A Political Ecology of Home: Attachment to Nature and Political Subjectivity

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Abstract

At the Joint Review Panel (JRP) for Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline across northern British Columbia, many participants presenting oral statements situated themselves as decidedly 'ordinary' people, with rich connections to the land and landscape. Without speaking of ownership, they nevertheless made claims to the area as their home through highly detailed articulations of knowledge and experience of its natural features. For some, it was also connected to a collective, indigenous territorial claim. In all cases, we argue that it is an articulation of 'home,' and that this formed the basis for the political subjectivity that led to their participation in the JRP hearings. Linking the scholarly literature on home with that of political ecology, in this paper we explore the significance of the assertion of experience and knowledge of the physical environment as the basis to claim it as 'home' and to assert a political right to defend it from perceived intrusion.

Keywords: political ecology, home, political subjectivity, citizenship, British Columbia, Northern Gateway pipeline.

Introduction

What political subjectivity is generated in the act of claiming common areas of the natural world as 'home'? Work in environmental perception and political ecology has

recognized that it is possible that "people actually feel really 'at home' on a wet hill-top…up a sheer rock-face…when wandering through a dense wood…and so on" (Macnaghten and Urry, 2000, page 2). There is also a well-established body of geographical literature on the concept of home that emphasizes its physical and emotional aspects: home as both a place of residence and a sense of belonging (Blunt and Varley, 2004; Ralph and Staeheli, 2011; Tuan, 1977). For Tuan (1977, page 144), home is fundamentally "an intimate place," which may exist in different manifestations at different scales. Although Tuan himself referred to "wilderness" as "undifferentiated space" (page 166), knowledge and experience of the natural environment may make it as intimate as a backyard. Claiming the natural environment as 'home,' however, reaches beyond private property and politically domesticates 'nature.' Some attention has been paid to the "nature" produced by recreational tourists (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; 2000; Edensor, 2000) and the socio-ecological relationships underpinning and shaping domestic space (Robbins, 2007; Shillington, 2008). In this paper, we seek to link and build on such scholarship in cultural geography, political ecology, and citizenship in order to make sense of an emotional and experiential intimacy with the physical environment as a 'home,' when that territorialisation is mobilized for political purposes.

The need to unpack these relationships arose in our observations and analysis of presentations to the Joint Review Panel (JRP) for the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline across northern British Columbia (BC). The JRP opened an interesting but limited space of political subjectivity for local communities impacted by the project. Research on the participation of the Haida (Galbraith, 2014) and the Carrier Sekani

(McCreary and Milligan, 2014) found that while the JRP allowed criticism of the project and the review process, there was no acknowledgement of, or space made for, indigenous structures of law and governance, territorial ontology, or land claims. LeBillon and Vandecasteyen (2013) noted the JRP was criticized in BC communities for serving only as "consultation," and not a "means for the public to participate in decisionmaking" (page 43). They further argue that the JRP was structured to reduce the volume and scope of participation. We also observed the Panel regularly caution participants to restrict their comments to the immediate project and not discuss, for example, the broader impact of oil sands development.

Many participants prefaced their comments to the JRP by excusing their lack of scientific or other expertise, instead asserting their personal experience of and attachment to the area in question as the basis for their right to speak and be heard. To emphasize this, several offered long and detailed lists of local wildlife species, physical features by name, or a wide variety of activities engaging with the physical environment, to demonstrate an expertise gleaned from direct engagement with the natural environment. It is an assertion, to varying degrees, of what Scott (1998) has called "metis," the "wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment" (page 313) that can only be gained through experience. This close knowledge of the lands and waters was at least part of what inspired, and was alleged to justify, individuals' intervention in the JRP process to speak out against the Northern Gateway project.

At the JRP hearings, these expressions of personal ecological knowledge and experience came from both Native and non-Native participants. A political ecology framework directs our attention to the unevenness of social and political positions, and how these affect one's ability to participate in the discussion of access to natural resources, both prior to and during the JRP. The connections to the land for members of First Nations who presented to the JRP have deeper histories and more complex relationships – especially in the context of BC, where Aboriginal title to most of its territory has never been ceded to the Government of Canada. We argue that all comments regarding attachment to place are forms of territorialisation, but the relationships among their positions are complicated. The positions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal presenters are in many ways allied, yet also conflicting and mutually undermining in their claims of "home." The exploration of these tensions raises questions regarding the political subjectivity that is, or is not, enabled by or produced through the JRP process.

Home as territorialisation and act of citizenship

The study of attachment to place and the production of "home" often focuses on qualitative evaluations of personal belief and experience. Blunt and Dowling's 2006 volume *Home* sought to "spatialize" and "politicize" the concept by developing what they termed "a critical geography of home" (page 21), which emphasized the multiple scales and power relations of which home is comprised. Our theoretical frame of 'home' engages with Blunt and Dowling's (2006) constitution of home as "multi-scalar and open" (page 26), "both material and imaginative" (page 22), constitutive of identity, and "articulated through relations of power" (page 24). Conceiving of home as

simultaneously material and imagined "moves us beyond the dwelling and alerts us to other sites that are called home" (page 22). We take this up to include the ecological, a form of home whose materiality is both within and greatly beyond the control of its residents.

In order to articulate how the non-human natural world as 'home' is mobilized in the constitution of political identities and possibilities for collective action, we turn to work in a variety of areas, especially political ecology, that engages directly with the relationship between materiality and discourse (Braun, 1997; Whatmore, 2002). Drawing on a diversity of philosophers and theorists, Bennett in particular has incorporated the "vibrant materiality" of the non-human world and the assemblages that enable human agency, with recognition of the non-human world's affect and capacity to enchant and thus motivate humans to act (Bennett, 2001, 2010; Whatmore, 2002). Building more directly on Desbiens (2004, 2013), Middleton (2010), and Sultana (2011), who have explored some of the affective, even traumatic, aspects of political attachment to 'nature' and subjectivity, we are persuaded that incorporating a political ecology approach can bring productive insight to continue the exploration of the politics of home. As McCarthy (2002) argues, political ecology should concern itself with unequal power relationships around livelihood, resource access, territory, property and the role of the state, "and the imbrications of all these with colonial and postcolonial legacies and dynamics" (page 1283). Sultana (2011) has further emphasized that a feminist approach to political ecology enables the consideration of the mutually constitutive relationship between the political and the emotional when considering conflicts over natural resources.

In her work with the James Bay Cree, Desbiens (2004, 2013) has drawn attention to the "close link between nature and nation" (page 361). She argues that to the Cree, "political identity and governance are inseparable from the protection, maintenance and development of resources in Eeyou Istchee [James Bay]" (page 354). A large, collective political identity is embedded not only in the symbolism of territorial boundaries but also in specific physical properties towards which there exist a moral and legal responsibility. These relationships are not linear or tidy, but rich and complex. As Sultana (2011) argues, "The messiness and entanglements in nature–society relations are better explained through closer analysis of complexities that exist, thereby enabling us to more clearly explain how and why people relate to, use, and find meaning in resources" (page 171). It is particularly important to engage this complexity in colonial and neo-colonial contexts in order to recognize the emotional trauma and other "entrenched subtleties of colonialism that linger" in institutions of governance (Middleton, 2010, page 2).

The JRP participants' claim to defend their surrounding natural environment as home is not only an emotional response but a discursive political territorialisation. Their employment of that claim as the basis for a right to speak invokes a spatial politics of citizenship. Much of the literature in citizenship studies lacks the groundedness of Desbiens' (2004) observation "that natural and social ecology are two facets of the same coin" (page 361). Indeed, Kärrholm (2007) argues that "[t]erritorial research has been elaborated mainly on the topic of the privatization of space," but that we should be open to "different forms of territorial production," even within nominally public space (page

446). He suggests that an investigation into "the material nature of everyday territorial production" (page 442) would deepen our understanding of the spatial constitution of citizenship. The many articulations of attachment to place in the testimony presented to the JRP give us an excellent window into such everyday territorialisations.

Following Isin (2008), we argue that presentations to the JRP are "acts of citizenship," noting that such acts are commonly disengaged from the formal status of citizenship and from formal political processes as well (Isin, 2002, 2008; Nyers, 2010). Here, citizenship is understood not merely as a privileged identity, but as a normally conflictual relationship between the governor and the governed (Wood, 2013). Political subjectivity does not emerge from citizenship status alone but rather is constituted through the act of staking a claim to a particular space, identity, or issue by articulating the authority to speak on its behalf. Acts of citizenship are related to processes of territorialisation: the ability to "be political" (Isin, 2002) relies on the ability to imagine oneself as rightfully attached to a place and to articulate it as a home from which one may speak, regardless of one's formal status within that place (Young, 2013).

Thus, Isin (2008, page 18) argues that considering "acts of citizenship" focuses our attention on "those moments when, regardless of status and substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens." This focus on practices allows us to examine "how people actually negotiate their access to resources and networks of belonging" (Krause and Schramm, 2011, pages 117-118). The actors who are our focus here make claims and articulate political subjectivities in which home is conceived of as attachment to, rather

than ownership of, a place. Their belonging is nonetheless territorial, rooted in a "territorial belonging as implicated in the mundane, banal claim 'I belong here'" (Antonsich, 2010, page 645). Just as home is a political site and a space of politics, the *making* of home is also a political act. In the statements of JRP participants, we see a direct relationship between feeling at home in a place, and feeling as though one has a stake in that place and thus the ability to intervene. "Home" is constitutive of citizenship.

This process of home-making as territorialisation has been productively unpacked by Wise (2000). He identifies "home" as an ongoing process that is also "the product of territorializing forces" and argues that we continually "mark out places in many ways to establish places of comfort" (page 297). Each marking of space shapes it; for Wise, territory is the "accretion" of these effects, when "markers are arranged to close off the spaces (even while they themselves open up onto others), to inflect a more common character on that space" (page 298). Territory comes from rhythm, pattern, and repetition; these create habit, which is more than a set of individual practices, but rather "the tendency of the universe to become orderly" or our efforts to make it so (page 302). Home is thus an active process in which humans constantly seek to inhabit: to make themselves secure and comfortable in a place over which, through their habitation practices, they gain some measure of control. Making oneself at home, as the expression goes, is to make the strange more familiar, to claim and reshape.

It is also through this process of living and identification that political subjectivity emerges. This term 'political subjectivity' is chosen deliberately in order to consider the

social (belonging) and the political (citizenship) facets of home simultaneously. Staeheli *et al* (2012) have argued for the importance of the ordinary in the construction of citizenship as political subjectivity. They observe that an "affective sense of citizenship – rooted in mutuality, belonging and care" emerges through local negotiations, attachments, and engagements (page 639). Importantly, Staeheli and Nagel (2006, page 1600) articulate a conception of home that links it with political agency:

> Rather than a bounded dwelling unit or place in which relationships between residents are internally defined, we view home as constructed in and through political practices and power relationships that differentially situate individuals with respect to material and metaphorical aspects of home.

Home is comprised of multiple, intersecting social relations and scales, that "[range] from the body and the household to the city, nation and globe" (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, page 27; see also Bradley, 2014). Moreover, 'home' can be located in more than one place simultaneously (Staeheli and Nagel, 2006; Wood, 2002).

It is critical and productive to recognize that in many instances—including BC—the act of territorialisation to create a home *de*-territorialises another. The very ability to name a place "home" is to exercise a spatialized power. Within the context of an often strained and unequal relationship between Natives and settlers, there are commonly non-Native residents who feel authorized to claim these unceded spaces as home and to speak out in such terms. The proposed Northern Gateway pipeline would cut through unceded lands to which Enbridge, with the support of the Canadian state, is staking a claim in the name of economic prosperity and benefit to the national interest. The contemporary provincial

government's handling of the land claims process masks colonialism under neoliberal visions of economic security and prosperity, claiming sovereignty over what is actually contested land. The pipeline proposal is part of a larger vision, in which Aboriginal peoples are imagined to achieve equality with other citizens through economic investment and participation in developing this "shared" land. This narrative writes ongoing inequalities and unsettled land claims out of the picture (Rossiter and Wood, 2005; Wood and Rossiter, 2011).

Our engagement with political ecology to examine participants' comments to the JRP is not an effort to frame them as a noble desire to 'protect nature,' but to underscore the political access to and use of 'nature' by the JRP participants themselves. In recognizing their politicization of nature, neither are we suggesting there is anything explicitly malevolent or subversive about their actions. We view their participation as political rather than moral acts, without any particular positive or negative connotation. In taking a political ecology approach that attends to both the ecological relationship with place within which the social is sustained, and the social and political relationships that frame understandings of the ecological, we attempt to extend the conceptual reach of the literature on home in two ways. The first is to explore the material, discursive and affective characteristics and complexities (as per Sultana, 2011) of 'home' when it is understood not as a human-made private residence, nor even as a product of social relations among human beings, but rather as a place of belonging and attachment to the physical environment. The second is to explore further the political aspects of attachment to place and home-making, framing it explicitly as a process of territorialisation within a

complex context of capitalist development and settler colonialism. Interventions by individuals in the JRP process are everyday territorialisations with political impacts.

The Joint Review Panel and Strategies of Resistance

In May 2010, the Northern Gateway Pipelines Limited Partnership filed a regulatory application for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project with the National Energy Board (NEB), the Canadian government agency responsible for regulating energy development. This was almost five years after Enbridge's initial submission of a Preliminary Information Package about the proposed project to the NEB and the Canadian Environmental Assessment (CEA) Agency. After that November 2005 submission, government officials recommended that the project be reviewed by an independent Joint Review Panel (JRP) that would subject the project to "a single set of environmental filing requirements and public hearing proceedings" (Enbridge, 2010, 6-1) rather than separate NEB and CEA processes. A JRP agreement was issued on December 4, 2009, and the three-member panel was established on January 20, 2010[1].

[**Figure 1: Pipeline route map**]

The proposed project under review by the JRP consists of three components as shown in Figure 1: a westerly flowing pipeline that will transport bitumen from the initiating station near Bruderheim, Alberta, to the Kitimat Terminal in Kitimat, BC; an easterly

[1] On December 19, 2013, the JRP recommended that the project be approved subject to 209 conditions (http://gatewaypanel.review-examen.gc.ca/clf-nsi/hm-eng.html). The Canadian government formally approved the project on July 17, 2014, subject to these conditions and to further consultations with First Nations communities. It remains to be seen whether the project will be built, as there are currently multiple legal challenges pending.

flowing pipeline that will transport condensate from the Kitimat Terminal to the station near Bruderheim; and marine and tanker terminal facilities at Kitimat. The massive project would produce two pipelines of equal length (1,177 kilometres), buried one metre below the surface, transporting different loads: the westerly flowing pipeline would carry an average of 525,000 barrels per day of bitumen, while the easterly flowing pipeline would transport an average of 193,000 barrels per day of condensate. The Kitimat Terminal would be comprised of a marine terminal and a tanker terminal, projected to serve 190 to 250 tankers annually. Kitimat would house 14 tanks each with a capacity of 496,000 barrels, two tanker berths where oil would be loaded and condensate unloaded, and one utility berth. Tankers would follow one of three marine routes to access the Kitimat Terminal.

Canada's Ministry of the Environment and NEB share jurisdiction over the review process. The JRP was tasked with addressing two overarching questions:

1) In terms of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, will the project cause significant adverse effects on the environment?
2) In terms of the National Energy Board Act, is the project in the public interest? (Enbridge, 2012, page 6).

As part of the review process, the Panel held a series of public hearings along the route of the proposed pipeline. The stated purpose of the community hearings was for "interested people, including members of the public and Aboriginal groups, [to] participate in the joint review process" (Government of Canada, 2012a). Hearings took place in two sessions: the first set of hearings, held between January and April 2012, were reserved for

intervenors to present oral evidence before the panel (e.g. formal presentations by First Nations leaders, environmental groups), while the second set, held between March 2012 and February 2013, allowed individuals from the affected communities to make ten-minute oral statements. Representatives of Enbridge were present at the hearings, as were RCMP officers.

We visited sites and attended sessions of the second set of JRP hearings in communities affected by the overland pipeline route in Prince George (58 presentations; July 9 and 10, 2012) and Burns Lake (15 presentations; July 17), and those affected by the tanker traffic, in Skidegate on Haida Gwaii (66 presentations; June 13 and 14). All participants spoke against the project. The sites we selected are all directly affected by the project in that the route runs through or near their communities. Prince George (2011 population: 82,865, of whom 9,930 self-identify as Aboriginal[2]) is the largest city in northern BC, and sits south of the proposed route; Burns Lake (2011 population: 1,975, of whom 715 self-identify as Aboriginal[3]) is directly in the path of the pipeline; Skidegate (population approximately 750[4]) is on the Skidegate reserve, and is situated in sight of the tanker routes. We also reviewed the transcripts of the JRP in other communities, which are all available online.[5]

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[2] Statistics Canada. 2013. Prince George, CA, British Columbia (Code 970) (table). National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE. Ottawa. Released September 11, 2013.

[3] Statistics Canada. 2013. Burns Lake, VL, British Columbia (Code 5951022) (table). NHS Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE. Ottawa. Released September 11, 2013.

[4] Statistics Canada. 2012. Skidegate 1, British Columbia (Code 5947804) and British Columbia (Code 59) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.

[5] Government of Canada. (2013). *Hearing Schedule – Previous Hearings and Transcripts*. Retrieved March 3, 2013, at: http://gatewaypanel.review-examen.gc.ca/clf-nsi/prtcptngprcss/prvshrngtrnscrpt-eng.html.

In each area that we visited, we made further ethnographic observations at the hearings and in the communities, including protest activities (collective action, posters and signs, campaign materials), news coverage, and informal conversations with presenters and other attendees. We chose to work this way intentionally – to read, listen to (they were streamed online) and attend JRP hearings, and make contextual observations – instead of conducting our own interviews. The volume of participants gave us a wider and deeper representation of BC residents than we could have arranged through interviews. Although the JRP structured the participation of those who wished to present, it gave the participants a greater autonomy than they might have had with interviews, as their contributions were generated for their own purpose, rather than in response to our questions. Indeed, their explanations and justifications for participating became part of our study as well. We recognized the limitations of relying solely on transcripts, and thus observed the hearings themselves in three sites and the communities in which they were held.

By the time the hearings began on January 10, 2012, in Kitamaat Village, BC, there was already organized resistance to both the project and the JRP process. As a result, the JRP hearings were held in a context of constant protest. On Haida Gwaii, hand-painted billboards opposed to the project were posted around the towns and along the main road. Many sites were surrounded by protests including in Prince George, whose hearings opened with a march and rally outside the community centre where the hearings were held. By the end of the process, hearings held in major cities were closed to the public:

only individuals scheduled to present oral statements were permitted to sit in the room and only while they presented.

The ethnographic work we did observing some of the hearings highlighted the personal and emotional aspects of presenting. We watched Phil Mullins bounce his baby on his lap while he spoke to the panel in Prince George, and saw various iterations of "No Enbridge" t-shirts worn by people young and older. We heard the catching voices and saw the tears of participants as they spoke and listened. We also learned of what was offered, but ultimately not included in the transcripts. Giving a presentation was an emotional process, one that became more stressful when participants' wishes conflicted with the rules of the JRP proceedings. One such example occurred in Skidegate, where the panel denied permission for a group of approximately 20 Haida children to perform a dance as their intervention. Before commencing the evening session, the panel announced that a "potential planned cultural presentation that was to be a dance" would not take place, indicating:

> This is not the time and place for that. We're here to hear these oral statements, as I've mentioned, that are 10 minutes in length and are individuals who have signed up to present their oral statements which is their personal views and knowledge about the Project" (Haida Gwaii [HG], June 13, 6349).

Later in the evening, their teacher spoke in both English and Haida on behalf of the Skidegate HlgaaGilda Youth Haida Dance Group:

> Our children are sad because we're not going to dance for you. Since February, the children worked very hard on their ocean storyline performance for today.

> *Their power of statement is in their Haida dancing*. Our drums are silenced. We are heartbroken and very disappointed that we have been deterred to present our strong opposition to the proposed pipeline by the JRP strict rules and guidelines" (Jenny Cross, HG, June 13, 6508-6510; emphasis added).

Cross' presentation received a standing ovation and the longest applause of the evening. It highlighted that the formal process tried to contain how people participated, and the ways in which people's interventions overflowed this framing as they sought to speak not only as individuals but to incorporate interconnections with land, creatures, tides, seasons, previous generations, and generations to come.

Many presenters noted that the JRP was their first such political intervention and prefaced their comments with assertions that, contrary to the statements of Minister Oliver about those who opposed the pipeline,[6] they were not eco-terrorists or activists, nor were they even part of a political organization or group, but were participating of their own accord[7]. One woman in Skidegate opened *and closed* her statement with, "I'm not a politician, I'm not a scientist, I'm not a radical. I'm a mother" (Sue Brown, HG, June 14, paragraph 7407).

The political subjectivity of these presenters was an active and embodied citizenship. One critical aspect emphasized by many participants was the means by which people move through nature: the slower, un-motorized pace of many of the interactions described and

[6] On January 9, 2012, the day before the public hearings began, Minister of Natural Resources Joe Oliver published an open letter to Canadians in which he criticized "environmental and other radical groups that would seek to block this opportunity to diversify our trade…" (Government of Canada, 2012b).

[7] Galbraith (2014) notes that environmental groups actively encouraged people to register for the JRP process, contributing to the largest-ever number of participants in such a process in Canada (4,300).

the lack of distance produced by such forms of mobility increase the sense of emotional and physical intimacy (see Edensor, 2000, on walking; Mullins, 2009, on canoeing). Many participants spoke of their knowledge of the area through extensive personal exploration of both land and sea. Donald Grantham (Burns Lake [BL], July 17, 10593) spoke of knowing the rivers from canoeing and the landscape and its history from hiking; Barrett Johnson (HG, June 13, 6269), based his "pretty good understanding of the wilderness and the pristineness of this island" on his extensive kayaking; in addition to paddling, Art Fredeen (Prince George [PG], July 9, 8952) testified that he had "backpacked, hiked, skied, snowshoed many of its wild places…studying, identifying, and photographing its diverse flora and fauna" along the way; Stephanie Lazerte (PG, July 10, 9888), spoke in the present tense to enumerate her activities: "I hike, canoe, fish, camp, and I'm an enthusiastic birder."

These speakers, along with many other participants, directly connected slow, non-mechanized travel through the area with their knowledge of it, and subtly asserted the superiority of that intimate knowledge. Several employed language such as "hands-on" (Jillian Merrick, PG, July 10, 9979), or argued that their multiple methods of intimate interaction mean that they have "seen the pipeline route from many perspectives" (Sonja Ostertag, PG July 9, 9335) and have a richer, more thorough knowledge than those who have not. Margaret Lachecki (PG, July 10, 9915-9916) described her experiences working in the forestry industry since 1984 in this way:

> I have walked and loved these lands…almost every day, every year, from…late April through early October. I cannot begin to explain the intimate relationship

> that develops from that experience. I am honoured and privileged to be able to participate in the lives of bear, wolf, moose, birds, and fish.

Participants repeatedly spoke of visceral and intimate relationships as though they had become part of the landscapes, territories, and ecological cycles they described. Their intimate knowledge of the landscape was not solely a rational experience, but an embodied and emotional one.

For some participants, their intimate knowledge of the landscape held further social significance because it was acquired from family in an intergenerational chain of teaching:

> It is [in Smithers] that I first learned how to fish and later how to fly-fish. I was taught how to ski, both cross-country and downhill on the slopes of Hudson Bay Mountain and neighbouring trails. As a family we spent many Sunday afternoons exploring backcountry roads and hiking local trails. My father's parents often came to visit us in the fall and I would sometimes join my father and grandfather to fish for steelhead on the Bulkley River (Josh DeLeenheer, PG, July 10, 10294-10295).

These intergenerational experiences continued with DeLeenheer's child: "When my son was old enough, I began to take him fishing, camping and renewing the traditions of my childhood" (10309). Similarly, Gillian Wigmore (PG, July 9, 9740-9741) described how she and her partner had "raised our kids paddling our canoes on the Nechako River, the Fraser River, the Dease River, the Stewart River, the Kitimat River, and on lakes and rivers between here and the Coast." Wigmore's phrasing reveals an intimate and

embodied experience of the area: she says, "we've raised our kids," not in Prince George or in our house, but raised them "paddling" in relation to specific bodies of water, a specific and situated skill that makes it sound like the rivers are an extension of their bodies. Far from incidental, the place and the activity are part of what have constituted the raising of the Wigmore children.

For Native participants, the intergenerational connections were often part of a larger cultural reproduction of food-gathering practices. Roberta Olson/Kiinewa (HG, June 13, 6094) recounted, "I was raised with my brothers and sisters as a food gatherer." The language she used is significant – "raised…as a food gatherer" – and revelatory of a direct relationship to the land, to the things that grow from that land; moreover, gathering food is a specific act – not harvesting, not producing, not buying – but a gentler interaction and one that is intimately connected to the food itself. Another participant revealed the centrality of food-gathering practices to her experiences of place:

> My dad has a big part of teaching me traditional ways. With him I go fishing for halibut and salmon, clam digging, hunting for octopus, picking seaweed, crabbing and hunting. … My Auntie Bev is my teacher; she has been bringing me out for octopus since I was three years old. I've been going to the Tlell and Copper River to fish for as long as I can remember (Shyla Cross/Sgaas Sgwansing, HG, June 13, 6149, 6151).

Participants repeatedly described an awareness of and attachment to nature noting specific places, practices and species with striking detail. For Stephanie Fung (HG, June

13, 6535-36), Haida Gwaii is “a place where I can live closely with the cycle of the seasons and with the cycle of the tides, where the land and the waters are alive and the salmon and the bears and the eagles and the insects are all connected, and I am connected to them too.” Similarly, a young Haida woman, Kelsey Pelton (HG, June 14, 6748), described how her family gathers traditional foods in specific places, in specific seasons: “We travel to North Beach to catch crab, and Copper Bay to catch sockeye. We pick berries in our backyard and dig for clams on the beach.” Another Haida woman, Barbara Wilson/Kii’iljus (HG, June 14, 6722), described “pods of white-sided dolphins, wall-to-wall orcas in Darwin Sound, counted sea lions on rocky islets, watched the humpback whales as they bubble fished and breached in Wampress Sound area.” Her observations emphasized proximity and intimacy with the landscape.

This specificity was echoed repeatedly in the presentations. Several participants, in the places we visited and at other hearings, made an explicit effort to list species by name, to demonstrate a precise and detailed personal knowledge of the regional ecology:

> “The ocean provided so much; fish, abalone, seaweed, scallops, clams, cockles, urchin, shrimp” (Susan Brown, HG, June 14, 6760).

> “The geese that migrate year round, the river otters that live in Flow River, the deer that also drink the water” (Heidi Richardson, HG, June 14, 6737).

> “And over the years I’ve watched hundreds of fluffy, tiny, ancient murrelet chicks coming out of their forest burrows, running through the forests at night, and

> jumping into the ocean to meet with their parents and set out in search of food" (Ceitlynn Epners, HG, June 14, 6803).
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> "Bears, elk and deer, but it was the sandhill cranes that really caught my attention. They were gathered on a small island in the Nechako River" (Heather Sapergia, PG, July 9, 9654-9655).
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> "In the last three years, I've seen bears bigger than I've ever seen before. I've seen elk, caribou, moose, unbelievable sized moose, mountain goats. I've seen trumpeter swan. I've seen all kinds of things" (Don Melanson, PG, July 10, 9940).

A few were quite explicit about how nuanced and rich their experiential knowledge was, underscoring their observational skill and the need to appreciate such detail before contemplating development. This can be seen in the following excerpt from Don Wilkins' (PG, July 10, 10375-10376) statement:

> Just to give you one small example of the knowledge that [trappers] have is that if you take a log and you look at the little part that is underneath between the ground and as it goes up, it's shaded, it produces a plant or an organism that the red back vole likes to eat. So you have to have that to have red back voles. And why do we care about red back voles, because the marten that we do harvest…eat the red back voles. Okay? So to give you an idea, we have a very good working knowledge of the land and the systems that are happening there.

What was also clear from the detailed exposition of experiential knowledge was a desire to emphasize the ecological diversity of the area as something valuable in need of protection. Mary Jesse Casimel, an Aboriginal woman from Stellako who made a presentation by phone in Burns Lake, spoke in a breaking voice of her anxiety at the disappearance of moose, fish and porcupine (BL, July 17, 10490). Alex Koiter (PG, July 9, 9674) explicitly linked his intimate knowledge with a claim to speak in defense of the "wilderness": "I am an avid hiker, canoeist, fisher, snowshoer, skier and camper. I have experienced and enjoyed a lot of what BC has to offer in terms of its incredible natural wilderness and, as such, I have serious concerns regarding the environmental impacts of this pipeline." The need for protection rang through the testimonies of all participants. Their attachment to place led them to fear for its well-being, and mobilized them, as seen in this statement from Donna Ablin (BL, July 17, 10972):

> How I feel about the probability in my mind, given the extreme navigational conditions, of a tanker spill on the long-protected and awe-inspiring coastline of British Columbia, where I just spent the last several days sailing in the Douglas Channel, feasting on freshly-caught seafood and overwhelmed by the natural beauty in every direction I looked.

Just as Ablin was "overwhelmed by the natural beauty," many participants underscored the emotional aspects of the exploration and knowledge-sharing; one Haida Gwaii teacher described:

> …the exquisite joy and the excitement of the children as they find a rare brittle star on the beach or they pick up these puzzling rubbery rings that are actually moon snail eggs. On this walk, the children collected a large edible chiton and brought it

> to one of our elderly chiefs knowing that he enjoys this delicacy but can't get on the beach that easily anymore. The kids, Haida and not, clamoured for more and more of the dried k'aaw, the herring eggs, that I'd brought as a treat (Marcia Watkins, HG, June 13, 6426-28).

This account captures once again the hands-on, tactile, intimate engagement with specific aspects of the local ecology; the importance of touch and texture to experience of place shine through. It also highlights emotional responses to the landscape, such as the excitement and joy of the children.

Several participants directly linked their own lives and identities with their experiences of the place, such as Barrett Johnson, (HG, June 13, 6266) who simply said, "This is what makes me who I am, this place." Josh DeLeenheer (PG, July 10, 10313-4) saw his own life as intertwined with that of the natural landscape: "I have spent nearly all of my life in northern British Columbia…. I know this area well and am bound to its fate." In one of the strongest statements in this regard, Barbara Wilson/Kii'iljus (HG, June 14, 6721) attributed both her identity and her well-being to her relationship to the natural landscape: "I have been privileged to live out on the land, to travel our waters, and to get to know who I am in the context of the waters and the lands. This connection has been part of making me whole once more [after her experiences in residential school]." These deeply personal relationships attribute influence, even agency, to the natural environment.

Participants generally did not disaggregate the emotional, social, political, and ecological aspects. Rather, their statements implicitly demonstrate the tight weave of identity and

place associated with ‘home.’ Their comments detail the ways in which the ecological home sustains its residents physically and mentally, generates powerful emotional attachments, invokes a sense of protection, shapes political subjectivity, and may motivate political action. Some participants framed their tactile forms of interaction with this landscape – activities that are in direct contact with land and water – explicitly through the lens of “home”: “I’ve camped and I’ve hiked, I’ve canoed, I’ve snow-shoed over much of northern BC. In short, it’s my home” (Robert Watt, PG, July 9, 9457); these are “the places that we call ‘home,’ the places where we grew up swimming in lakes, listening to birds, fishing, hiking” (Nadia Nowak, PG, July 9, 9298). This ecological ‘home’ is a place of intimacy, stability, and identity, and it is claimed and defended. Following Wise (2000), we argue that this intimate attachment to place by residents of the area is a type of “home-making” not in terms of domestic shelter, but that which underpins it: territorialisation. This territorialisation is in many ways informal and collective, and not framed by a system of enclosure. There are multiple, overlapping territorialisations, including, most significantly, the unresolved question of Aboriginal title and settler geographies.

Although several non-Aboriginal presenters acknowledged traditional territory, or stated their support for Aboriginal title claims, the apparent solidarity of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal presenters is more complicated and fragile than it appears. For Native presenters, the depth of knowledge and experience of place that extend past their own lives and lifetimes is part of an attachment that constitutes a legal and political claim, as

well as an emotional attachment. For the Haida participants, for example, their ancestors' occupation since time immemorial was foregrounded:

> My ancestors come from K'uuna Llnagaay in Kincolith to Kanacolith after the last big smallpox epidemic. K'uuna Llnagaay is Gamsiiwah and Kincolith is Kamshua Inlet. Hadacolith is Skidegate Inlet, as it's known today. We trace our lineage to Jila Kuns and Nangkilslas. We have lived on our islands and gathered from our seas since it was neither light or dark (Barbara Wilson/Kii'iljus, HG June 14, 6713).

The previous day, Jason Alsop/Gaagwiis (HG, June 13, 6112), had made the territorial claim quite explicitly: "Haida Gwaii is Haida territory and the Haida Nation, the Haida people and the people of Haida Gwaii are going to do what we need to do to protect our homeland." Even a non-Native participant, Don Wilkins (PG, July 10, 10368), reminded the JRP that "every single kilometre of this proposed pipeline is in someone's trapping area."

A political ecology of home

At the JRP, we observed attempts to secure access and protect the region from the perceived threat of the pipeline that were predicated on a discursive territorialisation of the natural landscape as 'home,' rooted in personal experience. Both Native and non-Native participants articulated a defence of this place as their home. This is evidenced not only through the repeated use of such words as 'home,' 'homeland,' and 'homegrown,' but also through the detailing of an intimate and visceral relationship with the physical environment. For Aboriginal speakers, this territorialisation was strengthened by deep

historical claims of residence and a legal argument of never having ceded the land. In all cases, the relationships with the natural environment not only supported physical well-being and a sense of safety and security, they also formed the basis of a right to speak out against incursions into what the participants see as their territory, even if they do not explicitly describe it as such. To the legal, political, social, and emotional geographies of home, then, we must add the ecological, because these connections – with specific places, wildlife, plants, animals, and tides – were central to participants' challenge to the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline.

That ecological home, however, is not without its own politics. To engage with the physical environment as home requires underscoring the constructed nature of 'nature' and access to it, and how it is, in fact, social. Macnaghten and Urry (1998) articulated the existence of a diversity of complementary and contradictory "natures" (rather than a singular nature) and the ways in which natures are produced via social practices. In this vein, they (2000, page 1) argue that interactions with our physical environment are specifically "embodied performances" that "produce and reproduce different natures." While much of their emphasis is on tourists' engagements with nature, these authors recognize that "some of these practices become so central to people's lives that they in turn become their 'everyday'" (page 2). At the JRP, participants did not collectively represent a singular nature; they spoke to a variety of types of interaction, engaging with land and landscape for purposes of work, leisure, subsistence, and intergenerational reproduction.

This engagement with ‘nature’ is also a political act, and its intersection with a process of personal territorialisation leads to what we consider an act of citizenship. Participating in the JRP is a form of governing – socially and economically – the territory affected by the proposed pipeline and claimed by the participants. Participants claim the territory and define its ‘appropriate use’ in their activities of canoeing, hiking, and so on, and they reinforce that claim to the territory in their exercise of political voice. They assert their possession to the exclusion of others and their right (or at least desire) to approve what may take place within it. In northern and coastal BC, those opposing the pipeline were arguing against the project out of a strong sense of territorialisation, but their arguments were not made with reference to property law. Their claim of the area as ‘home’ and their motivation to participate in the JRP is based in and justified by their knowledge and experience of the place.

Moreover, while both Natives and non-Natives recounted their personal knowledge of species, places, and practices as constituting their attachment to the natural environment, the latter’s assertions were sometimes oblivious to the ways in which they conflicted with or actively undermined the assertions of Aboriginal title. As Blunt and Dowling (2006, page 187) note, dwelling as a non-Aboriginal person (and making oneself ‘at home’) in a land “that was stolen before it was settled” is a problematic whose solution is often sought in essentialist descriptions of attachment to place that pretend to transcend human occupation and focus instead on ecological tropes (see also Crouch, 2003). Such efforts are not necessarily aggressive and may be asserted in a naïve effort to connect to First Nations’ claims, but participants remain embedded in a property regime that has yet to

fully address indigenous territorial claims. Many First Nations participants clearly proclaimed their unceded title to the land, insisting that the question of title was paramount to the process. Non-Aboriginal claims of home that fail to recognize Aboriginal title reproduce that power differentiation and foreclose Aboriginal claims.

Furthermore, the experiential knowledge displayed for the panellists was its own politics, productive of a particular political subjectivity: constituting a 'legitimate,' 'knowing' citizen who, though avowedly not an 'expert,' is entitled by experiential knowledge to participate and make claims of 'home.' The repeated statements of "I'm no expert" set the stage for the substitution of experience for expertise, displayed through long lists of aquatic, animal, and plant life; the marking of territory via the specific names of places, rivers, and physical landmarks; the listing of multiple modes of intimate personal exploration and appreciation of the landscape; and references to a depth of history in and with the landscape through intergenerational experiential exchange. This knowledge is often coupled with such a deep identification with the area and its places, species, and cycles, that it is almost embodied, an extension of these individuals. They have interacted with these places for so long, in many different intimate and visceral ways that they speak of themselves and their relationships with them as though they are part of them.

We observe this particularly through the constant invitations from presenters to the panellists to go outside and see the area, rather than merely sitting in the hearing room listening to others describe it. One speaker from Haida Gwaii perhaps best exemplified

the idea that only through actual contact with the natural environment can you understand it, both intellectually and emotionally, as he brought with him a shore crab in a glass jar:

> I'm going to try to show them -- give them that smile that you get when you hold a shore crab in your hands as a kid, and when it scurries across your hand for the first time and it tickles you, and you just -- brings you happiness and for that -- in that moment that's -- that's what it's all about for me.... So anyway, my pickle jar is over there and at the break, if you want, you can come and hold the shore crab and see what it feels like at the very least…. There is a point I'm trying to make out of that statement, and that's this whole process is happening inside. Everything everyone has to say here is outside. It's our environment. We can tell you, but it's one thing to describe to you, so people on a tape recorder can hear I'm talking about a crab; it's another thing to hold it in your hands and feel it (Joel Lagasse, HG, June 14, 7270-7273).

Lagasse concluded his statement by saying, "Until you experience these things, it's difficult to comprehend what we are trying to say." [8] The experiential knowledge Lagasse and many other presenters were asserting as a type of expertise is less "legible" to the state (Scott, 1998) and is often seen as less legitimate or valuable. Nevertheless, presenters from across the province, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, insisted that their knowledge was authoritative in its own way and should be heard.

Conclusion

[8] The official record of the hearing here (Joel Lagasse, HG, June 14, 7296) quotes Mr. Lagasse differently, which we believe is incorrect. This quote is from our own notes at the hearing.

The JRP's invitation to bring individual stories of the pipeline's potential impact on their lives was transformed by participants into an opportunity to present their personal topographies of the region. While the structure of the process deliberately sought out individualized interventions, the statements that people made did not necessarily stick to this formulation; they exceeded the positions and political subjectivities built into the process – speaking to both a wider, collective, intergenerational, multiscalar claim to these places and an intimate, personal, detailed knowledge of and attachment to their features. The JRP created, however inadvertently, a space in which to validate a personal and experiential idea of home that was also collective and common. However, for all their direct challenges to corporate and state readings of the land, these experiential claims are neither cohesive nor unproblematic, because non-Native territorialisations interrupt and destabilize the as-yet-unresolved question of Aboriginal title.

Jurisdictional boundaries established by the state frequently ignore such local, vernacular cartographies and interrupt the efforts of those communities to maintain their claims to a territory in a general sense, as well as to particular places. Consequently, the specific geographies and spatialities of these groups also disrupt hegemonic efforts of the state and corporate actors such as Enbridge to stabilize the practices that protect their own interests (see also Cohen and Bakker, 2014, on the rescaling of environmental governance in Alberta; and Le Billon and Vandecasteyen, 2013, on the scalar politics engaged by various actors regarding the Northern Gateway project). The participants' sense of belonging is territorial, and in direct contradiction with the territorialisations marked out and contemplated by state and corporate actors. Participants in the JRP

process reveal a different kind of territorialisation and constitution of citizenship: topographies carved out through extensive and intimate knowledge of the physical ecology of a place, rather than the discrete lines of property law. These counter-topographies reveal the challenge of articulating and making a claim to such a definition of home, and the common privileging of certain kinds of attachment to place, primarily those associated with private property ownership. They raise questions regarding the often-tenuous claim one has to places beyond any property to which one has ownership or occupancy rights, particularly to areas which are considered publicly owned and accessible, such as waterways, shorelines, and trails.

Bennett (2001, 2010) argues for animating the non-human world and taking seriously its effects on humans; she does not fully address what that politics looks like, but definitive conclusions are not necessary for us to take it seriously and to consider making space for it in our analyses of politics and political subjectivity. Sultana (2011, page 167) has emphasized "the importance of noticing the textures and nuances of conflicts and struggles" over resources. In this vein, the interventions presented above show an intimacy and engagement with land and landscape for food, mental and physical well-being, residence, recreation, employment, and survival. These individuals identify powerfully with the landscape and their claim to speak as 'citizens' of the region is premised on their knowledge and experience of it.

Approaching the JRP interventions through a lens of a political ecology of home expands notions of 'home' and 'home-making,' and also of citizenship. The intimate knowledge

of ‘home’ is the necessary experience asserted to articulate a citizen-subject and enact political subjectivity. Participants make claims to authority via this knowledge rather than by reference to formal political identity or property relations. Participating in the JRP is an assertion of the right to inhabit but also the right to speak, and that right to speak, to act as a citizen, is based on experiential knowledge of the land. That knowledge, moreover, is presented as specific, irreplaceable, and impossible to capture except through direct experience. It is from that experience that these citizens are constituted and thus assert their right to speak to the state and to a major private corporation, even as they apologize for their lack of expertise. For them, it is this knowledge that legitimates their territorialisation of the proposed pipeline route and their claim to protect their “home.”

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