding the ways in which people engage in mobilizing and organizing offers key insights into how to strengthen the climate movement for more victories. In an era where climate change is one of, if not the, most pressing issue facing the planet, it is crucial to effectively mobilize and effectively structure resistance for more wins.

Keystone XL was initially defeated in 2015. Energy East was defeated in 2017. And in 2018, the Federal Court quashed the government's approval of the twinning of the Trans Mountain pipeline. Momentum is building across the world as the realities of climate change hit, and more people become aware of the impacts it is having. But destructive projects such as Muskrat Falls, Line 3, Site C, Alton Gas, and more are still on the table. Understanding promising practices is important for ensuring future success, as is reflecting on what needs to be changed to be more inclusive. My thesis sheds light on how people were mobilized and engaged in climate justice work and offers insight to avenues of change to garner more success in the future, in addition to showcasing what has worked well.

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Annex 1 – List of interviews

Name	Date	Length	Location	Method
Holly	Nov 10, 2017	39:07	Ottawa	In-person
Greg	Jan 17, 2018	26:22	Ottawa	In-person
Claire	Feb 12, 2018	36:30	Ottawa	In-person
Rebecca	Feb 21, 2018	54:37	Halifax	Skype
Tess	Feb 22, 2018	41:05	Kenora	Skype
Abbie	Feb 23, 2018	53:58	Montreal	Skype
Cedar Woman	Feb 26, 2018	1:23:13	Winnipeg	Phone
Jenn	March 12, 2018	48:38	Montreal	Skype
Leslie	March 19, 2018	38:40	Ottawa	In-person
Azouwa	May 18, 2018	42:34	Winnipeg	Phone

Annex 2 – Ethics Certificate

File Number: 06-17-14

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 08/30/2017



Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Certificate of Ethics Approval

Social Science and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Susan	Spronk	Social Sciences / SIDGS	Supervisor
Lisa	Gunn	Social Sciences / SIDGS	Student Researcher

File Number: 06-17-14

Type of Project: Master's Thesis

Title: Putting gender on the line: Understanding the role of gender in social movement resistance to the Energy East pipeline

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
08/30/2017	08/29/2018	Ia

(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)

Special Conditions / Comments:

N/A



Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the application for ethical approval for the above named research project as of the Ethics Approval Date indicated for the period above and subject to the conditions listed the section above entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the study the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the study (e.g. change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment documentation, should be submitted to this office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: <http://recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie/submissions-and-reviews>.

Please submit an annual status report to the Protocol Officer 4 weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to either close the file or request a renewal of ethics approval. This document can be found at: <http://recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie/submissions-and-reviews>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Annex 3 – Recruitment Script

Hello, my name is Lisa Gunn. I am a Master's student at the University of Ottawa, studying international development and feminist studies. I am conducting a Master's thesis on the role of gender in social movement resistance to the Energy East pipeline (my principle research question is: to what extent, if any, did gender influence the social movement resistance of Trans Canada's proposed Energy East pipeline?). I am looking to speak to a variety of people involved in the climate movement and the fight to stop the Energy East pipeline – ranging from organizers, to movement members, to leaders and communities on the front line of climate change. If possible, I would like to recruit you to be my research participant for a semi-structured interview of 40-60 minutes. Participation is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw at any moment. If you choose to withdraw from the study, information you have provided will not be used in the research. During the interview, if you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, you are under no obligation to answer them. All information will be kept confidential, and at your request, your anonymity will be guaranteed. If I am provided with your consent, the interviews will be audio-recorded for the purposes of ensuring proper recording and transcription of data. Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or e-mail.

Annex 4 – Consent Form

Consent Form

Title of the study: Putting gender on the line: Understanding the role of gender in social movement resistance to the Energy East pipeline

Principal Investigator:

name: Lisa Gunn

Research Supervisor:

name: Susan Spronk

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above-mentioned Master's thesis research study, conducted by Lisa Gunn.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore how understandings and performances of gender influence social movement resistance to Trans Canada's proposed Energy East pipeline.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of giving a 40-60 minute semi-structured interview to provide an overview of my opinions regarding the use of gender in resistance strategy and movement building around stopping the Energy East pipeline. It is possible that I will participate in a follow-up interview.

Benefits: My participation in this study will help contribute to the scholarly understanding of the gendered dimensions of social movement resistance, specifically to the Energy East pipeline, and help a Master's student with her thesis.

Confidentiality and anonymity: While there are no perceived risks to participating in this study, I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. However, I do understand that discussions of environmental destruction, colonialism, and legal repercussions from movement actions can be triggering. Should you wish to refrain from answering questions for your own well-being or if you think information you might share would put in some sort of risk, you are under no obligation to answer. I understand that the contents will be used only for the purposes of writing a Master's thesis and will not be shared with other researchers or organisations.

I consent to recording this interview:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

For the purposes of this investigation, I wish to be identified in the following manner:

- ☐ By name, title and organization
- ☐ As an anonymous participant (by organization only)

Data: Electronic data will be kept on principal investigator laptop which is password protected, the field notebook will be kept in a locker, located at the investigator's residence. Data will be destroyed five years after expected completion of the project (December 2021).

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions before July 2018, when the project is expected to be completed. If I decide I no longer want some of the information I provided to be used in the research, I can retract the data at any point during the research timeline. If I decide to withdraw from the study, any data will be destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Lisa Gunn of the School of International Development and Global Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, which is research being done under the supervision of Susan Spronk.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the principal investigator and her research supervisor through contact information attached to this form.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa

A copy of this statement is available for me to keep for my records.

Participant's signature: *(Signature)* Date: *(Date)*

Researcher's signature: *(Signature)* Date: *(Date)*

Principal Investigator and Supervisor Contact Information

Principal Investigator:

name: Lisa Gunn

Research Supervisor:

name: Susan Spronk