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PLACING PIPELINES:

Enbridge Energy and the politics of space and nature in Northern Minnesota

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Abstract

This thesis is about how oil pipelines matter in Northern Minnesota: how they matter to resource capital, and how they matter to the people who live there. This research approaches the recent controversies over oil pipelines in Minnesota as questions of emplaced politics, interrogating how oil pipelines and Canadian energy transport company Enbridge Energy are meaningful at a local level. This research does not ask whether pipelines should pass through Minnesota or not, but rather why they have in the past, how they do now, and what sort of power relations and social processes facilitate their endorsement and resistance among people who live in the region. It is argued here that the local politics of oil pipelines in Minnesota are best conceptualized as expressions of historical and contemporary struggles over space, place-making, and the production of nature, whereby locals must navigate the tensions and contradictions between the externality of global flows and the locality of their own emplacement. In pipeline politics these forces meet and struggle over claims about nature, value, and the environments that should or should not be (re)built.

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Introduction

In autumn of 2013, Canadian energy transport company Enbridge Energy[1] applied to regulatory bodies in Minnesota for a series of permits that would greenlight a new oil pipeline running across the state. The "Sandpiper Pipeline" would originate in the North Dakota Bakken Shale oil fields, and carry fracked light-crude across Minnesota to Superior, Wisconsin. They had begun to secure "easements"[2] across private land plots already during the summer, and in November they officially filed for a permit with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).[3] By January of 2014, dissenting voices began to register at 'public information meetings' in counties along the proposed route. A low rumble of apprehension built into a tangle of political contestations that would extend into a two-year saga.

In the middle of the uproar over Sandpiper, Enbridge proposed a second – and much larger – pipeline: the "Line 3 Replacement" project would transport tar sands oil from the Canadian province of Alberta, also to Superior. Although the company framed the project as a 'replacement' for an older line that has been in operation since the 1960's, they proposed to build the new line along the new route that Sandpiper would take, and leave the old line in the ground, though they would no longer be running oil through it.[4]

[1] Legally the pipeline project was owned and proposed by Enbridge subsidiary North Dakota Pipeline Company, in partnership with Marathon Oil, though Enbridge backed the project and acted in large part as its public face.

[2] An 'easement' is a legal tool for designating the right to alter or use a section of land without actually dividing it into separate plots or having the title to the land change hands.

[3] The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is the regulatory body currently tasked with permitting oil pipelines in Minnesota; their jurisdiction over this issue is controversial.

[4] Whether or not Enbridge will permanently decommission the line has been a point of concern for those want them to remove it from the ground altogether.

Public information meetings in communities boasting less than 400 residents became contentious spectacles. Community members and neighbors found themselves at odds. Complicated and bureaucratic regulatory procedures were challenged in public by confused and annoyed residents (and regulators seemed to understand them only marginally, if at all, better than the locals). Court battles were waged. In the summer of 2016, citing changed market conditions and regulatory delays, Enbridge announced it was withdrawing its application for the Sandpiper Pipeline, admitting they had lost $800 million on the project. Meanwhile, Enbridge has made it clear that they will make every effort to proceed with their plans for Line 3, though their plans remain contentious.

It's true that the efforts to resist Sandpiper and the Line 3 Replacement project in Minnesota can be placed alongside a recent spate of contentious politics about oil pipelines. In the early 2010's an alliance of landowners, American Indians[5] and environmental organizations focused on climate-change mobilized against TransCanada's Keystone XL line, and turned out the largest[6] collective act of civil disobedience in the United States since the civil rights movement of the 1960's (Gravelle and Lachapelle 2015; McKibben 2013; Klein 2014). Indigenous groups in Ecuador (Kuecker 2016) and Canada (Bowles and MacPhail 2017; AJ+ 2014) have garnered international attention for their attempts to – sometimes successfully – block lines from passing through their territories. From autumn of 2016 into March 2017 showdowns on the prairies of North Dakota between police forces and protestors blockading the Dakota Access Pipeline populated images and videos on social media and smattered international headlines.

[5] Following much academic and activist literature, I refer to "American Indians," and not "Native Americans" (Hoxie 2008; LaDuke 2016); though the latter is also used (see, for example, Mikdashi 2013), it is sometimes associated with a liberal turn towards false notions of equality that whitewashed Indian history and removed colonialism from the popular vocabulary of American history (Olund 2002).

[6] Quantitatively, in terms of turnout and arrestees.

Media coverage emphasizing spectacle, however, can obscure the localized and historically embedded character of such disputes. In Minnesota, the politicization of oil pipelines and Enbridge Energy is an embedded issue. This is not Enbridge's first foray into Minnesota; the company has been operation in the state since 1949, and is already deeply integrated into the landscape socially and physically. The spike in North American oil production in the last decade (Brady et al. 2016; Birn and Meyer 2015; Mitchell 2013) has spurred international debates over geopolitics, climate change, and environmental justice, but in rural Minnesota, those debates confront and intermingle with a terrain of locally embedded claims that reflect the relational, material processes of history that shape local possibilities. It is impossible to understand why and how a pipeline in Northern Minnesota is contentious without a view that grounds itself in that terrain. Whether social movements intend to take on global capital for the sake of nature and justice, it takes only one conversation with a local activist to realize that their ability to do so depends on navigating the social and geographic landscapes which global capitalism manipulates (and has long been manipulating) for its own logics. The stories of Sandpiper and Line 3 are as much about how Enbridge *already* operated in Minnesota as they are about the mining of the tar sands or the fracking of the Bakken shale.

This research project does not intend to ask (nor answer) whether pipelines should pass through Minnesota or not, but to ask what sort of power relations and social processes are in play that either facilitate or block their passage. Based on qualitative ethnographic research, this thesis argues that the local politics of oil pipelines in Minnesota are best conceptualized as expressions of historical and contemporary struggles over space, place-making, and the production of nature, working primarily in a framework drawn from Neil Smith (2010) and David Harvey (1996). On the one hand, local livelihoods are continually caught in the tension between global flows and local emplacement. On the other, Enbridge seeks both to deploy spatio-temporal constructs that portray the interests of global capital as internal to places that provide them with strongholds of

support, and exploit historically produced landscapes to avoid and atomize resistance. Both the external flows of capital moving through space (Enbridge, which we might characterize as 'the global' in this case) and emplaced livelihoods ('the local' of landowners, residents, and laborers in Minnesota) are constituted relationally and therefore contain multiple positionalities; but along the snaking interventions of oil pipelines they meet and struggle over claims about nature, value, and the environments that should or should not be (re)built.

In what follows I will first describe my method in the field and review relevant literatures on the ethnography of infrastructure and the oil industry (Chapter 2), before working out a theoretical framework for interpreting my ethnographic data and then providing historical context for my case (Chapter 3). Following this I will give ethnographic accounts of two scenarios of place-making with reference to Enbridge and oil pipelines: the first an account of Enbridge's presence in Clearbrook, Minnesota, where they operate a terminal station, and the second an exploration of the relationship between Enbridge and landowners along the pipeline routes (Chapter 4).

Chapter 1 – Infrastructure and Material in Ethnography

This chapter provides an overview of my method in the field and a review of literatures relevant to ethnographies of oil and of infrastructures.

1.1 Shaping the Field

It is always difficult to fully define the parameters of a research field; the relational character of the social world gives them an almost limitlessly expansive character. Doing research around a pipeline, however, presents a field with a particularly odd geometry. When I planned my research I drew circles on the map around communities near to existing and proposed pipelines, and planned to centralize my inquiries there. When I arrived, however, groups and places which I

thought to relate in particular ways to the pipelines at times did not present as groups, or really as places, in the way that I had imagined. Instead, the organizing principle of infrastructure in question seemed to pull me through space: up and down the pipeline searching for the people and institutions affected by, and affecting, the regional politics of the issue. This presented a challenge for my research sample, but by forcing me to move through space and meet with people in a variety of locals it also sensitized me to the interplay between space and place, influencing the analysis presented here.

During my field work I spent roughly four weeks in Northern Minnesota, based in two fixed locations on a rotating basis: near Bagley, MN, and in Duluth, MN. The town of Bagley sits roughly 15 miles south of Clearbrook, where Enbridge runs a large terminal station connecting different sections of their pipeline network. While I had not originally planned to spend time there, I learned early on from an informant that a tour of the facility was going to be open to the public. The Clearbrook facility represents Enbridge's most centralized locus of operation in the region, and employs a stable labor force on a regular basis unlike pipeline construction, maintenance, and repair projects. I knew very little about it, and a tour of their facility would have greatly exceeded any access I had previously had to the company's operations. In the end the tour was cancelled, but the program was held as a presentation and information session (see Chapter 3), and by then it had already become clear to me that Clearbrook represented an interesting and important "place" in the story of pipelines and Enbridge in Minnesota.

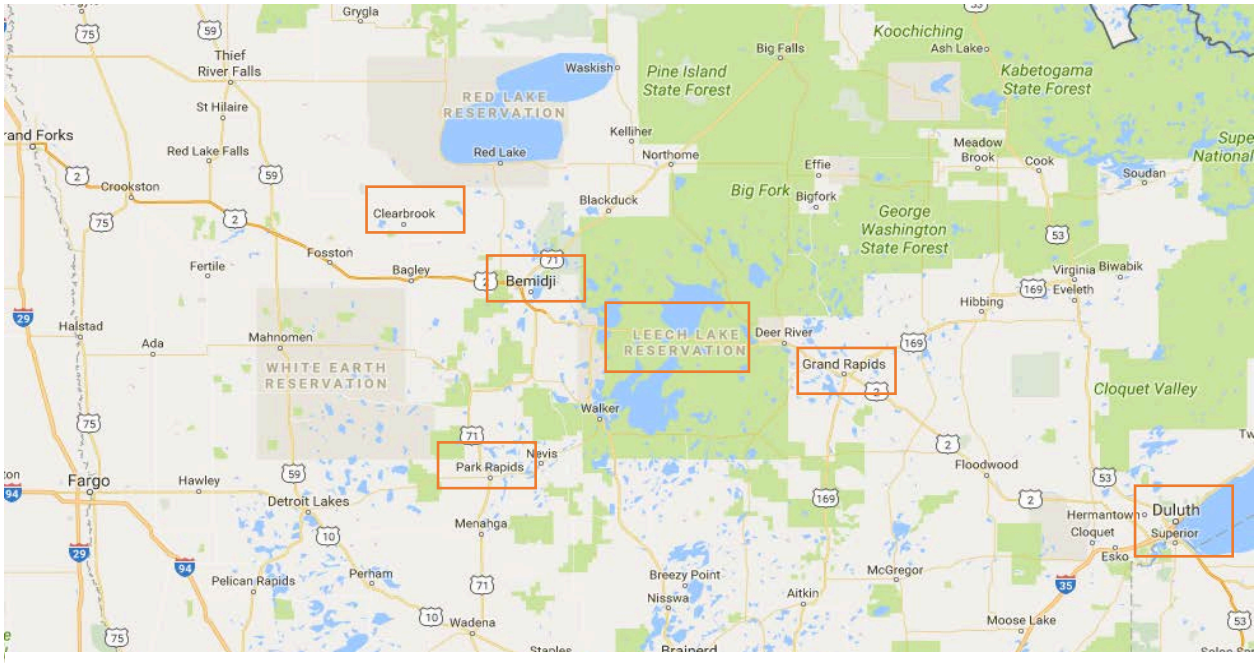

Figure 1: Northern Minnesota, taken from Google Maps. Green areas indicate state forest.

Duluth is roughly 170 miles southeast of Clearbrook on the shore of Lake Superior. Minnesota's second largest urban area, aside from the 'twin-cities' of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Duluth is defined by its history as a shipping port and a hub for both trade and industry, feeding off the surrounding "iron range" where iron-ore and then taconite mining boomed and busted in turn during the 20th century. As a major (though declining) center for the building industries and a progressive (in some cases militant) union stronghold in Northern Minnesota, as well as a university town, it is a staging ground for many of the tensions in the region over environment and industry. On the southern edge of Duluth, just across the mouth of the St. Louis River and the border into Wisconsin, is Superior, MN. Superior has often been chastised as a sort of 'little brother' to Duluth: the smaller city at the bottom of the hill, much less wealthy, home to dirtier industrial processes kept out of Duluth, a dumpy working class town set against an intellectual, middle class city (a distinction that surely doesn't hold today).

From Clearbrook to Superior run the two controversial pipeline routes that sparked the dynamic addressed in this research 1) Enbridge's "mainline" route that already contains seven major

pipelines, including the original Line 3 pipeline, and 2) the new proposed route for Sandpiper/Line 3 Replacement, now known as the "Lake Route" among activists due to the density of lakes and waterways it would burrow beneath.

I first spent time in the area working on pipeline issues as a journalist in 2015 and 2016. During this period I conducted initial interviews, upon which I based my early intuitions about this research project, and some of which I have also used here given that those subjects provided essential context but were not necessarily available to speak again when I returned. At the time I focused along the Lake Route with people who were resisting the new pipeline. I also attended "public information meetings" that were being held by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC)[7] and Enbridge in communities along the Lake Route.

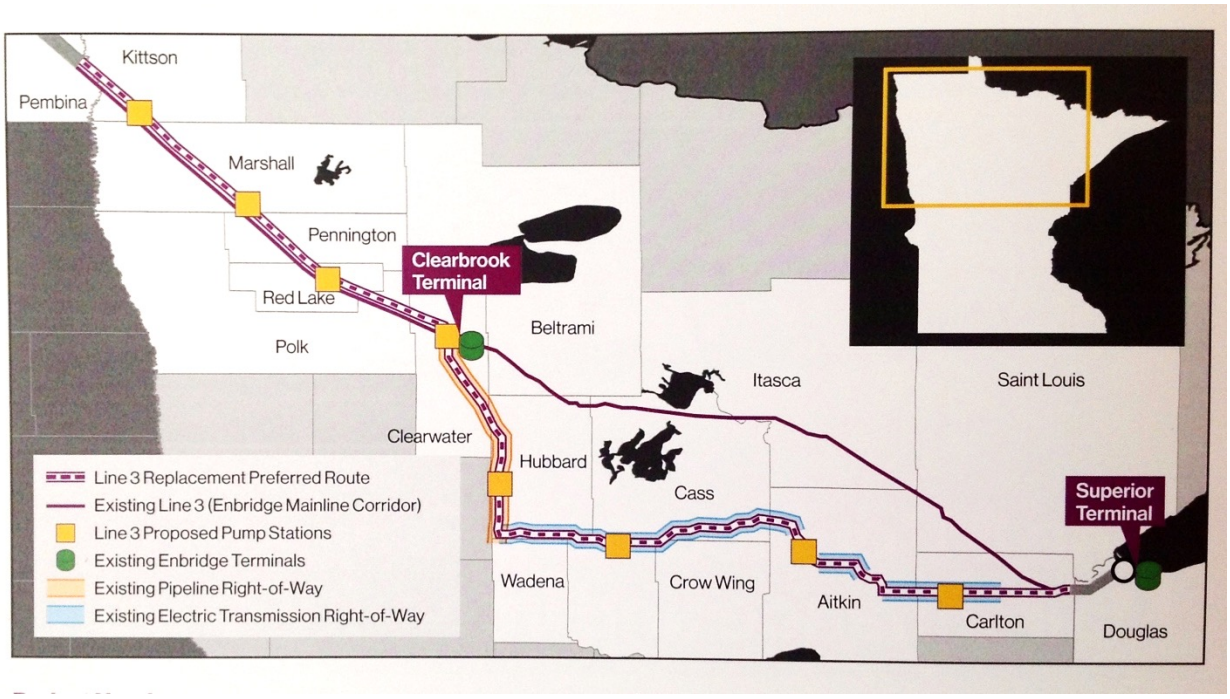

Figure 2: Image of Enbridge pipeline routes through Minnesota, taken from an Enbridge handout distributed at a public meeting in Clearbrook on April 24, 2017.

My fieldwork in April of 2017 consisted of semi-structured interviews carried out in Duluth and Clearbrook, as well as along segments of the old mainline route where I could locate landowners

[7] See footnote 3.

willing to talk to me, and a small segment of the Lake Route just west of Superior in Carlton County – a site of significant local grassroots pushback against the Sandpiper proposal. In Duluth I spoke to members of the Local 49 chapter of the International Brotherhood of Operating Engineers who have made their livelihoods working on pipelines. I also spoke, when I could, to Enbridge employees. Along the mainline route I visited landowners on their homesteads, sometimes touring sections of their property with them to see the pipeline corridor – or in one case, sections of exposed pipe – and how it had affected the ecology or layout of their land. In Carlton County I visited farms and homesteads through which the Lake Route was originally planned to run, and spoke to landowners who had organized to keep it from doing so.

Activists hailing from both environmental and tribal perspectives, as well as members of the labor community and employees of Enbridge, aided me in finding subjects. I also attended a number of public events: a presentation given by Enbridge in Clearbrook; a "pipeline walk" on Leech Lake Reservation organized by indigenous environmental group Honor the Earth and led by Marty Cobenais, long time Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) activist; and "Water Action Day," a rally held at the state capitol. In Bagley, my hosts were themselves involved and interested in the pipeline issues, and the homestead where I stayed with them is implicated in one of the possible route deviations for the Line 3 Replacement route. Our conversations influenced my understanding of local perspectives, as did informal exchanges struck up in a broad variety of everyday contexts, from chatting with bored waiters in empty diners to passing time in the one-chair waiting room of a local garage when the car of an activist with whom I'd tagged along for the day sputtered to a standstill in an inopportune location.

The coverage of this data is very limited, and it should be noted that I did not focus my ethnographic inquiry on the American Indian[8] reservations or communities in the surrounding

[8] Following much academic and activist literature, I refer to "American Indians," and not "Native Americans" (Hoxie 2008; LaDuke 2016); though the latter has also been used for good purpose (see, for

areas, though this issue affects them – and they affect it – as much as anyone else in Northern Minnesota. Activists of many persuasions and backgrounds across the state that I have worked with during the past two years, have shaped and in some ways guided this research project. Additionally, previous experiences on the 2015 "Love Water Not Oil Tour" led by Honor the Earth and at the Sacred Stones Camp in North Dakota during the summer of 2016 shaped my awareness of the issues. But it was not this project's aim to focus on social movements *per se*, be they indigenous or environmental, and given both the short period of research available for this project and my lack of embeddedness in reservation communities, I chose to incorporate these perspectives by approaching Minnesota in its entirety through its history as a settler colony. I have relied extensively on Meyer's (1991, 1999) nuanced history and political economy of the Anishinaabeg[9] in Minnesota, and have tried to avoid dividing the population of Northern Minnesota in ways that reflect persistent colonial logics rather than cultural, political, or economic realities on the ground. If anything, my data reflects historical layers of dispossession that can be challenged or highlighted by pipeline politics in Northern Minnesota. At times in interviews my subjects confronted or grapple with colonial logics or anti-colonial resistance that they have previously felt entitled to ignore; at other times they participate in certain common erasures regarding colonialism in Minnesota, which I have tried to draw out wherever possible.

example, Mikdashi 2013), it is sometimes associated with a liberal turn towards false notions of equality that whitewashed Indian history and removed colonialism from the popular vocabulary of American history (Olund 2002).

[9] Anishinaabe/g (-e is adjectival, -g plural noun) is the native-referent word meaning "the people" which the tribe most present in the northern areas of Minnesota has historically used to self-identify (Meyer 1999, xiv) and which a majority of tribal members and indigenous activists have used with me in interviews and conversations. The tribe has also been alternately referred to as Ojibwe/a and Chippewa, words hailing from periods of imperial contact with both the French and the British but whose exact origins are debated..

As a final note, some only informants' first names are used, and some have been changed, either in accordance with her/his request, or when I have deemed it an ethical choice regarding potential exposure of informants to undue backlash from either Enbridge or other community members.

1.2 Literature: A tale of two 'materialisms'

When I conceived of this research project, I did so, somewhat unconsciously, in complicity with the popular treatment of oil pipelines, simply by focusing the inquiry around the pipeline as an object. With good intentions I sought out informants that were themselves likely to understand this object in a relational way (landowners and laborers), and company representatives for whom it is their job and agenda to either mask the relations around the project or render them into a narrative that validates the changes to the built environment they are proposing. Nevertheless, in some sense I was also taken with the strange and contested technical nature of the object itself.

There is ample precedent in both anthropology and sociology regarding the ethnography of infrastructure, including a significant spike of recent interest in the topic (see Howe et al. 2016; Appel, Gupta, and Anand 2017). From the temporality of infrastructures (Gupta 2015) to their relationship with violence (Rodgers and O'Neill 2012) and the nature of infrastructural investment and risk distribution under neoliberal regimes (P. Harvey 2014), these built objects have an increasingly prominent position in social sciences literature. Theoretical approaches applied to infrastructures range as widely as topical and geographical foci, but running through many of them are tensions regarding how to understand 'materiality' in social life, and how the prominence or particularities of certain objects should or should not influence our interpretations of the social world.

Key is the question of what it means to emphasize 'the material,' and therefore whose work can be properly called 'materialist.' Latour has infamously attempted to rethink an ontology of the

social/material world, a perspective succinctly played out in his iconic "sociology of a door closer" (Johnson 1988; Latour 1993).[10] His suggestion that the material world possesses certain insufficiently acknowledged 'agencies' has inspired fascination with the scientific and material characteristics of the built and "natural" worlds we live in and the objects they contain. Some have dubbed the approach a 'new materialism.' However, from the heart of this theoretical move emerges the suggestion that there is a fundamental material substrate beneath the social world. The idea that the realm of the material 'acts back' poses a material 'outside' that flies in the face of the dialectic relationality at the heart of what has traditionally been understood as historical 'materialism.' Although the literatures reviewed below that relate topically this ethnography engage a variety of theoretical perspectives (and in some cases precede Latour), it is this underlying tension between fetishization (objects possessing properties and agency outside of dialectic relations) and relationality (objects as constituted by social relations), that I want to keep track of and emphasize. It is a tension that dovetails in a particular way with regard to pressing contemporary debates about energy and fossil fuels, and can be traced in its own way through various theoretical and empirical approaches to oil and the oil industry (H Appel 2012; Behrends, Reyna, and Schlee 2011; Rogers 2012, 2015; Mitchell 2013; Labban 2010; Barry 2013)

Anthropology has, in the past century, already explored at length the idea that energy sources play a fundamental role in shaping social life (White 1943; Illich 2010). Now, as the reliance of industrial capitalism on fossil fuels for energy has been increasingly problematized by concerns over climate change, there is a resurgence of theoretical approaches fixated on the meaningful relevance of fossil fuels themselves as particular substances with particular material qualities that have a defining effect on social worlds. The announcement of a new 'energy humanities' (Boyer and Szeman 2014) suggests a return to earlier anthropological fascinations with energy as both an

[10] As a pedagogic exercise in questioning scholarly customs and to trot out his ontological questions, Latour framed the authorship of this piece as originating from a sociologist named 'Johnson,' and published it under that pseudonym – though he lets the reader in on the exercise during the piece.

esoteric and material parameter for social existence, while authors such as Altvater (2007) and Malm (2013) aim to raise the significance of fossil fuels in theorizing capitalism.

Whereas oil in particular has frequently been treated with reference to its commodity characteristics (sharing a certain money-like quality with other raw commodities such as silver) (Friedman 2011) and its geopolitical significance (Yergin 2008), a call for attention to the particular physical/material characteristics of the oil industry and its supply chains has surfaced among political scientists, geographers, and anthropologists (Mitchell 2013; Hannah Appel, Mason, and Watts 2015b). The result is a selection of scholarship committed to the "many materialities of oil," including "oil spaces," "infrastructural materialities," and "chemical and microbial materialities" (Rogers 2015a, 370-72). Readers encounter more and more descriptive accounts of the ecological and physical processes of oil extraction, transportation, and consumption in the academic literature. This trend adds a certain richness to these ethnographies, many of which do focus analysis on the social phenomena occurring in intersection with, or being shaped by, the particular qualities of oil substances and infrastructures. Still, at times a certain flirtation with fetishism seems to appear – whether in the form of implicitly crediting fossil fuels for being the underlying fundament of capitalist relations, or claiming the chemical make-up of an infrastructure is determinate of politics.

Barry's book *Material Politics: Disputes Along the Pipeline* (2013), which tracks information production and "transparency" as a strategy of governance along the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, splits across this fault line. Although the title suggests a 'material' approach to an oil pipeline, Barry focuses heavily on "knowledge controversies" regarding science, risk, and expertise (many of which are carried out among elites). And although information practices certainly play a crucial role in facilitating capital's maneuvers in the landscape (Barry 2013, 4–5), Barry draws on Latour to analyze the nature and 'behaviors' of metals, and how the physical qualities of metal have comes to exert crucial influence on contemporary political debates. The

result is the removal of the metals in question from their sociality, and their construction into an exotic agent of politics that acts outside of the systemic relations producing a large oil pipeline.

As I headed to Minnesota to do an ethnography of a pipeline there, I, too, took note of the buzz of information-based debates: Environmental Impact Statements, anti-corrosion cathodic protection assessments, water quality reports, and more. In fact, perhaps partially influenced by reading Barry, but most certainly also by my own participation in the information buzz as a journalist in years past, I somewhat expected my informants to be forming their opinions about oil pipelines through reference to 'expert' information and evaluations. However, as I arrived on the ground it became clear this was not the case; many of my informants only referenced those 'knowledge controversies' if I pushed them to comment on them. Their experiences, perspectives, and ideas more often reflected a keen orientation to power, in worlds in which the natural and material had long been inseparably social.

The temptation to fetishize oil, and fossil fuels at large, is strong, given their admitted centrality to much of the capitalist system in its current state, and the enormity of the projected consequences should this state continue. However, doing an ethnography of a pipeline – a crucial and politically contested tangent of the oil industry today – challenges the validity of such an approach. Is my ethnography about oil? Or is it about rural political subjects in Minnesota? The answer is both, but a fetishizing approach to any of the variables involved inserts an intellectual barrier between them.

An Enbridge oil pipeline is an infrastructure – a transformation of the built environment – which connects oil fields in Canada to refineries in Superior, Illinois, or to further modes of transport. All along the way it intersects with and changes social/ecological worlds that have an intensely local character to them, for the purposes of global capital. In this way, a pipeline engages the spatial tension between local and global forces in determining the character of built environments, and stirs political disputes about which kinds of built environments benefit

whom. In order to contextualize and understand local interpretations of a pipeline, then, I have turned primarily to relational geographies that emphasize the inherently spatial character of social relations – which is highlighted, in this case, by the geometry of the line itself. This provides an alternative to the fetishization of materials, without losing the material character of both the politics and the infrastructure in question. As David Harvey (1996) has written, "if things seem to have a life of their own, then it is only because those things which are handled in the realm of material practices are considered to internalize discursive effects of political economic power and spatio-temporal relations" (222).

Chapter 2 – Nature, space and the politics of place

In this chapter I will attempt articulate a framework for analyzing the ethnographic accounts below as a politics of space and place-making, using primarily the Marxian geographies of Smith (2010) and Harvey (1996). Following this I provide a historical overview of Minnesota as a produced space/place.

Engaging this framework suggests employing a spate of highly abstract terms – nature, space, place, politics. The intention is to concisely treat these in paired sections here, in order to create some clarity around a useful vocabulary for the ethnographic chapters that follow.

2.1 Nature and Space

Following Smith (2010), Harvey (1996), and Moore (2015) this paper views both nature and space as relationally produced, as collusions between humans and ecology that take particular form under capitalism.

Nature here is characterized by Marx's dialectic "metabolic" relation: nature is linked to humanity through labor – a process which, in its general sense, can be thought of as transhistorical, but which takes on a particular form in capitalism (Smith 2010, 49–50). Under capitalism's expansionary impulse for the purpose of accumulation, "capital stalks the earth in search of material resources; nature becomes *a universal means of production*" (ibid. 71, emphasis in original). Crucially, however, considering nature as a 'means of production' does not place it on the 'outside' of the social or the human; rather it shares the experience of appropriation with the "human natures" of the non-ruling class under capitalism, "nature reaps its revenge since the domination of 'external nature' is accompanied by the increasing domination of 'internal nature" (Smith 2010, 45).

The tendency to conceive of nature and society in a dualism rather than as part of a dialectic whole is, according to Smith (2010), in itself a contradictory and ideological rendering of "nature" that not only naturalizes bourgeois political economy, it quickly breaks down in historically grounded accounts of the environment. "When this immediate appearance of nature is placed in historical context, the development of the material landscape presents itself as a process of the production of nature" (50). "Nature" itself is constituted in its relation to humans. This is true not only because "stalking capital" has so completely penetrated the reaches of the planet, but because ecological metabolisms are themselves relational and constantly in process. There is no static, locatable "nature" that exists in isolation; as long as it is encountered it is in relation.

This point is important to the discussion of pipelines below, because it establishes the pre-existing sociality of the "natural" landscape the pipeline encounters – whether it is farmland, forests, or lakes. By viewing "nature" as relational, it frames the pipeline as a confrontation between multiple relational entities, not an onslaught of one relational entity onto an essential entity that precedes it. The point is not to equalize land-with-pipeline and land-without-pipeline

as undifferentiated kinds of landscapes, or to suggest that there is nothing at stake in the prospect of replacing the latter with the former. It is rather to reframe it as a question of antagonistic spatial relations, allowing for a more nuanced anthropological interpretation of various perspectives on "nature" and "environment" that surfaced with my informants.

Smith traces the emergence of "social space" as an idea to Kant and classical political economy, but acknowledges that Durkheim is most often credited for the term (2010, 103). According to this approach, social space is conceived of as a distinctive sphere of interaction, without any necessary grounding in "real" physical space. Relations in this social space might not be less real or effectual than those in the physical world, but they don't necessarily express or have anything to do with correlates in the latter (103-104). Underpinning an entirely separate social sphere from the material world, however, is a separation between 'the social' and 'the natural' world that builds off of the dualistic and contradictory definition of nature discussed above. "Geographical space" on the other hand, is "manifestly physical" no matter how social it might also be. However, positivist geographers found their own dualism by separating 'natural' space from social space, with the former becoming the correlate to absolute space, the 'outside' to the sociality of geographic space (104). In this sense, "nature" as an outside to "society" becomes fundamentally implicated in the discussion of space, and subject to the same critiques directed as ideological dualisms between society and nature. And as with nature, argues Smith (with Lefebvre and Harvey), space as social and material is reunified by its relationship to the process of production (Smith 2010, 92-131).

Space in its material form, like nature, has a particular relationship with capitalism. While Lefebvre, who coined the phrase "the production of space," focused on the spatial character of the reproduction of social relations (Smith 2010, 123), Harvey has emphasized the role of space in the process of realizing value. Transforming use-values to exchange-values requires the extraction of use-values from isolation into the universalized abstraction of the commodity on

the market, which requires the physical 'freeing' of those use-values from spatial isolations (Harvey 1982; referenced in Smith 2010, 112). To speak concretely, labor, capital, and commodities must move through (physical) space to facilitate the pursuit of surplus value – which shapes capitalism's accelerationary impulse towards the compression of space and time (Harvey 1996). This impulse toward detachment, homogeneity, and universality, however, expresses contradictions within capitalism, which ultimately relies on the dialectic between use-value and exchange-value. Thus Harvey points out that the unavoidable friction of material space plays a particular role by solving recurrent crises of accumulation through territorial expansion and the speculative rearrangement of fixed capital across space and time, capital's "spatial fix" (D. Harvey 1996, 295–96, 2001).[11] All of these spatial processes occur as part of the abstract relationality of capitalism (class relations, for example) but those relations are, in the concrete, inseparable from spatial relationality due the character of capitalism.

Capitalism, thus argues Smith (2010) produces space "in its own image" (7), cyclically building into the environment in pursuit of surplus value and then withdrawing and moving in response to its own gradients of exploitation and value extraction. Space, like nature, is unified: materialities unified with the social through internal relations. The natural (some parts of which are more fruitfully referred to as the ecological) and the spatial are both material and social elements of the environment – the latter of which then emerges as 'built' and contested – rather than 'natural.' If capitalism produces nature and space 'in its own image' then the production of nature and space are also marked by struggle.

A pipeline is thus, in a very simple sense, part of the capitalist production of nature and space, in that it serves the compression of space that facilitates the realization of a raw material (oil as use-

[11] It should be noted that Harvey's concept of spatial fix encompasses a more complex set of relations than is necessarily summarized here, related to different notions of 'fixity' and processes of globalization. The way in which capitalism uses territory to resolve its crisis-prone tendencies is one part of this theory. For a more thorough overview see D. Harvey (2001).

value) into exchange value. This is what makes oil pipelines so important for the industry, and it is why the oil industry remains a variable even in local disputes. But the pipeline is also spatial because in order to fulfill that purpose it rebuilds the space it is meant to overcome. That alteration in the built environment effectually realizes nature and space in newly produced forms, including turned over soil, ripped out and replanted trees, and temporarily employed labor forces to carry out said tasks. As a pipeline cuts through the landscape, it slices through, and produces/reproduces, spaces in which other processes of production are already occurring, or simply spaces which other processes of production have produced into their current form, in order to prioritize the process of realizing the value for which it is purposed. This crossing of junctures, I would argue – between multiple produced spaces – and the attempt of the oil industry to exercise its power in order to advance their project of environment building, characterizes local disputes in Minnesota, and the discursive grappling of my interview subjects in the account below.

2.2 Place-making and Politics

Smith (1990) refers to "place" primarily through Robert Sack's definition, whereby "place" precedes "space" in a periodization of civilization. Harvey (1996), however, articulates the relationship between place and space as a fluctuating dialectic in the process of social construction: as capital operates in tension between fixity and mobility, 'places' arise as contingent 'permanences.' In one sense, Harvey argues, places arise in an "actual" sense, as "physical and social structures on the land…erected as permanences" (Harvey 295). This process reflects capital's paradoxic relationship with fixity and mobility. This "creative" process of production and destruction, does not express a linear teleology of development and then halt, but occurs in an ongoing fashion with the cyclical crises of capitalism, resulting in the repeated making, unmaking, and remaking of places. The cyclicality of this process means, then, that places exist not only in relation to space, but also time. "The process of place formation is a

process of carving out 'permanences' from the flow of processes creating spatio-temporality… 'permanences' – no matter how solid they may seem – are not eternal but always subject to time as 'perpetual perishing'" (261, quoted by Harvey 294).

This process of "actual" construction, however, contains a whole set of correlated social processes related to meaning. Consider the example with which Harvey begins his chapter on space and place in *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (1990): a "brutal murder" occurs in a middle class neighborhood in Baltimore (Guilford) defined by its separation from surrounding lower-class areas with primarily African American residents. Coverage of the event by the local paper frames it as a spilling over of certain crimes from those surrounding areas, a kind of pollution that threatens the safety and character of Guilford and its residents. Implicit is the idea that such crimes reflect "habits" somehow native to communities that are poor and/or African American. This coverage reinforces a construction of Guilford as a place in which certain kinds of behaviors and people do not belong, a construct dependent upon a certain classed and racialized idea about crime (291-293). "So what kind of a *place* is Guilford? It has a name, a boundary, and distinctive social and physical qualities" (293).

The Guilford case reflects place as permanence in the capitalist production of space and the built environment (people in certain classes live in certain places), but it also exhibits place as a complex socio-cultural entity imbued with meaning and (re)constructed in parallel discursive practices that entangle class, race, crime, safety, etc. The latter notion (place and space as *social constructs*) is necessarily related to the former (the production of space) but points to the inclusion of other practices which contribute to the meaning and function of produced space, and also the class struggles for place under capitalism. From this broader point I want to draw out two sub-points to more directly set the context for the ethnographic that follows.

First, I want to outline an approach to place and emplacement in politics. Harvey (1995, 1996) entertains a conversation with the writing of Raymond Williams on nature, emplacement,

livelihood, and politics. Harvey observes in Williams' fiction an emphasis on the embeddedness of politics within the places (and natures) through which peoples' livelihoods are realized. A sense of possessing something deep and historical to defend creates what Williams calls "a sense of value" that can play a crucial part in driving resistance and solidarity. But this "sweetness of place" (D. Harvey 1996, 27) is necessarily developed in relation to the fluctuating character of space relations. The construction of place and its internality is reliant on the existence and pressures of external forces. On the one hand, a place like a nation-state might be thought of as a jurisdiction of the elite, but a place might also be where taking a stand becomes possible (Williams 1989, 242; quoted in Harvey 1996, 29), or it may become the ruins of one, a casualty to external flows. The characters in Williams' novels confront the particular circumstances of these tensions over and over, finding their lives and choices caught up in the process of emplacement and dissolution. Commenting on an exchange in Williams' *The Fight for Manod* in which the characters struggle with one such intersection, Harvey argues that

> All of this poses acute problems of political identity depending upon the spatial range across which political thought and action is construed as possible…the internalization of these external forces in Manod depends crucially upon a farmer on the district council having privileged knowledge of plans being hatched elsewhere. The relevant place and range of political action (as well as action in the novel) cannot get resolved outside of a particularly dialectical way of defining loyalties to place across space. And within such loyalties we will always find a peculiar tension between resistance and complicity to dominant social process. (1996, 31)

I would argue that I encountered this "peculiar tension" in Minnesota exploring the local political issues surrounding oil pipelines. In some ways, my informants seem to embody Williams' 'characters,' faced with choices that challenged them to articulate loyalties by 'placing' themselves within various spatio-temporal frames that put some kinds of value over others.

This leads into my second sub-point, namely the role of discourse in the politics of place-making. Harvey's (1996) rendering of the "social process," is helpful here. The social process, argues Harvey, can be modeled into six "moments": 1) language/discourse 2) power 3)

beliefs/values/desires 4) institutions/rituals 5) material practices 6) social relations (78-79). Under observation, these occurrences present themselves as singular, but in essence they simultaneously contain in themselves internal relations to all the other moments in the social process (46-76). Space runs through all of them, and thus plays a role in discourse (as acts of power) as an element of the social process. In light of this, the struggle over place is observable in discourse as much as it is in materiality. So although the material production of space itself "constitutes the material framework within which social relations, power structures and discursive practices unfold," writes Harvey, "transformative material practices in part accord with discursive maps and plans (and are therefore expressing of [sic] both social relations and power) but they are also manifestations of symbolic meanings, mythologies, desires" (112). As such, "mapping is a discursive activity that incorporates power," whether it be in a 'real' or imaginal sense (ibid.) The social construction of place and space in discourse – by, for example, a foreign energy corporation – therefore represents a site of struggle over the agency to define place, and by extension to stand for alternative forms of value.

2.3 The Making of Minnesota: Building a frontier state

As described above, place is always in process. It is, therefore, necessary to first give a broad overview of the histories that underpin contemporary politics of place-making in Minnesota.

Minnesota makes up a "transition zone" between the northern pine forests, the corn belt, and the Great Plains (Gilman 2000, 1).[12] The space between Clearbrook and Duluth (see Figure 1) fills the southern swath of this "pine region" as I will call it for simplicity, with flat agricultural lands extending not far to the south. While the old mainline route stays further north, the 'Lake

[12] Gilman includes the mining region (colloquially known as the "iron range") in the pine forests, which is geographically and ecologically sensible, though in a social sense this tri-partied split is slightly misleading, given the enormous importance of mining and the construction of a cultural border around "the iron range" in the northeastern corner of the state (Manuel 2015).

Route' dives south after Clearbrook, running past Itasca State Park and the headwaters of the Mississippi, and skirting the edge of the many potato farms near Park Rapids before cutting east to Superior. From Clearbrook to the west the Great Plains take over, leading into North Dakota. Scattered across the entirety of the state are thousands and thousands of lakes: variously sized testaments to the same glacial processes that created the massive 'great lakes' of Superior, Michigan, and Huron. This fresh water (including myriad companion wetlands, streams, and rivers) is perhaps the most unifying ecological formation of Minnesota – though their uneven densities themselves differentiate some parts of the state from others. It is

These geographic differences shift in unruly gradients, expressing centuries of socio-ecological collusion in landscape production. Following Chapters 2.1 and 2.2, we can recognize that these rural environments, intermixed with varying concentrations and effects of inhabitance, are produced as much as the multi-million-resident twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul a few hours to the south. The ecology of the landscape undoubtedly shapes the character of the social world here, but there is nothing pristine about it – in line with Jason Moore (2015) we might think of it as "co-produced.": forests largely replanted new-growth or scrub forests with only intermittently dispersed stands of old red and white pines of the kind that drew loggers for decades; wetlands drained here for construction and remade over there for conservation purposes; prairies and forests having given way to livestock grazing and industrial mono-cropping, changing the soil and sending run-off and erosion into lakes. In turn, the lakes grow algal blooms, become shallower here or deepen there; they fill with invasive zebra mussels, empty of "native" fish species, and are stocked from fish farms for sport fishing – sometimes with "native" species, sometimes not. As trees thin, soil quality ebbs, and mines run dry of their metal deposits, capital makes moves (minor and major) that set these processes in motion all over again with different geographic emphases, no matter how slight. External and internal

forces both create and dissolve, and it fills Minnesota with a constant low-grade buzz of local politics about nature, space, and place.

The pine region, where the majority of this inquiry is situated, boasts a history built on successive cycles of commodity harvesting and extraction. During the 17th and 18th centuries the entire Great Lakes region supported a lucrative fur trade over which imperial France and Great Britain competed, enmeshed in politics with various American Indian tribes such as the Anishinaabe, Iroquois, Huron, Ottawa, Cheyenne, Assiniboine, and Dakota.

Imperial claims during this period amounted mostly to maintaining forts and managing relations with Indian tribes. When the French formally ceded much of the area to the British after the French-Indian War (1754-1763) and old trading posts were abandoned, new ones were built, and relationships with (and between) Anishinaabeg and Dakota populations were dramatically altered (Warren 1984). The politics of the fur trade period, constituted by complex and multipolar power relations between native groups and Europeans, played a key role in setting the stage for the politics of dispossession, settlement, and extraction that would come as the United States established its territorial claim.

During the first half of the 19th century, heavily hunted furs began to dwindle, and both settler colonialism and industrial capital began to arrive in earnest. Logging led a massive influx of European immigrants into Minnesota at the century's midpoint when during just 9 years the population jumped from under 5,000 to over 150,000 (Gilman 2000; S. R. G. 2000; "Statistics of the United States in 1860: The Eighth Census" 1866). Towns across the northern part of the state amassed around sawmills, peppered along corridors the railways began to cut through the state in the 1860s (Schmidt and Pratt 2007).

Around the same time that logging boomed, large deposits of iron ore were uncovered, sparking the first of many mining booms (Manuel 2015, xiii–xiv). By the 1870's demand from the steel

industry was soaring, and interest into the rich veins of ore on both the Vermilion and Mesabi "ranges" materialized into major investments. Before the century came to a close, the biggest barons of U.S. industrialism owned mines in what would become known as "the iron range": John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, James J. Hill, Elbert H. Gary, J.P. Morgan (ibid). The iron range would become a major entity in Minnesota, as much cultural and geographic as economic, as much imagined as real (Manuel 2015).

It's typical, especially in commodity focused accounts, to report that mining and logging 'drew' immigrants (see, for example, Gilman 2000; Manuel 2015) but this enormous influx of mostly European immigrants was a highly orchestrated project (Crossroads of a Continent Room 2017). When the Midwestern territories began gearing towards statehood, intra-state competition developed for the settlers and labor reserves necessary to pursue the ideal fantasy of *manifest destiny* and tame the frontier into newly imagined civilizations, spawning state-led campaigns to encourage immigration (Ziegler-McPherson 2017; L. Appel and Blegen 1923). In 1892 the Duluth Train Depot was officially made an 'Ellis Island Immigration Station': trains filled directly from Ellis Island arrivals were sent off to the Midwest to make-up the new settler labor force (Crossroads of a Continent Room 2017). Nevertheless, immigration to the region was indeed heavily centered around employment in logging, mining, or the railroads that facilitated both the immigration and the extraction.

The logging industry faded before the mining industry. By the early 1900's the most lucrative sources of timber had been exhausted, and the biggest sawmills began to close one by one (J.C. Ryan Forest History Room 2017). Mining, on the other hand, would remain a driving, if not tumultuous, force for the first half of the 20th century. During the second half, deindustrialization took hold, though the relevance of precious metals on the range has been repeatedly reinvented as technological advances either created new demand or unlocked new extraction methods (Manuel 2015). The cumulative result, however, has been a long and steady decline interrupted,

though not necessarily offset by, by sporadic and convulsive booms and busts (ibid). (Today new promises have arrived in the form of proposals for "sulfide" mining, a bitterly controversial mining method with serious environmental risks.)

The relevance of agriculture to the region is more muted than extraction industries, but it shouldn't be dismissed. Immigrants who wished to farm (and who were quickly overtaken by industrial cash cropping) went mostly to the flatter southern and eastern portions of the state (Gilman 2000, 3-4). Agriculture never cultivated a labor market or landscape density in the northern areas of the state,[13] but these distinctions deserve qualification. South from Duluth in Carlton County, the hills and trees give way to a corridor of vegetable and dairy farms near the towns of Carlton and Warba. According to Janake Fisher-Merritt, a second generation organic vegetable farmer near Warba, this corridor follows a rare strip of rich soil in an area otherwise dominated by heavy clay. Gilman's (2000) claim that "subsistence farming and local market gardening never became important in Minnesota" (3) also writes off the long history of mixed cultivation methods used by Indians in the area, as well as European traders who often relied on those strategies for their own survival, too (Meyer 1999, 1991). From my own ethnographic experience, many of those strategies survive today, for more than symbolic purposes: hunting, gathering, and homestead gardening continue to play a partial role in both personal subsistence and informal local markets for many in Northern Minnesota.[14]

[13] Today farming income in the northeastern quarter of the state is considered virtually non-existent by economic reporting mechanisms ("State of Minnesota Rural Report" 2014, 13).

[14] As a landowner outside of Grand Rapids toured me around the homestead he inherited from his father to show me his seasonal sap-gathering operation, his berry bushes, and his large gardens, he told me proudly that he had just retired from his 12 years working at a local call center for Delta Airlines (there are two airline call centers and one for a health insurance company in this area). When I asked about his wage/salary he told me that for most of his career he was paid about $40,000 a year, which he said was tight with his wife and two sons, but "enough to be comfortable with the gardens and a deer in the winter."

Chapter 3 – Enbridge in Minnesota: Clearbrook

This chapter gives an account of Enbridge's presence in Clearbrook, where they operate a terminal station and where I attended a public presentation given by the company. Constructing Clearbrook as a place in both an imaginal and material sense, and Enbridge as internal to it, consolidates this place as a political stronghold for the company in the state.

3.1 "This is a company town"

Clearbrook's population hovers around only 500 residents, but it occupies a major intersection of Minnesota's pipeline politics. Enbridge's main terminal sits just west of the town itself, a major strategic node in their mainline system where oil coming from both North Dakota and Canada is temporarily stored, re-arranged, and then routed into the next segment of pipeline towards Superior. The town itself is situated at a Y intersection where County Road 5 splits off from State Road 92 – such are the meaningful geographic markers in rural Minnesota. A short but characteristically wide 'main street' boulevard marks the center surrounded by a small grid, perhaps seven by ten in total, of residential 'blocks,' and an outgrowth of what appears to be newer neighborhood development on a hill at the northwest end of town: a few newer looking homes with big yards and trees, though on the fringe homes lapse back into mild dilapidation.

From the southwest perimeter of the town Enbridge's terminal becomes visible. Take County Road 74 right after leaving town, which cuts the terminal campus in two, and it will take you nearly as long to drive through the middle of it as it will to drive through Clearbrook: a dozen or so large holding tanks, trucks moving on roads in between them, visible interlacing networks of pipes, scattered offices and buildings, lined water ponds, all gated and surrounded by a high wire-topped fence. It seems to make up its own town.

Figure 3: A view down County Road 74 towards Enbridge's Clearbrook terminal

Figure 4: Holding tanks at Enbridge's Clearbrook terminal

Figure 5: A corner of Enbridge Energy' Clearbrook terminal

Enbridge is felt all over Clearbrook. In my first drive through a building on the north side of town caught my eye. Sharply new and modern looking it could have been a conference center or a small hotel, but I was directed there later when looking for the management offices of a local pipeline construction contractor – no surprise that their business runs almost exclusively off of a single client. Big white pick-up trucks with the yellow 'Enbridge' logo plastered on the side are scattered along side streets. At noon the main street café – "AJ's on Main" – turns chaotic as it fills with workers, and a sandwich on the menu will cost you around $11 (you can eat for almost half that at the main street diner in Bagley, only 15 miles to the south and with nearly twice the population, a reflection of the disparate wage scale between industries in the two towns)

From here, the site of Enbridge's largest fixed investment in the state, pipelines radiate outward into the landscape, and it represents a concentration of Enbridge's power and role in rural Minnesota. Enbridge is the largest tax payer in the county – Clearwater County – and a major employer, providing high-paying jobs (both directly and via contractors) in an area dominated by lower paying service industry positions and assembly line work. It is a hot seat of support for the

recently proposed projects, and many people were bitterly disappointed when the Sandpiper project was stayed. As Marty Cobenais, longtime activist of the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) and resident of Bagley told me a few days after I arrived in the field, if you want to hear company language, this is the place to listen. In Clearbrook, pipelines are good because the terminal is good.

Despite inches of snowfall the night before, on April 24th a group of about 25 people had gathered in the classroom-sized Legion,[15] a room at the back of Clearbrook High school, for a "Northern Exposure to Lifelong Learning" (NELL) program. NELL sessions, aimed at senior citizens but open to the public, are held on a weekly basis in the area on topics ranging from ecology to history. The program had announced it would host a tour of the terminal, but as the date approached they canceled the tour – much to my disappointment – and settled for a public presentation.

The presentation was led by two female Enbridge PR representatives, Becky and Jennifer; they began by showing a short film. A soothing male voice told a history of Enbridge, overlaid by black and white clips of men in hardhats working and smiling into the camera. The terminal was installed in 1949, we learn, when the first mainline pipe was opened between Alberta and Superior, driven by the spike in oil extraction in Alberta. Men in top hats shake hands and cut ribbons. Enbridge and its workers heave up earth and maneuver massive metal structures, bringing progress and employment to towns like Clearbrook, and the narrator hails their "pioneer spirit." The film tapered off in romance. Enbridge is about "something bigger," it tells us, "more than a pipeline…communities…relationships…legacy." The recent history of their increased pipeline expansions since the tar sands boom of the late 2000's was absent, as were any

[15] The American Legion is a wartime veterans' association started in 1919, and along with an expicitly commemorative mission as well as a number of programs aimed specifically at veterans and soldiers, it also runs many general local programs and activites from their locations in communities across the United States.

of the major spills the company is responsible for in the region. When I asked when the film was made they estimated around 2009 – one year before they launched the Line 67 or "Alberta Clipper" expansion along the old mainline to increase their capacity for transporting tar sands bitumen. When the film had come to a close Becky commented on how much she always enjoys this film, before saying that she hadn't known it before, but she "just found out" that Clearbrook is "actually a company town."

This comment caused me pause. In the first, Clearbrook was not a company town, in the sense that it wasn't created by a company, the way coal towns in Colorado or even mining towns in Minnesota like Hibbing were. Outside the door of the Legion room the hallway is lined with a photographic exhibition of Clearbrook history. A placard near the beginning explains that "the first industry in Clearbrook was wood cutting and lumbering," after which dairy operations popped up on the cleared land, making the local creamery a mainstay business for the town (the Leon Co-operative Dairy Association began in 1907). The Soo Line railroad came through in 1908 and funded a few development projects in the town, but discontinued service only a few short years later. A grail elevator went up in 1912. Another set of photos shows farmers and early model tractors, another carnage from the flood of 1957.

The Enbridge terminal wasn't built until 1949. It's not hard to imagine that life was difficult in agricultural Clearbrook after the railroad stopped coming through, the logging industry faded, and the depression hit. Certainly the terminal would have radically altered the make-up of the town – perhaps this is what led Becky (or whoever bestowed on her the idea) to believe and state that Clearbrook is a 'company town.' For although the fact that Cheryl, the longtime county assessor for Clearwater County, retired on May 1, 2015 only to start working for Enbridge on May 2 draws a cozy picture between public bureaucracy and the company, it doesn't necessarily indicate a full integration of public administration and private company.

But aside from the fact that Clearbrook does not appear to have developed as a company town, it is odd that Becky and Jennifer stood in front of a room of people and told us it was with an air of interested and nostalgic celebration. Company towns like those documented by the Colorado Coal Project (2017), for example, don't seem like something to celebrate: where laborers are paid in 'scrip' money which they must use at the company store, where company men control housing and private police forces, where abuses of power are simply institutionalized.[16] And if that archive seems to recall an era past, McKenna's (2009) anthropology of Dow Chemical in Michigan makes it clear that contemporary towns dominated by single companies exhibit troubling cases of censorship and impunity regarding harmful company practices.

In Northern Minnesota, however, industrial decline has led to a nostalgic reconstruction of logging, mining, and settlement periods in general, in part in explicit efforts to cultivate tourism where the decline has depressed local economies (Manuel 2015). Book stores in nearby Bemidji and Grand Rapids reserve walls for books dedicated to logging and mining, and you won't find a historical society or local museum in this part of the state without an exhibit on one or the other, or both. Clearbrook would never have been pegged as tourism location, and it is a little further west than the area typically romanticized a 'the iron range.' By calling Clearbrook a company town, however, the Enbridge representatives invoke the nostalgia of these other industries, while cultivating a particular construction of Clearbrook as a place. Not only does it seem to give Clearbrook's a sense of 'permanence' by glossing its history, it gives it a certain 'sweetness' associated with regional nostalgias, and it also makes it *Enbridge's* place – placing the company on the interiority of that sweetness.

[16] The Colorado Coal project is a consolidation of ethnographic film content gathered in the 1960's and 70's by Ron McMahan and Eric Marguilis; in recorded interviews men who lived in company towns recount stories of company abuses in mining towns that led up to major standoffs between labor and capital there, including the Ludlow Massacre of 1914.

I was the youngest person in the room by more than one decade, most of the audience had grown up, raised their children, and made their livelihood in and around that town. Many people in the room were either ex-Enbridge employees, contractors who currently rely on Enbridge business, or people whose loved ones were one or both of those. And although I never heard anyone outside of that meeting repeat the 'company town' line, multiple informants told me that Clearwater County – 'one of the poorest counties in the state' nearly always follows the name – belongs to Enbridge and the oil industry, ideologically and economically.

Enbridge's material and imaginary place-making of Clearbrook obfuscates Enbridge's externality as an arm of global capital, and it becomes instead something that belongs to the town, something to defend against people who might undermine Enbridge's projects. Enbridge, a foreign corporation, became the object of local 'loyalties' like the ones described above by Harvey (see Chapter 2.2). One local contractor showed up at the beginning of the meeting, but refused a cup of coffee or the offer to sit down – he had come only to 'see if any activists had shown up.'[17] During a question-answer period at the end of the meeting, one man asked questions that activists have raised during the controversy of the past few years, and then nodded approvingly when Jennifer and Becky explained them away and mimicked confused exasperation. Afterwards, as I stood by waiting to speak with the Enbridge reps, the man approached them to have a mutual moment of catharsis about how ridiculous the people pushing back against pipeline projects are. In the short coffee period that followed, there was much scoffing and shaking of heads over 'activists' – one gets the sense it is a dirty word. During the presentation American Indian communities were mentioned only in passing, and catastrophic spills that Enbridge has committed in the last decade were hidden behind cumulative statistics and lengthy descriptions of safety protocols.

[17] Cheryl (see Chapter 4) explained this to me in our interview the next day; she found it very sweet.

The point here is not to scoff back at local Clearbrook residents, but to observe the discursive fusion between a small town in rural Minnesota and a giant Canadian energy transport company, and then the power of the associated discourses of place and loyalty that emerged. Jennifer and Becky's presentation following the film was peppered with statistics about what Enbridge does for Clearwater and for Minnesota; I found myself noting how convincing their PowerPoint was. I could go through my transcript and catch the misleading air of a few dodgy safety assurances, unpack intentional omissions, or point out the promises they made which reflect a very concrete change of tune from the rendering of the Line 3 replacement project they tried to stick with one or two years before. These are predictable moves for a company like them – what is important is how their constructed emplacement reinforced the alliance between company representatives and lifetime Clearbrook residents, as though everyone were on one team. Complaints and concerns about Enbridge that have circulated among the contested politics of recent years dissolved easily into the realm of the ridiculous.

3.2 Localizing consumption and petro culture

In addition to actively constructing history and place, the presentation also took a striking approach to navigating Enbridge's identity as a company in the oil industry. Referring back to Chapter 2, much of the local politics about oil pipelines occur in reference to the spaces of production (or the produced spaces) that the line has to pass through. However, Enbridge's association with 'big oil' has proven to be a vulnerability in certain local contexts. When I headed out to the field I assumed this was because oil had become so controversial in an environmental sense, and though this came up on certain occasions it didn't represent the source of ire on the part of locals that I might have expected. But being 'big oil' is a sure symptom of alliances with global spatial flows that won't be loyal to local place; sometimes informants took no ethical issue with oil pipelines but were simply angry that the environment in Minnesota would be put to work for the 'pockets of big oil,' as one landowner put it.

At the entrance to the Legion room attendees were greeted by a welcome table: a pile of 'free-to-take' plastic cooking spatulas – dyed Enbridge yellow, the company's name inscribed on the handle – sat next to a series of handouts. Aside from informative handouts – including maps I've used in this document – decorated with slogans like "Fueling Minnesota's economic engine,"

there was a flyer with the heading "Fueling Summers." A caption declared that petroleum products "help us make the most of our summers." Beneath the text a three-by-four grid of

photographs showed recreationally used items, most labeled according to the petroleum derivatives they contain (see Figure 6).

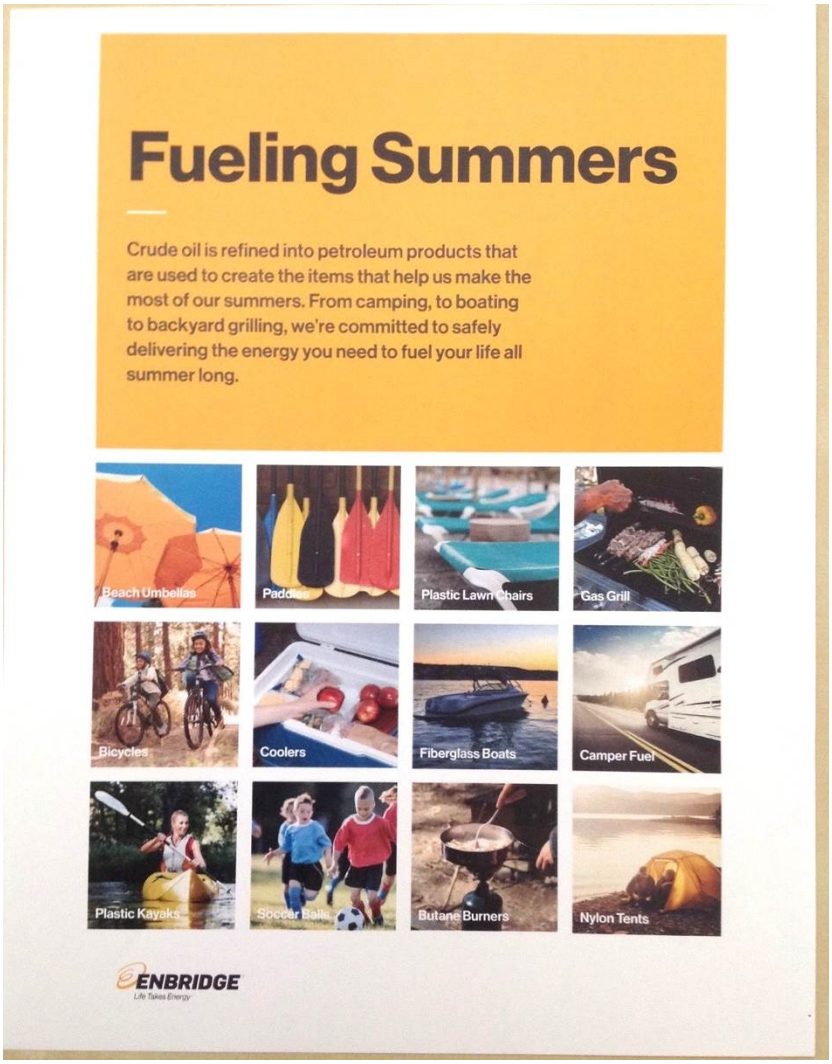

Figure 6: A flyer taken from an Enbridge presentation in Clearbrook, MN on April 24, 2017

This kind of messaging can be more or less expected – old tricks in an industry long known for its marketing tropes, information production, and elaborate attempts to embed oil in the cultural landscape (Yergin 2008; Barry 2013; LeMenager 2014).[18] What's worth noting is the particular way that Enbridge chooses to frame its association with petroleum. Many times during the presentation Jennifer and Betsy emphasized that Enbridge neither extracts nor owns the oil running through its lines, it is, in their own words simply "a service provider," the service being "fueling" things like "lives" and "summers," but only by *transporting* oil.

If anything in local contexts is raised about the social, economic, or environmental issues related to fracking or tar sands – to which, as opposition has aptly pointed out, Enbridge's lines are linked – the "service" line quickly comes up, and the company washes its hands of responsibility. At the same time, oil as a substance for consumption is constantly invoked. Oil consumption, culture, and "imaginaries," already have a particularly notable presence in American society (Hitchcock 2010; LeMenager 2014). In this case, Enbridge's presentation of the commodity which they exist to put in circulation (a spatial process that explicitly invokes global flows that have no fidelity to places like Clearbrook) puts it right into the emplaced interior of people's lives. How can you turn on the oil in your kitchens, your kids' soccer games, and your fishing trips? And how could you turn on Enbridge, who is just making sure it shows up there?

Near the end of the Q&A an elderly woman raised her hand, she didn't have a question, she confessed, but she wanted to tell a story. "With regards to the whole company town bit," said Charlotte – at first she equivocated a little bit – "I mean, first of all, it wasn't so much a company town in that they never ran a store here or nothin' like that…" but then her story fell into Enbridge's, "…but I do remember the workers and all that real well." Her dad ran the drug store

[18] A recent story from the Center on Public Integrity reports on the oil industry's foray into k-12 classrooms reading childrens books about the fearsome consequences of life without oil (Zou 2017)

in town, she said, and she told a story about a local man, who had evidently gained some notoriety for his antics and whose name was apparently recognized among a few people in the room. Imitating a thick foreign accent (Scandinavian, if I had to guess) she recounted him making a comical public scene in the store. After laughter in the room subsided, she affirmed that the workers were always "real nice," and "always patronized daddy's store and all that." Becky nodded her head and smiled, and the meeting was called to a close.

As she and Jennifer packed up their projector, I approached Becky and asked if she might be willing to sit down some time and have a conversation about why she does this work, and what it means to her. She agreed to meet me the following week in Duluth, and in the same sentence affirmed "I'm an iron range girl, I grew up in Hibbing – it's a mining town, you know – so I know what this kind of industry means to these people." Becky has accrued a reputation among the activist movement for her blind and almost comical willingness to be Enbridge's public mouth for a range of questionable if not entirely disingenuous claims, but I didn't doubt that she believed and felt what she had said to me. Seeing these divergent interpretations through the lens of place, space, and livelihood releases this analysis from a superficial or pejorative interpretation of people operating in the local, without, on the other hand, making excuses for exercises of discursive power backed by an entity with enormous material power that is not at all confined to the local in the way the subjects on the ground might be.

Clearbrook embodies the tension between the emplacement of livelihoods, and the production of place and internality in relation to externality and spatial flow. It is undeniable that many livelihoods in Clearbrook and the surrounding area have come to rely on Enbridge, and that some incomes or employment opportunities take a hit when the company's projects are shut down. Those livelihoods have certainly had a hand in producing Clearbrook as a place since 1949. But the discursive production of space and place, subsuming one locality into the project of circulating the value of a global commodity, is also an exercise of power meant to manage the

contradictions in those relations. In the end Enbridge is capital, and capital moves in space for itself, abandoning place at its convenience. No amount of discursive 'emplacing' of Enbridge in the interiority of Clearbrook as a benevolent supporter of local livelihoods undoes the fact that the company is simultaneously back-suing the county in tax court for sums that could amount to over $1 million, claiming that in past years their facilities were overvalued causing them to pay what they claim were unfairly excessive tax rates (Ruzicka 2015) . The county has already spent the money, and it would be a devastating hit for them to owe it back. It was surely the most awkward moment in the presentation when it came up (I was honestly surprised it did). Jennifer, however, managed to describe it with a grave sort of delicacy, like a parent explaining to children why something that feels unfair, in fact, is simply a rational necessity.

This last twist raises one more aspect of Enbridge's relation with Clearbrook as a place, namely its relationship with the area as a legal jurisdiction. Enbridge claims the tax case has arisen because Enbridge's assets in Minnesota have been assessed at higher rates than elsewhere, generating unfair tax-rates. This is one of the difficulties with an investment as fixed as a pipeline system: moving a factory or off-shoring a call center allows capital to exploit difference in the world, using its dialectic relationship with fixity and mobility to drive down costs of production. A terminal, however, cannot move, but the structure of the pipeline system exposes differences that Enbridge is unable to exploit in the traditional manor. Instead, the tax-case represents the deployment of the law for the same purpose, to secure the lowest costs of production available.

Enbridge's tax claim perhaps isn't directly comparable to the Black Acts that Thompson (1990) famously wrote about, but Hall's (1978) summary of Thompson' argument resonates as relevant, "in a class society, based on the needs of capital and the protection of private property, the poor and the propertyless are always in some sense on the wrong side of the law" (190). Rather than the elite disciplining poor individuals via the state, however, in a neoliberal turn global resource capital – unable to flee – is disciplining the state (at the county level, no less) for cutting into

profits. As Hall calls crime control the "wider exercise of 'social authority,'" here civil law cements the ultimate rule of the private – if one wants to Clearbrook a company town, this might be the best reason to do so. It's a glaring exposure of the contradiction between Enbridge's paternal claim to the town as a place, and its ultimate fidelity to the logic of capital.

Chapter 4 – Through whose back yard

For a pipeline, a company like Enbridge needs to fix capital through a narrow strip of landscape across long distances – as a project it is reminiscent of a railroad or a highway. These infrastructures share both physical/geometric similarities, not by coincidence but because they are a particular part of capitalism's spatial production. Railroads, highways, and pipelines are all about accomplishing the mobile counterpart to capital's need for fixity, and in this way represent various manifestations of "globalization" as theorized by Harvey (2001). Railroads have moved commodities to markets and labor forces to different fixed sites of production since the industrial revolution, and in doing so were symbiotically developed (supported *by* and support*ing*) other industrial apparatuses such as the steel industry. Highways have served a similar purpose but in association with the automobile industry (and by proxy the oil industry), and as such have cultivated a different kind of individualized labor mobility key to the post-WWII 'hydrocarbon man' and the American consumer economy (Yergin 2008). Pipelines also move commodities to market (usually a specific commodity, in this case oil), the difference being that they only move one particular kind of commodity to market and cannot also be used to transport labor.[19]

[19] Today oil-by-rail transport is a major counterpart to oil pipelines economically and politically. Pipeline supporters claim that pipelines allow them to avoid the danger of oil-by-rail transport, though it's not really clear that transporting oil by pipelines will have much to do with reducing oil-by-rail transport, being that each constitutes a different form of "fixity": oil on rail cars can be stopped, reversed

Infrastructures that serve this particular purpose – overcoming geographic space for circulation – are tasked with, obviously, absorbing the challenge of crossing geographic space, namely the frictions of crossing through and re-producing socially produced landscapes in accordance with its own purposes. And if it's not air-travel from airport to airport, or ships moving from port to port, that means land access. Pipelines may have flourished to meet the oil industry's need to limit the strategic vulnerabilities created in each juncture of transport among teamsters, railroads, and sea-ports (Mitchell 2013) but in doing so they created new contests over oil transportation before the commodity's journey could even begin.

When the railroads first came through Minnesota the government granted them large sections of the landscape (20% of the territory, in fact); what the railroads didn't need they sold to settlers to fund their ongoing building (Schmidt and Pratt 2007; Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources 2016). At the time, the project of colonization and settlement was still characterized by the binary of the external frontier and the formal absorption of territory into the project of the United States by the federal government. Throughout the second half of the 19th century, as the federal government appropriated more and more land from Indian tribes, it turned around and distributed land grants to the state of Minnesota, to railroads, and to private individuals and companies.

The Homestead Act of 1862 and the allotment of Indian reservations beginning in 1889, however, marked a shift in colonial settlement towards an internalization of the frontier

directionally, and re-routed depending on changing market conditions; the route of oil in a pipeline is irreversibly fixed once it begins its journey. This has caused some tension between refineries and pipeline companies before, who are sometimes entangled in contractual efforts to guarantee a return on assets like pipelines, which require upfront investment before the valorization project they are serving is in motion.

borders[20] and along with it came a new landscape of private property. Between 1848 and 1857, the Public Land Survey[21] was progressively implemented throughout the territory of Minnesota, juridically sectioning the landscape off into meticulously scaled grids ("History of the Public Land Survey System" 2017). The 160-acre plot became the common maximum unit for sale (limited to 80 acres in some circumstances) and allotment. This period fully territorialized the rule of the new state and formalized the absorption of the landscape into both settlement and capitalism. The result was a produced landscape fractured into plot-by-plot bids for private ownership among settlers, Indians, timber and mining companies (the latter two which routinely worked around the 160-acre maximum to procure larger tracts of land) (Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources 2016, 11). As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, the state and federal governments also launched new initiatives to manage mineral rights and re-acquire previously purchased land for the purposes of "conservation"[22] and recreation.

This is to say that when capital wants to fix an infrastructure intended to secure mobility for commodities and/or labor into the landscape now, it does so across claimed land, and often land subject to multiple claims and multiple kinds of jurisdiction (such as, for example, contested Indian treaties, federal regulatory jurisdiction over particular ecological formations, and state jurisdiction over infrastructure permitting). In addition, these claims have a history of struggle and contestation between homesteaders, resource capital, and the state. All of this sets the stage for the politics of landowners faced with the prospect of pipeline on their property.

[20] I argued this point recently with regard to allotment policy in a term paper titled "Where the Reservation Ends: Colonial space and the production of civilization in Northern Minnesota."

[21] A federal institution created by the Federal Land Ordinance of 1785

[22] Conservation, as Phillips (2007) has pointed out, is not the same as preservation – many conservation policies and land procurements have been about working with capital to prevent it from destroying resource deposits too quickly.

It's hard to miss the local politics of property lines in Minnesota. When I stopped in Clearbrook to fill up my gas tank, I grabbed a copy of the local *Leader-Record* newspaper off the counter only to read the main headline: "Board passes resolution regarding landowners' dispute with the DNR [Department of Natural Resources]." The biggest local news on April 26th in the comunities of Clearbrook, Bonvick, Gully, Leanard, and Trail (the coverage of the *Leader-Record*) was a three-column story on a dispute over whether right-of-way on an unpaved field road leading to public lands formally belonged to the state or to a private landowner. The first day I spent at the home of my hosts near Bagley, they suggested after breakfast that we get out and "walk the property line" – an almost ritual part of visiting the rural homesteads of family or friends, which involves noting stands of old-growth trees, swamps, nesting sites of a favorite bird species, deer trails, potential building sites, downed trees marked for firewood (and often an account of when they went down), and any other ecological or built characteristics of the property that the owner finds meaningful in one way or another. Property lines are marked with triangular orange 'no trespassing' signs nailed to trees and hanging on front gates. Outside of town limits, which jurisdiction you belong to becomes a bureaucratic detail. Individual/family tracts of property become the dominant units of cultural placemaking, but contrary to the methodologically individualizing stereotype of the selfish, individualistic hick that sneaks into narratives about "NIMBY" politics, I suggest that this is related to the colonial and homesteading histories of this landscape and the associated development of live and livelihoods that are intimately tied to local productions of nature. In this context, the local politics that emerge with the intrusion of the pipeline reflects a structural atomization originating in the historical production of space here, as well as relational tensions already in the produced landscape. The company's intentional efforts to exploit this atomization for their own gain not only on occasion backfires, it also aggravates positionalities already present.

5.2 Rebulding Nature

Aside from working for Enbridge, Cheryl and her husband also host pipeline on their land. The MinnCan pipeline, operated by Koch Pipeline Company, runs through their property, and Enbridge purchased another easement across it for the Sandpiper/Line 3 Replacement project, which will become relevant if the latter is approved. They "love" the MinnCan pipeline, she told me – from the fact that it created a deer run through the tree line which her husband now hunts, to the "sweet postcards" she receives in the mail when the company is going to perform routine maintenance and check-ups (she promised to send me one). She is enthusiastic to have Enbridge working on their property, "you gotta dig and everything", she said, "but those guys put that place back *better* than it was before!"

It's not much of a surprise that Cheryl toes the company line, it's her job. However, my time in the field suggests that there are likely a significant number of land owners who have either sold easements or already have pipeline on their property, and think something similar to Cheryl. What her comments do point to is the relevance of a rather elaborate "production of nature" – in this moment perhaps as much a theatrical production as a political-economic one. What makes land 'better than it was before'? And for whom?

A pipeline does not fully displace or dispossess landowners like a dam or a public acquisition for a national park, but it does – as I argued in Chapter 3 – slice into local spaces of production, or at least locally produced spaces, in which people live. Cheryl's[23] – and the company's – narrative relies on a version of landscape and nature in which a) the local production process/space isn't disrupted so much as improved, and b) they can and will guarantee it by the quality of their protocols. We've already established that there are landowners who feel the first criterion is true. However, the rationalized production of nature that occurs along a pipeline construction

[23] In fairness to Cheryl, she stated her personal sympathies in our interview for people who have ecological formations on their properties that they don't want disturbed, and wishes Enbridge to work with those people to go around them.

"spread,"[24] and the subsequent plans to manage that built environment, come with particular spatio-temporal constructions about how "nature" works, and will continue to work – effectively, erasing of the process of co-production, and instead celebrating a technical mastery over nature. For some people who draw particular kinds of livelihood from the ecological surroundings, this doesn't add up.

Janake and Frank are small-scale organic farmers who live in Carlton County, just east of Superior. During the summer of 2014, they and a swath of their neighbors received FedEx envelopes in the mail from Enbridge. The letters inside contained notice about the Sandpiper project, and informed them it was routed across the recipients' property. The company was seeking survey access to these farmers' land in order to explore and collect data regarding the route and its feasibility. Although they stopped short of making direct threats, the letters advised landowners against withholding access, and made casual reference to "eminent domain" statutes – laws that allow the state to stipulate access to private lands for "public utility" companies. (Again we see the potential deployment of the law for the benefit of capital, and a private company masquerading as a public entity.)

Both of the farmers had acute concerns related to their farming operations. In the first, an easement for a pipeline has the potential to disrupt their designation as 'organic' producers, which is a costly certification and allows them to appeal to particular markets. On Frank's property the easement would have threatened a multi-generational stand of maple trees which were set to mature into producing sap harvests (for maple syrup) in successions during the next decade. Janake, for his part, had watched in 2010 as, just up the road, Enbridge had turned over the earth along the old mainline route for the Alberta Clipper expansion, and he has a very different sensibility than Cheryl about Enbridge putting things back "better than before." As an

[24] The actual construction of a pipeline takes place along 90-100 mile "spreads," each of which constitutes a job that gets bid out to contractors.

organic farmer whose reliance on fertilizers and pesticides is limited, he has been intentionally co-producing nature on his land for years, and is sensitive to the fact that layers of topsoil that are pulled out, turned over, and then patted back down on top of a pipeline will have lost entire micro-ecologies that contribute to its fertility.

The spatio-temporal logic of the pipeline would have sliced through the spatio-temporal logics through which Frank and Janake have to approach their farming operations as co-productions with the 'natural' landscape: maple trees take a long time to grow and rich topsoil doesn't materialize overnight. So no matter how impeccably rational a presentation about safety protocols sounds at the Clearbrook Legion, in Janake's kitchen, as he told me over and over with dismissive ease, "*it just doesn't make sense.*"[25]

But not all landowners who resist the pipeline actual draw their livelihood from their properties via cultivation. I would, however, resist the notion that this means the pipeline doesn't have a sincere impact on their lives, particularly because it impacts (or threatens to impact) how they live. Enbridge has defended their Lake Route plan because it runs through some of the statistically least populated areas of the state; the corollary, as activists have pointed out, is that it is the most water-dense. Arguments to preserve the "pristine" character of lakes might masque the produced character of the natures and the landscape here, but many landowners who live on landed plots in the area worry about the pipeline on their land for another reason: they have to live in the nature as it is produced there. In Minnesota this means ice and snow in the winter, floods in the spring, insects in the summer. Because of how the Homestead Act and Allotment policies instituted the privatization of the landscape, the population is spread out and it isn't untypical for wage workers to live on a small piece of land outside of town. Most people who live on rural plots are intimately aware of the co-produced character of natural environments;

[25] The important counterpart here is Indians who draw significant livelihood and also sustenance from harvesting wild rice on lakes that the new pipeline might run beneath.

even the biggest fans of Aldo Leopold know that if they don't put culvert under the driveway automobile access to their home will eventually disintegrate. It's a simple point, in rural space human natures rather obviously work alongside ecological natures; it is a collaborative, laborious process of co-existence simply to sustain habitability, even if modestly. Thus when a pipeline creates a swamp on Otto's land and then the ongoing maintenance work of Enbridge tears up his built solution which allows him to maintain access to the other half of his property, it's an intrusion. If the exposed pipeline in that swamp leaks oil out into it, that's another. When Terry and Al question the 'film' on top of their well water when Enbridge comes through to build a pipeline between them and their neighbors, they are questioning whether their ecological 'nature' is habitable as it was before. Not to mention that for anyone who does rely on small cultivation for sustenance or local market purposes, shifts in the ecological relations surrounding these operations will undoubtedly have effect.

5.3 Property, atomization and local positionalities

Janake and Frank were able to convince Enbridge that it wasn't worth their trouble to run either Sandpiper or the Line 3 Replacement across their properties. The farmers and a number of their neighbors founded a group called the Carlton County Land Stewards (CCLS), hired a lawyer, and became key actors the court case that stalled Sandpiper in 2015. CCLS made so much noise that Enbridge has rerouted their proposal for the Line 3 Replacement to meet with the mainline on the west side of the county. The fact that Janake, Frank, and their neighbors organized against Enbridge is a story in itself, but for the purposes here I want to note the experience that preceded that story – because from my time in the field I would argue it represents a much more common experience.

Frank secured a minor "route deviation" around his farm early on, but at the time he opted to continue organizing against the projects and Enbridge, which he considered generally to be unfair. This, however, was not an easy choice according to Frank:

> …one of the things that was really hard for us, as a family, was to say "okay, it's off of us, great. We're done. Let's hide.' Because we're still worried that they're going to come back and put it back on us because, well we're causing them problems. And it doesn't make a lot of logical sense, but that's the kind of thing that keeps you up at night wondering, 'Well, I wonder if they'll come back.' Because, it might. It's not in the ground yet, you don't know. So it was hard to not just put your head in the sand and go 'Whew, that was pretty close, lucky me I'm going to hide now.'

This choice, says Frank, is hard because of local "mindsets":

> they [people in the area] don't want to say anything because… first off, okay, if you stick out in a herd, the predator picks you off. We've got that whole mindset going, because, you know, of our background or whatever. People just don't stick out. I've really had to change the way I looked at things to do this [organize]. The second piece would be, their neighbor might be pro-pipeline, and they're not, but they're like, 'Yeah, well, they gave me some money now, well that's fine.' They still have to live next to that neighbor. So it's hard for people, in a small community, I mean, everybody knows everybody. And the other thing is, if you live out in the country you probably don't really like people, to be perfectly honest, because you live out in the country away from them. So the last thing that you want to do is start talking to a bunch of people about how, you know, you're vulnerable. Again, it's a psychological piece.

Similar suggestions surfaced with other landowners, too. Otto has had years of conflict with Enbridge over their effect on his land, and is now trying to organize people to make Enbridge remove the old Line 3 if they are going to "replace" it along the new route. He also complained about how "people don't talk to each other about these things." We stood on the road looking at the swamp that didn't used to be there before the pipeline blocked up a stream, and he pointed across the road to his neighbor's land and said "look, he's got it too." I asked if he'd ever spoken to his neighbor about it, he shook his head 'no'. An organizer with whom I rode along for a day as he door-knocked in an attempt to recruit landowners to testify in a public hearing about the Line 3 Replacement project expressed a similar frustration: it wasn't that people didn't have problems with Enbridge on their property, it was that they didn't want to talk about it. "It's like they're *embarrassed* to want a company to clean up after itself!" he told me in exasperation, after we spoke with a landowner who agreed Enbridge should be held accountable for removing the old line, but became uncomfortable at the idea of stating so publicly.

When I asked Otto why he thought people don't talk to each other he told me it's because "they [Enbridge] make it that way… they don't ever want us getting together." He is not the first person to make such a suggestion to me. Multiple landowners have claimed that Enbridge deals with landowners on a secretive case-by-case basis. There were no public meetings when the easement process began; contracts are negotiated on a property-by-property basis, and multiple landowners have told me that Enbridge's land agents attempted to encourage them to sign on for easements or survey access by telling them their neighbors have all already agreed to do. Additionally, landowners with line on their land told me that after having 'incidents' – a vague term for 'something went wrong' – part of their compensation package included a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) stipulating that they can't speak about what happened or how much they were compensated for it.[26]

The atomization of landowners, however, is not entirely caused by Enbridge, however much they might exploit or reinforce it. Landowners in Northern Minnesota are also atomized by the history of homesteading and settlement that privatized the landscape and removed large portions of it from tribal control. During the second half of the 20th century, however, tribal movements have slowly worked to regain collective claims to land in the region, through establishing tribal governance, fighting for rights and regional influence accorded to them by treaties long broken by the state and federal government, and through land reclamation projects. This is important to note, because as landowners experience their own atomization in the face of Enbridge, local tensions over these struggles are sometimes aggravated. As one landowner recounted to me his difficulties with Enbridge and his mistrust for the company, he burst out in frustration:

> They can pump all the oil they want, but if they're doing it, treat everyone fair. Do I get an oil check every month? No. Do I get a great big settlement up front? No. and here I find out, the ones that are doing the most pissin' an'

[26] This includes landowners in Minnesota who hav experienced smaller incidents, as well as landowners whose properties were covered in tar-sands bitumen by a massive Enbridge spill in Michigan 2010.

> moaning and everything are the reservations and some got 3 some odd million. I heard some got, like 7 [million]. And I'm… you know. We're gettiin' nothin.

Importantly, a few sentences later he was expressing solidarity with the occupation in North Dakota at the Standing Rock Sioux reservation, an act of resistance against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

> They didn't ask to go out and camp out there, they were out there protecting what was theirs. They didn't have a say so at the beginning, once again the white man stepped on 'em. There isn't anything the white man was ever held accountable for, nothin.

And then only a few sentences later he backed off, noting that he is happy to 'honor the treaties' if Indians want that, but only their 'original terms. As far as he was concerned, they can have extra fishing rights, but they they'd better 'go out and fish in their birch bark canoes' like when the treaties were signed.

Importantly, this tangent highlights the relational and contested character of the emplaced lives in question. It is not only that internal and external forces are relational with one another, nor only that global capital is relational in producing space and place. Those positionalities in contest with Enbridge also are themselves relational, and contain contradictions that can be aggravated by the confrontation with external flows.

Conclusion

The findings of my research indicate that local pipeline politics are emplaced among local histories, ecologies, and livelihoods, subject themselves to the global flows that produce space and place at the behest of capitalism. Relying on Harvey and Smith to conceptualize the pipelines' relationship with "nature" and Enbridge's relationship with local "places" allows for an ethnographic account of environmental issues and global capital that neither falsely pits humans against nature, nor romantically disregards the real entanglement of local lives with Enbridge,

given its material role in place-making. Additionally, unpacking the deployment of certain spatio-temporal constructions regarding Clearbrook, or about oil as a commodity, reveals the power Enbridge exercises to construct a sense of place that is advantageous for its local strategic concerns in a political landscape in which their operations are increasingly contested.

Harvey has focused his work most ardently on the social processes surrounding place and space in urban areas, in part as a way of disrupting fetishizing discourses about "the environment" that rely on romantic, bourgeois characterizations of "nature" (1996 118), and in part to articulate the underappreciated role of speculative urban housing development in the 2008 financial crisis (D. Harvey 2012). It was my hope that this paper might highlight the general applicability of these concepts of place, space, and nature, to the rural landscape, and to questions of environments instrumentalized for the purposes of resource capital.

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