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# **A Literature Synthesis Report on the Impacts of Resource Extraction for Indigenous Women**

**By**

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**for the**

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### Foreword

This report is the product of collaboration by the 5 authors listed on the cover page. However, credit goes to Susan Manning and Patricia Nash for summarizing, tagging and coding the literature and to Susan Manning for drafting the report.

The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA-W-ICREF) acknowledge our presence and work on Indigenous territories. We respectfully recognize the legacy of colonization upon Indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

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### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarize literature reporting on major social, economic, health and cultural impacts that may be experienced by Indigenous women in the context of resource development and extraction projects. It is the first of two reports. The second will focus on good practices for assessing and mitigating potential impacts on Indigenous women.

Our overall goal, at the request of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, is to provide guidance to support the implementation of the proposed *Impact Assessment Act*, specifically the new requirements to consider “the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors” when examining potential social, economic, and health impacts of major projects. Achieving this goal requires not only understanding Indigenous women’s experiences surrounding resource extraction, but also considering how Indigenous knowledges can guide resource-related decisions, including ideas about how to understand and approach the diversity of impacts that can result from resource development and extraction. In the past, environmental assessment has been based largely on western worldviews (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999), viewing knowledge as an object, rather than as a process and relationship. For example, Indigenous women often carry different perspectives, backgrounds, and positions, which contribute to different priorities, concerns, and approaches to resource development (LaBelle, 2015). While there is not one western or one Indigenous knowledge system or way of knowing, western knowledge has generally taken an anthropocentric, patriarchal, and reductive approach to knowledge, in turn framing land and resources as objects to be exploited. Indigenous knowledges tend to “emphasize a metaphysical, holistic, oral/symbolic, relational, traditional, and intergenerational approach to knowledge” (Levac, Baikie, Hanson, Stienstra, & Mucina, 2018, p. 4), regard land as providing teachings and informing ways of knowing (Ormiston, 2010), and offer a code of ethics which includes the values, beliefs, and concerns of an Indigenous community (Foth, 2011). Working to link Indigenous and western ways of knowing, without privileging western knowledges or appropriating Indigenous knowledges, is an important part of Canada’s truth and reconciliation process (Levac et al., 2018).

### Approach and Methodology

We began with the extensive (pre-2016) literature collection gathered by FemNorthNet, a SSHRC-CURA funded project of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA-W-ICREF) and reported in ***Gendered and Intersectional Implications of Energy and Resource Extraction in Resource-Based Communities in Canada’s North***. All articles directly related to the questions addressed in this report were imported into the database for the current study. In addition, and using a similar search process, we systematically searched relevant databases for literature published since then (post-2016) about the impacts of resource extraction on Indigenous women.

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For each article, we extracted the relevant information and placed direct quotes and paraphrased notes into a summary/extraction template with a set of 8 sub-questions related to our overall purpose:

1. What was the impact of resource extraction on Indigenous women reported in the literature? Identify major social, economic, health and cultural impacts.
2. What are the concerns of Indigenous women reported in the literature, even if impacts are not yet clear? Noting major social, economic, health and cultural impacts.
3. What policies, tools (eg. IBAs, land claims), methods or actions (legal challenges) were used to respond to, influence or mitigate resource development impacts? Describe any tool or framework that was used. Did it identify or address gendered impacts?
4. Note the identification or suggestion of any new policies, tools or methods that could address gendered impacts.
5. Describe any examples of the consideration of Indigenous knowledge systems in accounting for: (a) implications in resource extraction; (b) gendered implications in resource extraction?
6. Describe any examples of existing guidelines, principles or actions to guide decisions/planning with attention to gender and Indigenous knowledge systems? Especially note names of documents/guidelines referenced.
7. Describe any examples of key factors that facilitate contribution to the Impact Assessment process by Indigenous women.
8. Describe any examples or proposals for developing capacity to identify and mitigate negative social, economic, health and cultural impacts of economic development projects on Indigenous women.

Articles that did not provide answers to any of these questions upon further reading were excluded from the study. Any examples of organizations/Nations/governments that had experience with resource extraction within the articles were noted in an Excel spreadsheet as potential participants for key informant interviews, the results of which will be included in our final report.

Due to time constraints, we did not have time to do searches for international examples of good practices. However, future research should look into experiences in the following countries since they frequently appeared in the literature searches: Australia, Norway, Sweden, USA, Peru, Bolivia, and Papua New Guinea.

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This report summarizes findings that responded to the first two questions noted above, including some noted concerns about current assessment processes. The final report will include results from both literature and key informant interviews that address the remaining questions.

### **Key Findings**

The literature review revealed many positive and negative economic, social, health and cultural impacts of resource extraction projects for Indigenous women. Indigenous women “may experience intersectional forms of discrimination and harm due to overlapping social categorizations of gender, race and indigeneity, and socio-economic status, as well as the ongoing effects of colonialism” (Koutouki, Lofts, & Davidian, 2018, p. 65). At the same time, resource development projects represent important opportunities for Indigenous women and Indigenous communities.

### **Employment & Business Opportunities**

One of the most important benefits for Indigenous women in the context of resource extraction projects is new opportunities for employment (Andrachuk & Smit, 2012; Garvie & Shaw, 2016; Hodgkins, 2016; Nightingale, Czyzewski, Tester, & Aaruaq, 2017). Indigenous Nations and communities typically negotiate preferential job training and hiring for their members and preferential business contract opportunities for companies owned by their members in the land claim agreements and impact benefit agreements (IBAs) with industry that precede major resource development projects on Indigenous territory (Hodgkins, 2016). Proponents often perceive these provisions as appeasement measures for Indigenous communities, by making the resource projects more attractive to community members who might benefit from employment and business opportunities (Hodgkins, 2016). The preferential hiring opportunities are typically only available to Indigenous women who live on reserve or in Indigenous communities (Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2015). Job opportunities for Indigenous women can often help them to “build financial independence apart from their partner and/or extended family, for greater autonomy” than they would otherwise have had without the resource employment (Nightingale et al., 2017, p. 375). Opportunities for employment also have positive impacts on self-confidence and women’s motivation to complete their education (Nightingale et al., 2017). In some families, women have become the primary breadwinner if they are employed by a resource industry while their partner or spouse is not. This is a shift in gender roles for some Indigenous communities, which has been linked to increased relationship stress and sometimes family violence (Nightingale et al., 2017).

While Indigenous women do gain employment through resource extraction projects, it is important to note that “the extractive industries offer fewer skilled and high paying jobs for

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women” than men (Koutouki et al., 2018, p. 65). Women are most often employed in what could be considered typically feminine roles, such as in cafeterias, housekeeping, office work, etc. rather than as tradespeople, which is perceived as a more typically masculine role (Cox & Mills, 2015; Davison & Hawe, 2012; Koutouki et al., 2018; Nightingale et al., 2017). These lower skill feminine roles typically have lower wages than the trades-oriented jobs predominantly held by male workers (Bernauer, 2011b; Koutouki et al., 2018). A study of Inuit women in Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake, Nunavut) employed at the Meadowbank Gold Mine found that they are much more likely to hold temporary/causal job contracts than permanent jobs. Inuit women “comprised approximately 6.5 per cent of the permanent workforce, and 35.1 per cent of the temporary workforce” at the mine (Nightingale et al., 2017, p. 371). In the same study, women did report feeling that the mine “was providing good employment opportunities for their family” and were satisfied with the wages and workplace training offered (Nightingale et al., 2017, p. 375). Indigenous women with disabilities face particular barriers to accessing employment in resource extraction industries, and the necessary training for those employment opportunities (Manning, Stienstra, Baikie, & Hutchinson, 2016; Stienstra et al., 2016; Stienstra, Baikie, & Manning, 2018; Stienstra, Manning, Levac, & Baikie, 2017). Women who become pregnant while employed by a resource extraction company can face challenges in obtaining maternity leave and returning to their job after their pregnancy (Czyzewski, Tester, Aaruaq, & Blangy, 2014).

Indigenous women can also face challenges in obtaining the necessary loans, startup capital and investments needed to take advantage of IBA provisions for preferential awarding of industry contracts to Indigenous companies (Lorefice, Boyd, & Caron, 2017).

The shift work and fly-in, fly-out work sites that are common in resource extraction industries also have consequences for Indigenous women (Bernauer, 2011a). They can keep women who are employed in resource industries away from their families and children for long periods of time (Koutouki et al., 2018). Some families who have two parents working at the same resource site schedule their shift rotations so that while one parent is working, the other is at home with the children, resulting in partners not seeing each other at all for any significant amount of time (Nightingale et al., 2017). This separation of families has been linked to increases in family conflict and violence (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999; Coumans, 2005; Czyzewski et al., 2014; Koutouki et al., 2018; Nightingale et al., 2017). Women who have partners or other family members who are employed in a resource industry often face an increased caregiving burden for children, people with disabilities and seniors/elders at home in the community (Koutouki et al., 2018). Indigenous women who are single mothers likewise face childcare challenges that can prohibit them from pursuing opportunities for employment in resource industries (Nightingale et al., 2017). The lack of childcare while working was among the three most common reasons why women in Qamani'tuaq left their jobs at the Meadowbank Gold Mine (Nightingale et al., 2017).

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Indigenous women also report racialized and sexualized violence and harassment at resource extraction job sites (Nightingale et al., 2017; Pasternak, 2016). Some attribute this violence and harassment to the preferential hiring provisions that ensure opportunities for Indigenous women's employment, where often non-Indigenous male co-workers not hired through those provisions see Indigenous women as less deserving of their jobs and a "token hire" (Cox & Mills, 2015; Koutouki et al., 2018). Workplace experiences of sexual violence is a common reason for Indigenous women to leave jobs in resource industries. Some of these experiences can be linked to the types of jobs women occupy at resource sites, which can be complicated with the racial stratification of resource workplaces, where Indigenous and other racialized workers often hold low-skilled jobs (Bernauer, 2011a; Cameron & Levitan, 2014; Haalboom, 2014). "Working in positions of low power within the workplace hierarchy, as well as working physically in the male employees' sleeping quarters [as housekeepers], appears to place Inuit [and other] women at a greater risk of sexual harassment and assault" (Nightingale et al., 2017, p. 376).

The temporary nature of employment in most resource extraction projects is worrying for many Indigenous women. Women report feeling anxiety and worry about what will happen to their families and communities once the resource project that many depend on for employment is shut down (Rixen & Blangy, 2016)

### **Education & Training**

Resource extraction projects often bring new opportunities for education and training for Indigenous women, especially training to prepare them to work in extractive industries.

Many resource extraction companies partner with government or community agencies to offer 'ready for the job' training for potential Indigenous employees. A study of one of these programs for primarily Indigenous workers seeking employment in the Northwest Territories' diamond mines noted that many aspects of the program were uncomfortable for students. Students were encouraged to change their ways of speaking to fit with Western/Southern standards of workplace readiness and professionalism, such as using I-statements and making self-confident statements about themselves and their abilities, which many perceived as "boasting" (Bell, 2017, p. 78). This program also emphasized financial independence as success and portrayed financial reliance on extended family networks (or extended family members relying on these future resource workers) as a barrier to success in the industry (Bell, 2017). This is incompatible with the close family relationships in many Indigenous communities, especially where only some people can benefit from industry employment. The study also reported that women were explicitly "taught to be sure to cover their 'three Bs' (backs, breasts, and buttocks)" (Bell, 2017, p. 78), which reinforced a view of women as sexual objects.

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Finances and a lack of childcare create additional barriers for Indigenous women to access these education and training programs (Buell, 2006; Stienstra, 2015). While many costs such as tuition, airfare from their home community, and a living allowance are typically covered by either industry or agency partners, there are still financial barriers for some students (McCreary, 2013). For example, one study found that while students were provided with a \$1000 monthly living allowance in Fort McMurray to attend a training program, this was not enough to even cover their rent, let alone other living expenses (Hodgkins, 2017). Indigenous women who are mothers often experience difficulties accessing childcare to allow them to attend training programs. Women sometimes have to pay for expensive childcare out of their monthly living allowance, which can leave little money for other necessary living expenses (Hodgkins, 2017). Some programs do provide childcare, but these services can be closed for certain periods of time or are not always available for the hours that they are needed, such as outside regular business hours (Hodgkins, 2017).

### **Socio-Economic Status**

Resource extraction projects can have a positive impact on the socio-economic status of many Indigenous women, their families and communities. However, they also can exacerbate previously existing social and economic inequality (Nightingale et al., 2017). In Northern Canada, for example, “Inuit women experience lower employment, income, health, and general well-being outcomes compared to Inuit men” (Nightingale et al., 2017, p. 369), and thus are much more likely to occupy a lower socio-economic status.

Signing land claim agreements and impact benefit agreements to facilitate resource development projects are often portrayed as a positive step towards economic development for Indigenous Nations and communities. However, the literature suggests that this does not necessarily hold true, especially for Indigenous women. Pre-existing inequalities can mean that these agreements can leave “many households within land claims areas in worse conditions than they experienced before the agreements, as failed expectations and the rising social costs of global inclusion combine with inadequate personal/household resources and a rapidly changing social environment that requires new skills and social forms” (Dombrowski, Habecker, Gauthier, Khan, & Moses, 2016, p. 786). More marginalized members of communities, such as women, people with disabilities and people living in poverty, can actually experience worse socio-economic conditions in the aftermath of these agreements. For example, rising food and housing prices in Indigenous communities are often attributed to income-related inflation from new employment in resource extraction projects and self-government institutions, which more marginalized members of communities, including women, are much less likely to be able to benefit from (Dombrowski et al., 2016; Koutouki et al., 2018; Rixen & Blangy, 2016). Many Indigenous women worry about the residual effects of this inflation on their lives and well-being once the resource project shuts down and jobs are scarce but prices are still high (Rixen & Blangy, 2016).

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### Housing

Nearby resource extraction projects further strain what are in many cases already strained housing resources in Indigenous communities and in municipalities with high numbers of Indigenous people. For example, in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, the influx of workers for resource projects in the Mackenzie Valley and Beaufort Sea exacerbated an existing housing crisis “leaving many local residents at risk of becoming [hard-to-house or homeless]” (Young, 2016, p. 42) due to rising housing prices. Indigenous women and men who experience intergenerational trauma, addictions, mental health crises, and who have low levels of education are especially vulnerable to becoming hard-to-house or homeless in these contexts (Young, 2016). Shelters and emergency warming centers are not always available, poorly funded, have limited space, and may have policies that refuse service to people under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which makes it difficult for people with addictions to seek shelter (Young, 2016). In Inuvik, for example, the local RCMP jail has begun as a “de facto wet shelter” for intoxicated individuals during cold weather, indicating the depth of the housing crisis (Young, 2016, p. 44). Many communities also see the average cost of real estate increase dramatically when a resource extraction project begins construction (Goldenberg, Shoveller, Koehoorn, & Ostry, 2010). This can make dreams of buying a home suddenly unaffordable for community members whose jobs provide lower incomes than the extractive industries (Stienstra et al., 2016).

### Social Services and Infrastructure

Accessible and affordable childcare is likely the most important social service to ensure Indigenous women’s abilities to benefit from the positive opportunities that accompany resource extraction projects (Mokami Status of Women Council & FemNorthNet, 2011). Women typically bear the bulk of care work responsibilities in families and communities (Perkins, 2017). The ‘Employment & Business Opportunities’ section above outlines many of the implications a lack of childcare has for Indigenous women’s employment in resource industries and their family’s well-being. An additional finding that emerged in the literature review is that a lack of accessible and affordable childcare can have implications for children’s school attendance and vulnerability to violence when their parents are working in a fly-in, fly-out resource job site (Czyzewski et al., 2014). Inuit women in Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake, Nunavut) reported experiencing anxiety while working away at the mine site because the lack of childcare in their community meant that some had had to make the tough decision to leave their children under the supervision of a partner or family member who abuses substances. They worried about the quality of care and supervision their children were experiencing but felt that they had little choice if they wanted to remain employed at the mine and provide for their family (Nightingale et al., 2017). Other studies have found that grandparents often take care of

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Indigenous children when their parents are away at work sites, which has had positive impacts on language retention (Davison & Hawe, 2012).

Other important social services such as physical and mental health care, housing and employment resource centres, family violence shelters, food banks, and public transportation are non-existent or inadequately funded in some communities, or strained by the pressures of inflation and the influx of workers for resource extraction projects in other communities (Czyzewski et al., 2014; Nightingale et al., 2017). Seniors/elders and people with disabilities are likely to be particularly disadvantaged by inaccessible or inadequate services and infrastructure (Ryser & Halseth, 2013; Stienstra et al., 2017). There have been many reports of essential workers, such as nurses and doctors, leaving public services to work for private extractive industries (Dylan, Smallboy, & Lightman, 2014; Hall, 2013). The inadequacy of mental health care workers and addictions counsellors can be especially worrisome for Indigenous women as resource extraction projects conclude. Inuit women in Qamani'tuaq anticipate an increased need for these services in their community when the Meadowbank mine ceases operation in a few years, predicting new stresses from the sudden loss of jobs and income that will lead to rising depression, substance abuse and violence (Rixen & Blangy, 2016).

Provisions in IBAs and community development agreements that provide communities with royalties or funds for social services can be important ways to counter some of these negative impacts (Dylan et al., 2014). For example, in after thinking about a 'best case scenario' for their community following the closure of the Meadowbank Gold Mine, Inuit women in Qamani'tuaq offered the following vision:

Qamani'tuaq residents find alternative ways of supporting themselves, opening new businesses (repair shops, caribou- and handmade products). Mine profits are meaningfully re-invested: new Heritage Centre offers programs to teach Elders' knowledge; a Centre for Ideas becomes a space for reflection on a sustainable future after mining. A new childcare centre frees parents to seek work; an additional soup kitchen opens. Women teach sewing, baking and cooking skills at a new Sewing Centre. Summer camps and youth activities improve mental health among youth. Families go hunting and fishing more frequently, receiving advice from their Elders on the best areas to go 'on the land.' (Rixen & Blangy, 2016, p. 307)

### **Health**

Resource extraction projects have been linked to many negative health outcomes for Indigenous women and communities (Arruda & Krutkowski, 2017). Many Indigenous people and communities across Canada are concerned about the effects of environmental contaminants from resource projects on their health and well-being. Some of these health effects carry different consequences for women than men. For example, there are "elevated

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women's cancer rates downstream from the tar sands" (Perkins, 2017, p. 283), and "women are more susceptible to radiation harms than men" from uranium mining and nuclear waste (Runyan, 2018, p. 26). Unusually high rates of abnormal cancers and lung diseases have occurred in the majority Indigenous communities of Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan and are attributed to their close proximity to the tar sands (Joly & Westman, 2017). Resource extraction sites that are not properly remediated upon the conclusion of the project, like the remains of the Giant Gold Mine outside Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, can pose substantial long term health hazards for Indigenous people and communities (Hird, 2017). Several members of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation were poisoned by arsenic polluting their drinking water near this mine in the 1950s. After this tragic incident, the arsenic waste from the mine was collected and stored underground, where it still sits today – 14 years after the mine ceased operation (Keeling & Sandlos, 2016). The influx of male workers for resource projects is also often linked to an increase in rates of sexually transmitted infections among Indigenous women in nearby communities and higher rates of teen pregnancies (Buell, 2006; Peterson, 2012).

A particular concern for Indigenous people and communities downriver from hydroelectric dams is the potential increase in methylmercury (MeHg) in the water, fish and wildlife stocks. For context, it is important to note that "Indigenous lands are located within 100 km of all potential hydroelectric sites across Canada planned for near-term development" (Calder et al., 2016, p. 13117). In adults, MeHg has been linked to potential heart health problems (Calder et al., 2016). Children's exposure to MeHg in their mother's wombs can have a significant impact on their development and place them at higher risk of developing intellectual disabilities and a number of other conditions including attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), vision problems, and challenges with short and long-term memory (Calder et al., 2016; Pirkle, Muckle, & Lemire, 2016). Women who are "of childbearing age" and children under 12 are most sensitive to MeHg exposure, and fetuses accumulate MeHg in their bodies at a much higher rate than their pregnant mothers (Calder et al., 2016, p. 13119; Pirkle et al., 2016). Mercury contamination is also becoming a concern for Indigenous communities in the vicinity of the Alberta tar sands (Pirkle et al., 2016).

Mental health concerns have also been linked to resource extraction. "High rates of suicide in many Northern communities can be linked to the increased challenges and stresses that come with the changes that accompany resource extraction, combined with already complex legacies of colonization and displacement" (Stienstra et al., 2016, p. 41). Depression and anxiety are commonly reported concerns in communities near extraction sites, and can be exacerbated by the boom and bust cycle common in some extractive industries (Coumans, 2005). The link between resource extraction and addictions is discussed in more detail below.

### **Substance Use and Abuse**

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Increases in substance use and abuse is one of the most common health impacts of resource extraction projects (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999; Arruda & Krutkowski, 2017; Joly & Westman, 2017; Mokami Status of Women Council & FemNorthNet, 2011). A study in Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake, Nunavut) found that “in a community with existing social challenges, recent experiences with trauma, and limited support services, [Inuit] women reported that the increased income from mine employment is fuelling problematic substance use” (Nightingale et al., 2017, p. 378).

Substance use within Indigenous communities is in part increased due to policies that have zero tolerance for alcohol and drug use on resource job sites. Because of these policies, “mine employees facing challenges with substance use overindulge upon returning to the community” (Nightingale et al., 2017, p. 378). This overindulgence has been linked to increased rates of gendered and sexualized violence for women and girls within communities (KAİROS, 2014; Nightingale et al., 2017).

### **Sex Work**

Increases in sex work among Indigenous women have been linked to resource extraction industries (Coumans, 2005; Joly & Westman, 2017; Perkins, 2017; Peterson, 2012). This is typically attributed to the mass influx of primarily male workers to resource towns and work camps near project sites, who have high levels of disposable income and seek female companionship (KAİROS, 2014; Koutouki et al., 2018). Some Indigenous women enter sex work as an alternative source of income for themselves and their families, while others are victims of human trafficking (Koutouki et al., 2018). “Women who are homeless, living in overcrowded housing, struggling with mental health concerns and addictions, or experiencing poverty are more likely than other women to be involved in sex work or vulnerable to trafficking” (Stienstra et al., 2016, p. 43).

### **Violence, Crime and Safety**

Increases in violence and crime are common impacts of resource extraction for Indigenous women and Indigenous communities (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999; Arruda & Krutkowski, 2017; Perkins, 2017). As noted in the ‘Employment & Business Opportunities’ section above, sexualized, gendered and racialized violence and harassment in the workplace is not an uncommon experience for Indigenous women, and the nature of work schedules in resource extraction industries which separate families for long periods of time have been linked to increasing rates of gender-based violence in some families in Indigenous communities (Koutouki et al., 2018; Nightingale et al., 2017). The effects of legacies of colonization, displacement, and intergenerational trauma can also contribute to this issue (Campbell, 2007). Women in communities near resource extraction sites sometimes experience rapid increases in sexual violence, which can be connected to the influx of male workers (Bernauer, 2011a; Buell,

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2006; Koutouki et al., 2018). Many Inuit women fear that an increase in rates of violence and crime will be a likely outcome in Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake, Nunavut) upon the closure of the Meadowbank Gold Mine (Nightingale et al., 2017).

### **Food & Water Security**

Resource extraction projects can compromise food and water security, especially access to country food, for Indigenous women and their families. Flooding from hydroelectric dams can reduce access to important “hunting, gathering, trapping and fishing” grounds (Buckland & O’Gorman, 2017, p. 75) and create concerns about levels of methylmercury (MeHg) in local fish and wildlife (Calder et al., 2016). Waste and other pollutants from oil, gas and mining projects are very real concerns during project operations and can remain concerns long after a resource extraction project has concluded, if cleanup and remediation is not properly managed (Medeiros, Wood, Wesche, Bakaic, & Peters, 2017). Further, negative effects of extractive industries can combine with the negative effects of climate change to increase food and water security challenges for some Indigenous communities (Arruda & Krutkowski, 2017).

Country food is an important source of healthy and affordable food for many Indigenous people (Calder et al., 2016). Families who live on low incomes depend on country food as a source of affordable nutrition, as food in local stores in Northern and remote communities can be very expensive (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999; Arruda & Krutkowski, 2017; Kunkel, 2017; Medeiros et al., 2017). There are high rates of unemployment for women in many Indigenous communities. For example, “census data show that more than 30% of Aboriginal women living on reserves in the Cariboo Chilcotin region [of British Columbia] were unemployed” (Kunkel, 2017, p. 12). The economic value of being able to hunt, fish and gather berries to these women and their families cannot be underestimated. Women who are members of the Tsilqot’in Nation told researchers how they make additional income from their harvests by trading inedible parts of the animals for other items their families might need (Kunkel, 2017).

Access to country food can be compromised in a number of ways due to resource extraction projects. Firstly, toxic pollution in the environment can kill animals or make them unsafe to eat (Calder et al., 2016; Medeiros et al., 2017). The construction of infrastructure that accompanies extractive industries such as building roads, work camps, etc. can disturb or destroy animal habitat and disrupt migration routes for animals such as caribou (Andrachuk & Smit, 2012; Dylan et al., 2014; Nightingale et al., 2017). Inuit women in Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake, Nunavut) noted that their husbands traditionally have primary responsibility for hunting in their families. When workers are away at resource sites for a long period of time, they have less time to engage in hunting and providing country food for their families (Buell, 2006; Nightingale et al., 2017).

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The availability and safety of fresh drinking water is an issue for many Indigenous people (Medeiros et al., 2017). Pollution from resource extraction projects often contaminate local freshwater systems. This is particularly concerning for Indigenous communities because going out on the land is an important cultural practice (Moore, von der Porten, & Castleden, 2017). As one study noted, “untreated freshwater sources are commonly used during hunting and fishing expeditions for drinking, butchering processes, and meal preparation” (Medeiros et al., 2017, p. 642). Some Indigenous people “now carry bottled water when going out on the land” because of fears of water contamination (Moore et al., 2017, p. 5). Environmental contaminants from extractive industries can also poison local drinking water sources and community reservoirs (Sandlos & Keeling, 2016).

At the same time, some communities also report positive food security impacts resulting from resource extraction. For example, the additional income from employment in resource industries can help to finance hunting equipment, like all-terrain vehicles, to increase access to and availability of country food for Indigenous communities (Rixen & Blangy, 2016; Shandro, Jokinen, Stockwell, Mazzei, & Winkler, 2017). This additional income can also help to make store-bought food more affordable. New roads into the bush to facilitate access to resource extraction sites can also benefit Indigenous community members by making their hunting grounds more easily accessible (Rixen & Blangy, 2016). Additionally, royalties and other economic benefits from IBAs and other Indigenous-industry agreements can be used in ways that increase the viability of subsistence lifestyles and create additional opportunities for community members to go out on the land and engage in traditional practices (Southcott & Natcher, 2018).

### **Culture, Traditions, Rights & Sovereignty**

Loss of access to land and parts of their territories due to resource extraction projects can have far-reaching cultural and spiritual impacts for Indigenous women and communities (Buckland & O’Gorman, 2017). Women can experience different impacts than men as a result of loss of access to land. “For example, while hunting and fishing are traditionally seen as men’s domain in [some] indigenous cultures, women are frequently responsible for harvesting plants and other wild products” (Koutouki et al., 2018, p. 67). These traditionally women’s activities are often not considered in regulatory processes or impact assessments (Koutouki et al., 2018). In other cases, “places where women hunt and fish, harvest berries, and pick medicinal plants (as well as those where they traditionally gave birth) have been ignored [in land use studies and research]” (Kermoal, 2016, pp. 114–115). One potential reason for this exclusion is that the ethnographic methods which underpin the research used in many land use studies and impact assessments have been historically biased towards men and their activities (Kermoal, 2016).

Indigenous women are also concerned about the effects of resource extraction on the transfer of cultural knowledge (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999). In Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake, Nunavut),

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“more than 64 per cent of women surveyed reported that mining is causing the loss of traditional/cultural practices” (Nightingale et al., 2017, pp. 377–378). This is linked to mine employment keeping many community members, including elders, away from the community for long periods of time, resulting in less time spent out on the land (Nightingale et al., 2017). When environmental accidents happen at resource extraction sites, they often have consequences for Indigenous traditions and culture. For example, a tailings site failure that polluted the Fraser watershed in British Columbia prevented some Indigenous Nations from fishing for salmon.

Salmon fishing, as a traditional activity, has been practiced for generations and provides the basis for a series of community gatherings that underpin community cohesion and reaffirm values. Fishing, fish processing, and preserving provide opportunities for shared activity, play an important role in maintaining a sense of identity, represent a physical manifestation of culture, and create opportunities for traditional knowledge to be passed from First Nation elders to youth. (Shandro et al., 2017, p. 85)

The cultural consequences of the tailings site failure which prevented salmon fishing were quite harmful for Indigenous Nations in the area.

A resource extraction project can change Indigenous peoples’ sense of place or place attachment to part of their territory, which is not always understood or accounted for in resource extraction regulatory processes based in Western science (Arruda & Krutkowski, 2017; Kunkel, 2017). For example:

When discussing energy impacts and the technical fixes proponents prescribe for them, Aboriginal people frequently make the point that the relevant lands are inhabited by a spirit, a sacred character that cannot be replaced following massive resource extraction and landscape change. While companies have proposed new ceremonies to close the reclamation of project lands, to heal the land and its spirit, Elders generally reply that this cannot be done...The transformation of the lands will be too great, and the reclaimed lands will not have the same inherent value; it is not the same place (Baker & Westman, 2018, p. 151).

Many Indigenous communities and Nations report experiencing consultation, traditional land use studies, and impact assessments as “extractive in that they take knowledge from communities without giving back” (Baker & Westman, 2018, p. 145). Indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge is far too often warped, distilled or manipulated to fit the needs of industry proponents and governments in regard to the duty to consult, rather than taken as a interconnected web of knowledge and being integrated in its fuller forms in these studies and assessments (Baker & Westman, 2018). It is also often felt that “consultation has little effect on development decisions” in the end, as proponents have much more power than Indigenous Nations (Garvie & Shaw, 2016).

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Indigenous Nations and communities have a number of critiques of current consultation and impact assessment practices, and their consequences for Indigenous culture, rights and sovereignty. First, the duty to consult is the responsibility of the Crown, and thus federal, provincial and territorial governments. However, in many cases, consultation has been delegated to industry proponents and government oversight is minimal (Kermaal, 2016). Second, the status and breadth of official consultation policies varies across Canada. Officially government consultation policies for the Métis only exist federally and in some provinces. Notable exceptions include Alberta and British Columbia (Joly, Longley, Wells, & Gerbrandt, 2018; Kermaal, 2016). Many Métis communities experience challenges in being recognized in resource extraction regulatory processes and in deriving benefits from extractive industries for their communities (Kermaal, 2016; Mills, 2017). Third, in some jurisdictions, junior mining companies doing exploration activities are not required to consult with Indigenous communities before staking mining claims on their land (Haalboom, 2016). This ignores Indigenous Nations' rights to their territory and is an infringement on their sovereignty. Indeed, "a First Nation's first encounter with an industry proponent can still in some instances occur when workers appear in the bush, ready to begin extraction activities" (Garvie & Shaw, 2016, p. 1015). Fourth, very few jurisdictions require that impact assessments consider cumulative effects for Indigenous peoples and communities. This means that cumulative impacts on treaty rights and cultural practices due to multiple projects cannot always be properly considered with the individual project focus (Garvie & Shaw, 2016).

Some Indigenous Nations have recognized that resource extraction and other economic development activities might be necessary to ensure the sustainability of self-government. For example, a candidate running for election in Nunatsiavut, Labrador stated: "As our North Coast tax base is significantly smaller than what we need to run our self-government, the Nunatsiavut government will be dependent on extracting its natural resources in order to have the funds necessary to sustain our communities and the running of our government. The generation of own source revenue is essential, and right now, mining seems to be the short-term answer" (Procter, 2016, p. 293). Resource industry jobs that allow Indigenous people to maintain prosperous livelihoods in their own communities have also been recognized as contributing to more sustainable self-government (Procter, 2016).

### Gaps and Silences in the Literature

The academic literature related to the impacts of resource extraction and impact assessment has a number of gaps and silences which we noted in researching and writing this report. These gaps and silences present challenges for researchers and practitioners who want to make impact assessments practices more inclusive of gendered concerns.

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Firstly, the majority of the scholarly articles concerning impacts of resource extraction were focused on Indigenous nations and communities as a whole, with very little disaggregation of data and findings by identity factors such as gender, age, income, (dis)ability, etc. This makes it very difficult to tease out the intersectional implications of resource extraction for historically marginalized members of Indigenous communities, including women, and will likely present a challenge for future impact assessments.

Secondly, the academic literature is particularly silent on the experiences of Indigenous men, and the differences in gendered impacts of resource extraction between Indigenous men and Indigenous women. Indigenous women, in comparison, are much better represented in the literature on impacts of resource extraction, due in large part to research led or initiated by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and the Native Women's Association of Canada (see, for example, Czyzewski, Tester, Aaruaq, & Blangy, 2014; Nightingale, Czyzewski, Tester, & Aaruaq, 2017). It is difficult to run searches in academic literature databases for the terms 'man' or 'men.' These searches often return many irrelevant results due to matching keywords that contain those search terms within them (mental, man-made, human, etc.). However, searches for the term 'gender' in association with 'Indigenous' still return very few results which differentiate gendered impacts between Indigenous men and women. We take this to mean that little research has been conducted thus far which focuses more fully on the experiences of Indigenous men. This would be a valuable area for future study.

Thirdly, we found that the academic literature generally contains few positive examples of best practices for including Indigenous women and Indigenous knowledge systems in impact assessment processes. The scholarly literature contained many critiques of existing practices but few examples of pragmatic solutions. Suggestions for best practices were much more likely to be found in the community literature (reports and fact sheets produced by advocacy organizations, Indigenous governments, etc.). We have included our findings from this community literature in our reports and encourage proponents and consultants in future impact assessment processes to consult the community literature as well as the academic literature.

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