Gender in Research on Northern Resource Development

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**Introduction**

As other authors in this volume have demonstrated, the effects of resource development in the north are profound and complex. In this chapter, we review the literature that explores how these effects are gendered. Although gender has not always taken a central place in northern research, indigenous women across Canada’s north have often voiced their concerns over development through reports and submissions to Environmental Assessment (EA) processes. Women from remote communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT), for example, expressed their concerns in a response submitted to the 1995 Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed diamond mine (Brockman & Argue, 1995). The women were concerned that the mine would increase alcohol and drug abuse and negatively affect family and community life. The submission also asked that the company address the additional barriers that women would face accessing employment benefits, compared to men. These included not having access to childcare, being typecast into lower paying traditional jobs, and being unable to accept work that involves long distance commuting because of their childcare responsibilities. A few years later, the Tongamiut Inuit Annait (TIA), an organization representing Inuit women in northern Labrador, made several submissions to the Voisey’s Bay nickel mine/mill and smelter project Environmental Assessment Panel. In addition to asking that the proponent attend to the gendered impacts of development, the TIA made a number of recommendations concerning gender and governance. In 1998, the TIA organized a workshop which gathered Inuit women to examine the EA and land claim processes and they suggested that EA and land claim policies and processes adopt gender sensitive methodologies, that funding should be provided to Aboriginal women’s groups, and that they ensure equal representation of Aboriginal women on all institutions pursuant to land claims (Archibald & Crnkovich 1999). Many of the concerns raised by women in these earlier assessments are still relevant. More recently, in 2011, the Mokami Status of Women Council filed a response to the EA statement for the Lower Churchill Hydro Development in Labrador which outlined how the proponent did not adopt a feminist methodology, that the company failed to set detailed targets for the training and hiring of women and that the Environmental Impact Statement did not provide adequate information about child care, housing, and response to alcohol and drug abuse (Hallett & Baikie, 2011).
Despite the important roles that Aboriginal women have played in the politics of resource development, however, gender has often been assigned peripheral status in academic research on northern resource development. This may be a product of the masculine nature of resource industries or of the divide between the community-centered perspectives of Aboriginal women and those of white feminist movements who have tended to prioritize individual emancipation. The limited literature that does exist suggests that the perspectives of Aboriginal women can offer crucial insight into how northern economies and cultures are changing as a result of resource industry growth. There are many indications that resource development is profoundly re-shaping gender relations in northern communities, altering the flow of wealth through families and kin networks, the status and power relations between women and men, and social and cultural practices and beliefs. In this chapter, we suggest that adopting a gendered lens that extends beyond the study of indigenous women is critical to understanding the flows of wealth to, and the social and cultural changes within northern communities.

Our overview encompasses literature on northern resource development and gender relations in the Arctic since the 1980s. Although we focus on Canada’s north, because the literature is limited we also draw on sources that examine the gendered impacts of resource development in other regions. Although we adopt a constructivist understanding of gender, seeing gender as a range of attributes associated with the categories ‘women’ and ‘men’ that are culturally specific and that change over time, we are cognizant that much of the literature pertaining to gender focuses on Aboriginal women and their relations with men. The review therefore focuses more narrowly on Aboriginal women and resource development despite our intentions to adopt a broad perspective on gender relations. We divide the literature on gender and resource development into three perspectives: economic perspectives focused on patterns of wealth distribution; socio-cultural perspectives that describe the impacts of resource development for gender relations in the community and family and political perspectives examining how resource development influences the role of women in resource and community governance. Of these three areas, the socio-cultural impacts of resource development on northern Aboriginal women are the best documented, however there are important linkages between economy, governance and social and cultural implications that have been overlooked.
Gendered distribution of resource benefits

Women living in the north have often voiced concerns about the distribution of resource wealth within their communities. In EA hearings and discussions prior to development, women’s groups have been weary of resource development, suggesting that rising individual incomes can heighten economic disparities within and among communities and families. Northern women have also been concerned that resource wealth often flows disproportionately to men rather than women and children (Status of Women Council of the NWT, 1999; National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2008). These concerns are supported by a fragmented literature on the participation of Aboriginal women in resource work and on different models of wealth transfer through negotiated agreements. The literature suggests that gender continues to be a significant factor in training and employment. The limited literature about cash transfers resulting from profit-sharing arrangements or paid as compensation for environmental impacts suggests that these are also differentiated by sex. Last, research is needed to understand how women and families benefit from procurement policies that support Aboriginal businesses.

Employment - Wages from jobs in high-paying natural resource sectors are a critical way that northern communities have harnessed resource rents for local economies. Yet several studies have shown that Aboriginal women are less likely to be employed in resource work than Aboriginal men. Although this gender disparity also applies to non-Aboriginal women, exclusion from resource employment has a greater economic impact on Aboriginal women since they often live in areas with few other employment opportunities (Reed, 1999; Mills, 2006; Rude & Deiter, 2004). The labour market consequences are particularly critical for women living in northern communities. For example, a study by Southcott (2003) found that women in Northern Ontario had lower participation rates than men and than women in Ontario as a whole. Although Aboriginal women are over-represented in resource employment relative to non-Aboriginal women because of their greater representation in northern and rural areas, their employment is often in jobs that are low-waged and precarious. For example, in a study of occupational and industry segregation in forestry, Mills (2006) found that Aboriginal women were concentrated in seasonal forest services such as tree planting and under-represented in more stable sawmill and pulp mill work relative to men. Aboriginal women were not only excluded from male-dominated occupations but also from female-dominated clerical and secretarial occupations. In the NWT in
2006, women had a 46% employment rate whereas in the diamond industry they only accounted for 16% (Gibson, 2008). This indicates that women in communities affected by diamond mining are increasingly being pigeonholed into homemaker roles compared to the general population. As well, purchasing power is being put into the hands of men while women have higher levels of education which could lead to new tensions in families.

Research on women in resource industries has identified several barriers to the participation of women. These have included: gendered expectations for youth, selective hiring practices and hostile work environments. Research on women working in forestry in northern Saskatchewan found results that women in non-traditional occupations felt that they faced heightened pressure to prove themselves on the job and were tokenized by male co-workers and employers, findings that were consistent with other research on women in non-traditional occupations (Tallichet, 1995; Women in Mining Canada, 2010). Fly-in, fly-out mines pose additional barriers to women with children since the mines require that workers are away from home for weeks at a time (Sharma, 2010). In addition to documenting the barriers faced by women, other scholars have sought to better understand the reasons for women’s exclusion. Several authors have argued that the relationship between masculinity and resource work is central to the exclusion of women (Reed, 1999; Brandth and Haugen, 2000). While masculinity is certainly a key factor in the under-representation of women in resource work, it needs to be understood as a social and cultural construction that is continuously reproduced in space. In relation to mining, Lahiri-Dutt (2012) emphasizes that resource work is not inherently masculine, instead suggesting that scholars work to deconstruct the association between mining and working class masculinity. Research in this vain includes Butler and Menzies (2000)’s work on the participation of Aboriginal women in forestry in British Columbia since the Hudson’s Bay company established a fort in 1834. While Aboriginal women were initially included in harvesting and selling wood they were later excluded as the industry became more capitalized and as colonial policies limited First Nations ownership and access to waged work (Butler & Menzies, 2000). From this vantage, understanding the social and cultural practices that reproduce hegemonic forms of masculinity is critical to increasing women’s influence and participation in resource industries.
A second area of research pertaining to the participation of northern women in resource work is the influence of negotiated agreements on employment. Negotiated agreements between Aboriginal communities or governments and companies or provincial and federal governments have significantly altered employment in resource regions by encouraging the training, hiring and promotion of local Aboriginal workers. While most of the research on negotiated agreements and employment focuses on Aboriginal participation as a whole, research differentiates between the experiences of women and men. There is disagreement over whether negotiated agreements are able to address gender inequality in employment. O’Faircheallaigh (1999) suggested that Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs) have the potential to promote the training and hiring of women. He points to the IBA negotiated by the Labrador Inuit Association at Voisey’s Bay which included provisions for the employment of women and to The Cape Flattery mine in Australia that became subject to an IBA after it had already been in operation. In both cases, local Aboriginal people were able to negotiate specific employment opportunities for Aboriginal women into their negotiated agreements (O’Faircheallaigh, 1999). Alternatively, other research has suggested that programmes to promote the participation of Aboriginal peoples have not been as successful at including Aboriginal women as they have been at including men. Research in forestry and mining by Egan & Klausen (1998) and Butler & Menzies (2000) found that programmes to hire Aboriginal workers did not address the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal women. Research on the Diavik mine also found that despite negotiated agreements, a combination of factors continued to impede the entry of Aboriginal women into non-traditional jobs. These included: discriminatory hiring, inadequate training and cultural barriers (Status of Women Council of NWT, 1999). Women in the NWT also stated that the Diavik Mine gears their hiring practices toward men and only hires women in low-paying traditional occupations such as housekeeping, cleaning and cooking (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2008). The work of Gibson (2008) also suggests that while IBAs increase access to employment, the benefits largely accrue to men. In northern communities affected by mining, unemployment dropped from above 50% to below 30% after the beginning of mining operations. And, although all incomes rose as a result of mining, men’s incomes rose more than women’s as they were more likely to receive employment.
While the operations phase of any resource project generally garners the most attention from academics, the construction phase is an increasingly significant share of overall employment, as operations become increasingly capital intensive. It is worth considering how the gendering of construction might represent particular barriers to the participation of women. An evaluation of the Innu, Inuit and Metis Human Resources Development Strategy for the Voisey’s Bay Project noted that activities to promote training in non-traditional occupations was limited and that their recommendations regarding women’s participation were not implemented (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009). Little (2005) studied a training programme for low-income Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women to become apprentice carpenters in Regina and concluded that tailored training programmes were critical so that women could develop strategies to overcome barriers to employment such as sexism, racism and harassment. Little (2005) argued that the success of the program is not just in the number of women that become carpenters but in the programs ability to boost women’s view of themselves. While Little’s book focuses on low-income women in Regina (mainly Aboriginal), there are lessons to be learned that can be applied to training programs for women in the North.

_Cash transfers-_ IBAs and Socioeconomic Agreements also provide for transfers income directly to Aboriginal governments. Despite the importance of cash transfers, there is almost no literature examining how the income generated by resource development through IBAs might benefit women, for example by increasing the funding for services used differentially by women. One such study by O’Fairchealleigh (2007) assesses three models of income distribution in Australian IBAs for their gendered effects. He concludes that only one model respects the varying degree of risk carried by different parts of the population (such as women) in the allocation formula. With the first model the entire community would meet and make decisions each year on how to allocate funds in three categories: a holding mechanism, commercial investments and immediate regular cash payments made to members. The holding mechanism distributed money to a tax-exempt trust fund that provided payments to individuals at age 18 and to those who needed medical and social services. Under this model, women would receive direct payments from the revenues gained from mining and could use this money as at their own discretion. However, this model has not been used in recent years as it provides benefits in the short term but not the long term. The second model, and the most widely used in recent years, is the establishment of a trust
fund that is embedded in the IBA to ensure long-term benefits. This model can benefit women positively, especially in the long term, but it depends on where the money is allocated, what is prioritized, and whether women are involved in the allocation process when the trust fund is established. The third model has a one-time lump sum payment that was divided 50/50 between a women’s fund and a men’s fund. Communities were also given fixed annual payments and profit related annual payments that were split between a number of funds (sustainability fund, special purpose fund and partnership fund). This model had obvious benefits to women as a large one-time lump sum was given to a fund for the use of Aboriginal women. However, this model is a unique in Australia and no Canadian IBAs contain such a model.

The above research, while suggesting that women do not obtain economic benefits from resource development equal to men, fails to provide an overall picture of how the income flows resulting from resource development are gendered. Particular attention should be paid to two research areas that are largely void, the gender distribution of cash transfers resulting from negotiated agreements and of the profits from Aboriginal-owned firms. While there is little research on women’s participation in joint-ventures resulting from resource development, since women in northern communities are often more educated than men, they are often highly involved in administrative work. One business leader in a Taicho community commented:

*We are truly blessed in the Dogrib region, for we have very strong Dogrib women. The head of the education is a Dogrib woman holding a degree. The head of Social Service is a Dogrib woman. The head of our Lands Administration is sitting right here, our Office Manager. In almost every department or every social or government group the head is a woman. The majority of young people getting an education are Dogrib women. Right now as we speak 56% of the total staff of our schools is Dogrib women. 100% of the administration of the band, hamlet and Treaty 11 are Dogrib women. It won’t be long before the next move is to dispossess us old people. And it will happen. Right now as I speak we have 92 young aboriginal people attending post secondary education. Out of that 92 there are 64% of them are aboriginal women of the Dogrib region (Qtd. In Gibson, 2008, p. 226).*

Therefore, despite the exclusion of women from many forms of resource employment, women in northern communities may be able to garner economic benefits from development through employment in social services or administrative capabilities or through participation in business ventures.
Socio-cultural perspectives of resource development on gender relations

From a socio-cultural perspective, rising income disparity between the sexes resulting from men’s participation in resource development has multiple gendered effects. Research has documented gendered impacts at multiple interconnected scales, from the individual to the family and community. When development affects the health and wellbeing of individuals, the effects ripple outward to affect families and the broader community. For example increasing alcohol use or higher male incomes may increase domestic violence rates, or alter the gender balance of reproductive labour within the home and subsistence harvesting within the community.

Individual Health Effects – There is a sizable body of research documenting the negative effects that resource extraction has on individuals working at a resource extraction site or living in a community that hosts a resource extraction industry. Reported social problems that have negative health outcomes include increased alcohol consumption, gambling, sexual exploitation, teen pregnancy, single parenthood, STIs, spousal assaults and family violence (Kuyek, 2003; Gibson and Klinck, 2005; National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2008; Gibson 2008; Government of NWT, 2009). Many argue that resource exploitation increases negative social behaviors through increased income and individuals being separated from their social networks while on work rotations at remote sites (and alternatively spouses left at home). These problems affect both men and women. Drug and alcohol abuse appear to affect men at higher rates, perhaps due to their higher rate of employment at remote sites where alcohol and drugs are available, and they are separated from family and other social norms (Gibson and Klinck, 2005). Gambling addiction however, appears to affect women at higher rates than men (Weitzner, 2006; Gibson, 2008).

Schaefer (1983) argues that there are physical health consequences related to increased psychological stress of participating in resource development. Through a comparison of two Inuit communities, one in the Western Arctic greatly affected by the D.E.W. line construction and oil exploration, and the other in the Eastern Arctic which was largely traditional at the time
of the study, the author showed significant differences in nutritional and general health parameters. The Inuit community affected by Western development proved to have poorer health and an increase in nutritional anemia, obesity, arteriosclerosis and metabolic problems as well as family break downs, alcohol abuse, venereal disease and deaths due to violence (Schaefer, 1983). More recent research found that psychological stress also affected women since they experienced increased pressure to perform unpaid domestic labour while their male spouses are employed by the resource industry (Sharma, 2010). The author argued that the gendered employment structure in single-industry towns that provides few employment opportunities outside the home for women promotes a patriarchal culture in the community and family life that often varies substantially from previous social organization. Sharma and Rees (2007) argue that the health consequences of this patriarchal culture include increased psychological stress among women.

*Effects on Family and Community Social Structure* - The individual health impacts discussed above move through the social structure of northern communities, starting with the families of resource extraction workers. Weitzner (2006) found that mining had many negative impacts on families including an increase in alcohol use, neglect of family and children from those hired at the mine site (spending paycheck before coming home, not coming home at all during break), increased family violence and increased burden on stay-at-home spouses to care for family. These negative effects resulted in both diminished physical and mental health for all family members which then affected the community as a whole.

Research on the effects of resource development has also documented the impacts of long distance commuting, or fly-in, fly-out operations, on families. While much of the research suggests that long distance commuting has negative effects on families, other research is more ambiguous. Pirotta (2009) found that women in Australia who worked a fly-in fly-out schedule reported multiple problems including developing and maintaining friendships; community living; physical exhaustion and recuperation during leave; and successfully returning to community life. Similarly, in Gibson’s (2008) research in the Northwest Territories, Dene women often described their husbands as a “once a month Santa Claus” (181), who they had to “train” to uphold their portion of the workload each time upon return from the mine: “I sort of have to train him again, to not swear around the kids, to train him to take care of the kids” (224). This has adverse effects
on children as they often have a parent (usually the father) who misses out on important events such as graduations, birthdays and family events, as well as day-to-day contact. However, Gibson (2008) also found that some Dene women preferred the rotational schedule, as they enjoyed being at the mine, away from conflict at home. O’Faircheallaigh (1995) has also suggested that cultures of reciprocity that include support from extended families help the partners of men working in fly-in fly-out operations cope with prolonged separation. He qualifies this, however, by saying that these supports are in decline as a result of economic development.

Research has also documented how an increasing reliance on wage labour and declining reliance on subsistence production is negatively affecting families, extended families and communities (Stern, 2005). Through a qualitative study in the community of Holman, located in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories, Stern (2005) shows the importance of sharing and reciprocity and the consequences of wage labour which serve to weaken Inuit social values and create tensions within the community. These tensions then undermine the social support systems that women had previously found helpful in dealing with the psychological stress of an absent spouse employed in the resource extraction industry.

Impacts on families from resource development projects occur not just during the life of the project, but also after the shut-down phase. Families with increased incomes from employment shoulder increased debts and the stress involved with making payments after the industry closes. Women have expressed concerns of the “feast and famine” system that is associated with resource development projects and the debts and stress that result in psychological and physical impacts (Yukon Conservation Society, 2000).

*Effects on Subsistence Harvesting* - The gendered effects of northern resource development can also be seen at the level of cultural activities. The most researched of these is subsistence harvesting. The destruction of the land that accompanies resource development projects affects wildlife populations and landscapes which Aboriginal people rely on as both food and a means of expressing and reproducing culture through the subsistence economy. For example, Natcher, Felt, McDonald & Ford (2012) note that 91 percent of houses in Postville, Labrador participated in subsistence harvesting and in nearly all cases they served as an important component of household economies. Women in British Columbia spoke about the impacts of resource
development on wildlife as a whole, and specifically discussed receding waters resulting in fewer fish, a reduction in the rabbit population, and coming across diseased animals (Rude & Deiter, 2004). The subsistence economy is an important way that many households in Canada’s North feed themselves. The reduction in wildlife results in an increased reliance on store-bought goods and the health consequences caused by these foods. The importance of the subsistence economy for Aboriginal women is highlighted by Kuokkanen (2011) who argues that women contribute to family survival in a number of ways which go beyond the man-as-hunter, woman-as-gatherer dichotomy, including processing and preparing meat, fur and hides. Bielawski (2003) shows that while gender roles are rather stringent during hunting trips with both men and women, women often hunt and butcher caribou themselves, showing that this knowledge is not held by men alone. However, participation in the subsistence economy involves both men and women, and the loss of one partner due to employment schedules can result in a severe decline of a family’s harvesting activities.

Parlee, Berks & the Teetl’it Gwich’in Renewable Resources Council (2005) authored a paper that show that the importance of a subsistence economy goes beyond just economic benefit and is intertwined with health, spirituality and culture. By investigating berry harvesting practices of Teetl’it Gwich’in women, the study identified nine different values, of which the commercial value of berries was not one. The interwoven and complex manner in which women partake in berry harvesting includes a network of sharing, sustainable harvesting, spirituality, relationship to the land, and health and wellbeing of the family. This underscores the importance of mitigating negative environmental effects of resource development in order to maintain the cultural economies of northern communities. Further, the introduction of western cultural views and behaviours through contact with resource extraction industries and non-local workers can have negative impacts on local cultures. Women in British Columbia raised concerns that with development comes Western cultural beliefs about nature which clash with the traditional roles of women being stewards of the land (Rude & Deiter, 2004). These same women also spoke of being distressed and grieved while seeing the destruction caused by development which deterred them from berry picking.
The multi-level impacts of resource harvesting on socio-cultural systems has an impact on the lives of both men and women, in many cases in different ways, but also ripples through social institutions where both men and women have specific cultural roles, thus also disrupting social and cultural linkages at higher levels. The research on the social and cultural aspects of resource extraction industries documents the impacts of development, especially as tied to increased wage labour and rotational work schedule, as well as environmental concerns, yet provides few examples of successful resistance or adaptation to the effects of resource development. The research on socio-cultural effects needs to transition from the description of problems to an assessment of strategies that facilitate their remediation.

The role of women in resource governance

Our final category of literature explores the role of women in resource governance. Perhaps not surprisingly, the research suggests that governance is quite gendered, and that women’s voices are not well represented in decision-making. Kafarowski (2005a) for example, shows that despite their involvement in fishing and hunting, women are largely absent from the boards of hunters and trapper groups in the Northwest Territories. The author argues that men and women have different traditional knowledge(s) in regards to hunting and fishing and the traditional knowledge of women is left out of decision making processes. Because hunting and fishing is seen as the man’s domain, women are largely underrepresented in this decision making process.

The management of natural resources is also the management of the environment. It includes not only the governance of commercial goods from mining or forestry, but also the governance of non-commercial goods produced from hunting, foraging and trapping. Often, the two are not mutually exclusive. Large scale resource extraction processes are largely governed by EA processes from the state and IBAs between Aboriginal governments/institutions and industry, both of which can include provisions regarding the impacts of the project on local wildlife management. There is a growing body of literature that looks at the participation of Aboriginal women in EA and IBA processes. There is a larger body of literature that looks at the involvement of Inuit women in wildlife management at the community, regional and territorial level. This includes a number of authors writing about Aboriginal women’s traditional ecological knowledge (Ohmagari & Berkes, 1997; Berkes & Jolly, 2001; Parlee, Berkes, & Teetl’it
Gwich’in Renewable Resources Council, 2005) and their involvement in hunting, trapping and non-commercial fishing. Lastly, there is the involvement of women in formal governance, including Aboriginal governments, band councils and national and local boards and organizations. This literature is thin but exposes the vast underrepresentation of women in formal governance. We found that the literature falls mainly into three areas of governance, the EA and IBA processes, Wildlife Management, and Resource Governance.

The Participation of Aboriginal Women in EA and IBA processes. - There is a growing body of literature regarding IBAs in Canada, however, very little is studied about the participation of women during these processes. One important aspect of the IBA process is public communication and public meetings. Although public participation and public meetings are an important aspect to IBA negotiations, they can have negative consequences. O’Faircheallaigh (1995) points out that the physical orientation of the room where the meeting is to take place can influence the results of participation, as well as how information is communicated. Meetings done with a high volume of technical information, coming from one or two people sitting behind a desk staked with pamphlets and then asking if there are any questions is not an effective way to communicate. O’Faircheallaigh (1995) recommends that those who hold meetings should take into consideration catering for young children so women are not excluded from the conversation and to also hold the several shorter meetings rather than one or two long ones to encourage more people to participate.

Although historically women have been excluded from negotiated agreements, there is an increasing trend to include women in a formal capacity and gender as an important issue for discussion. The Lutsel K’e in the Northwest Territories has negotiated a number of IBAs and provisions have improved as they learn from each subsequent IBA (Weitzner, 2006). Timing affected what issues were on the table and how they were negotiated. The Lutsel K’e was not prepared for the first IBA and that IBA was seen as insufficient. However, as subsequent IBAs were negotiated, more time was given for these negotiations allowing for women to include gender issues in the negotiations (Weitzner, 2006). Archibald & Crnkovich (1999) also noted the rushed nature of the land claims and IBA negotiations in northern Labrador as a cause for concern for women (p.2). Throughout the Lutsel K’e negotiations, women in the community felt
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represented and claimed to have a strong voice (Weitzner, 2006). Although there was no formal organized women’s group, there have been women Chiefs, Band Councilors, there are many women in the workforce and negotiations on mining issues were headed by women (Weitzner, 2006).

Although the Lutsel K’ee women felt represented and that their voices were heard, this is not always the case. Kuyek (2003) notes that women in the Yukon are often not equipped with the information necessary to feel confident enough to speak up about issues effecting women’s health. The Yukon Conservation Society also recommends that Yukon women utilize their rights to information and to not be afraid to voice blunt questions (Yukon Conservation Society, 2000).

Although IBAs can provide economic benefits to women, there is concern that IBAs are too narrow in focus and do not provide the proper cultural protection. Martha Flaherty, president of the Pauktuutit (Inuit Women’s Association), addressed her concerns about this at the 1993 Annual General Meeting of Tungavik Federation of Nunavut:

We have a concern that Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements may be negotiated too narrowly. We would like to see the contents of these agreements broadened to include more requirements on the developer to support community development initiatives in communities affected by the specific development project. This is possible under the provisions of the Final Agreement. In our meetings, we have heard what women have said about development and its effects on the environment, their lives and their families, the delivery of goods and services, transportation, and housing. This information can help ensure Impact and Benefit Agreements address the needs of all Inuit in the community, not just those who will be working for the developer. (qtd in Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999)

This demand to include all members of the community, not just those who will be gaining employment, is an important one, but one that often gets ignored due to industry concerns of being responsible for what governments are traditionally responsible for. Shanks (2006) points out that industry is reluctant to provide social measures (such as funding for child care, housing, social services etc) as they fear government wants to download their responsibilities onto industry. This acts to further disadvantage women, as they are the ones who receive a majority of the social burdens due to development.
In Northern Labrador, Inuit women were involved in negotiated agreements concerning the Voisey’s Bay Mine development including the EA and IBA. Women were adamant in their demands for employment equity and increasing employment in non-traditional jobs (O’Reilly & Eacott, 1998, p. 26). However, Archibald & Crnkovich (1999) argued that there was a lack of representation of women on the land claims and IBA teams and the Labrador Inuit Association board which affected what issues were raised and how they were to be addressed.

The literature on the EA process in Canada is large and mainly focuses on sustainability and participation by Aboriginal groups. The studies that look at Aboriginal participation often treat Aboriginal as a uniform group and neglect to look specifically at the needs of Aboriginal women. Only a few authors writing about the EA process in Canada mentioning gender or the importance of women (Fitzpatrick & Sinclair, 2003; George, 1999; Lawrence, 1997 and O’Faircheallaigh, 2011). With the exception of reports by women’s groups about the involvement of women during specific EA processes, only O’Faircheallaigh (2011) wrote specifically about women during EA and IBA processes, providing a book chapter for an international book about women and mining titled Gendering the Field.

O’Faircheallaigh (2011) argues that Aboriginal women play a greater role in pre-project agreements and assessments than acknowledged in the literature. This is because he expands the definition of negotiation to include informal mechanisms of negotiation. He points to Voisey’s Bay as an example where women were heavily involved in the EA process, both formally and informally. Brockman & Argue (1995) wrote a submission to the review of the Northwest Territories diamond project environmental impact statement which was very critical of the statement. The authors presented concerns raised by Inuit women during the process that the EIS was insufficient and did not contain the information needed to mitigate negative impacts on women from the proposed diamond mine. Brockman & Argue (1995) also note that Aboriginal women were interested and concerned about more than what was relegated to “women’s issues” during the socio-economic impact part of the EA process. This is reflected in the concerns raised by Aboriginal women in Labrador during the Voisey’s Bay EA process (Tongamiut Inuit Annait, 1997)
Fitzpatrick & Sinclair (2003), in their study about the Sable Gas Panel Review in the Maritimes, note that there was a minimal effort to include Aboriginal organizations with the Panel shipping cartons of documents to the Aboriginal organizations who felt this was insufficient. Aboriginal groups and women need to be active participants during these processes with information being presented to them in a manner they find acceptable and not having to wade through documents to find relevant information. While the EA literature regarding sustainability often ignores women and gender, one of the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, a UN agreement that Canada is a signatory to, is that “women have a vital role in environment management and development” and that their participation is “essential” (George, 1999).

*Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the Involvement of Women in Wildlife Management*

Despite the large traditional role that Aboriginal women played in interactions with renewable natural resources, they are under-represented today in formal natural resource management settings. This gendered management extends beyond Aboriginal women in formal settings, in part because women have limited participation rates in post-secondary science programs.

Simpson, Sullivan & Storm (2007) note that in Manitoba, Aboriginal participation is greater in social science, education, arts and business where programs have been developed that are catered to the needs of Aboriginal people. They argue that the low participation rates of Aboriginal people in science based programs is partially due to the approach of university science education that focuses on theory and is taught in a manner that conflicts with Aboriginal traditions.

Additionally, Aboriginal women, especially those with young children, face an additional barrier in the requirement to relocate to a city to partake in programs in the field of environment/natural resource management (Simpson, Sullivan & Storm, 2007).

The problems associated with the education of natural resource management in Canada are reflective of the conflict between the two systems of natural resource management in Canada, the state system and the Aboriginal system. The state system is characterized by centralized authority enforced through written laws and regulations, advised by professional administrators and scientists who rely on scientific data and the Aboriginal system is characterized by customary authority, traditional ecological knowledge, and communal management principles (Sherry & Myers, 2002). There is a large body of literature that compares and contrasts the two
systems, as well as some authors that try to bridge the two systems together. While much of this literature ignores women, some authors focus on Aboriginal women’s involvement in traditional ecological knowledge. Ohmagari & Berkes (1997), who studied the transmission of traditional knowledge from older Cree women to the younger generation, note a connection between the time constraints of Euro-Canadian education which result in less time spent in the bush and the loss of certain bush skills and knowledge. Although Inuit society has a division of labour based on gender, Berkes & Jolly (2001), note that there is a certain amount of fluidity and that women can hunt and men can sew skins. The authors provide an example of three sisters who were raised by their mother who took over the duties of their father after his death (Berkes & Jolly, 2001). This is shared by Kafarowski (2004) who notes that subsistence fishing in Nunavut, while having separate but equal gendered divisions of labour, has a degree of interchangability. This is not the case in commercial fisheries in Nunavut where women are underemployed in offshore fishing and hold low paying jobs in the processing industry (Kafarowski, 2004).

Shannon (2006) found that while most studies on Inuit women and the procurement of food focuses on the divisions of labour and the complementary roles of women in supporting men who do the harvesting, fishing as a procurement activity does not have gendered divisions of labour. She argues that such activities, where women are full participants rather than complementary or contributory participants, should be focused on more. Having control over traditional resources and land can assist in establishing economic and social development strategies and Colton (2005) argues that greater control over traditional resources can assist Aboriginal groups in establishing tourism, which, in their study of the Woodland Cree First Nation, was perceived by First Nations as having the ability to provide economic benefits.

The literature on traditional knowledge of Aboriginal people in Canada is large but little attention is paid to Aboriginal women. Kafarowski (2005a) argues that men and women possess different knowledge(s) and that the literature on traditional knowledge treats the two as the same. The author looks at Inuit communities in Nunavik and Nunavut where women are traditionally responsible for food preparation and the short and long term health of the family and thus play a critical role in the family through their unique knowledge. The traditional knowledge of women is an important factor in monitoring the affects of resource development that is too often ignored.
Women in Yukon communities affected by mining draw on local knowledge to assess changes in the environment and have drawn water and soil samples themselves to test for contaminants (Yukon Conservation Society, 2000). In 2002, an integrated risk assessment of the Oujé-Bougoumou region was utilized which included a traditional land use study. The study included interviews with heads of households to identify sites of concern for environmental health, of which 90 were identified, which were then entered into a geographical information system database (Tsuji et al., 2007). This information will be used to direct policy and set priorities for action.

The traditional knowledge of women is often ignored during decision making processes involving resource development in the north. In the Northwest Territories, women from the Denesoline community of Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation thought the socio-economic and human health indicators developed by the government during the environmental assessment period for the Ekati Diamond Mine were too narrow. They collaborated with academics and released a study to develop their own framework and indicators for monitoring the impacts of mining on the health of the community (Parlee, O’Neil & Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation, 2007). They established health and healing to include spiritual, mental and emotional health which is connected to traditional lifestyle and the health of the land. The importance of traditional knowledge is underscored by Bielawski (2003) who, in his book about the Ekati diamond mine, showed how traditional knowledge was claimed to have been utilized by BHP in the lead up to the mine but both Aboriginal men and women stated otherwise. During hearings by an ad-hoc water board about the impacts of the mine on the water in the area, BHP presented...

While the literature suggests that the traditional knowledge of women is ignored during the EA process, it is utilized in localized resource management decisions regarding fish and berries. Parlee et al. (2006) note that the traditional knowledge of women in the Northwest Territories is utilized in year to year decision making of local resource management institutions. The knowledge gained by women from berry picking influence rules for resource access, sharing information and harvest sharing.
Kafarowski (2005a) shows that despite women being involved in fishing and hunting, they are largely absent from the boards of hunters and trapper organizations in the Northwest Territories. The author argues that men and women have different traditional knowledge(s) in regards to hunting and fishing and the traditional knowledge of women is left out of decision making processes. Because hunting and fishing is seen as the man’s domain, women are largely underrepresented in this decision making process. Kafarowski (2006) notes that women are also underrepresented on hunter and trapper organizations in Nunavut, with representation as low as 5% in the Kitikmeot region. This underrepresentation of women on decision making boards was also evident in Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, where, in 2003, women held 11% (1) and 7.6% (23) respectively of the seats on those boards (Kafarowski, 2004). Because of article 23 of the Nunavut Land Settlement Act, beneficiaries of the settlement receive priority hiring over non beneficiaries. This holds an advantage to Inuit women who will be hired before more experienced applicants from outside the settlement area. Bush food is important to the diet and sustenance of Inuit and Beaumier & Ford (2010) found evidence of food insecurity in Igloolik, Nunavut, with women reporting skipping meals and reducing food intake. While a number of variables are attributed to the food insecurity, socio-economic stresses and climate change are seen as exacerbating food insecurity for women. By looking at the small community of Sach Harbour and how Aboriginal people adapt to climate change, Berkes & Jolly (2001) argue that wildlife co-management institutions create “additional linkages for feedback” which assist in transmitting ecological knowledge to regional, national and international levels (Berkes & Jolly, 2001, p. 13).

The Involvement of Women in Formal Governance -The most publicized case of Aboriginal women and community governance came in 1997 when the Nunavut Implementation Committee suggested a two-member constituency system, whereby one man and one woman would be elected from each constituency (Williamson, 2006). The proposal was sent to a plebiscite where 57% of Nunavut voters voted against the proposal (Dahl, 1997). Dahl (1997) provides a number of possible reasons for the proposal being voted down but emphasizes regional differences that are intertwined with Nunavut politics and the declining role of Inuit men in economic society. There is evidence that Inuit women are more educated and more employed in Nunavut than Inuit men (Williamson, 2006). Inuit men have seen their role as hunter/trapper as economic provider
reduced to one of unemployed male that hunts and traps. Both Dahl (1997) and Williamson (2006) provide this as a partial answer to why the gender parity proposal was voted down.

The parity proposal and the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement are offered by Bennett (2011) as two missed opportunities to address women’s inequality in Nunavut, where Inuit men dominate hamlet councils, senior levels of government and territorial politics, including land management. Based on interviews with members of Nunavut’s legislative assembly, White (2006) argues that the Nunavut government system, which joins a Westminster cabinet-parliamentary system with traditional Inuit culture, is not a fundamental alteration to system but a rather substantial adaptation, with many Western values intact. Without the voices of Inuit women on these formal decisions making bodies, Inuit women will not be able to influence decision making regarding resource development.

Although there has been an increased trend toward Aboriginal self-government in Canada over the last few decades, unless women have formal positions on boards and in government, they will be left out of decision making. A paper by the Women’s Native Association of Canada argues that self-government of Aboriginal people is fundamental to addressing concerns held by Aboriginal women (Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2007). However, even with Aboriginal self-government, there is no guarantee that the voices of women will be heard. As Hipwell et al (2002) notes, the imposition of the Indian Act resulted in male dominated Band Councils which usurped the traditional power of women. This results in the marginalization of women’s voice during Land Claim negotiations which take place between the Canadian and provincial governments and Band councils (Hipwell et al, 2002).

In 2010, a book was published by the Language and Culture Program of Nunavut Arctic College, which told the stories of 12 Inuit women involved in leadership and governance in Inuit communities around Canada. Titled Arnait Nipingit: Inuit Women in Leadership and Governance, each chapter is written by a different Inuit woman explaining their successes and pitfalls of their careers while also providing advice and guidance for policy and for Inuit women aspiring to be leaders in governance. Madeleine Redfern, who resides in Nunavut, wrote about applying for positions on the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, the Nunavut Impact Review
Board and the Kakivak Association, all of which she was denied from which troubled her because she knew she was qualified (Redfern, 2010, p.106).

Archibald & Crnkovich (1999) wrote about the participation of women in northern Labrador and the EA and IBA negotiated by the Labrador Inuit Association. They noted that the confidentiality of IBA negotiations and the lack of a written Agreement in Principle to the Land Claims, meant that women in the community had to rely on LIA negotiators to keep them informed. Archibald & Crnkovich (1999) also criticized the federal comprehensive land claims policy as too commercially driven, that the discussion at the table becomes about how much Aboriginal groups will benefit economically rather than the cultural and social well being of Inuit. Martha Flaherty, president of the Pauktuutit (Inuit Women’s Association), said the following during the 1993 Annual General Meeting of Tungavik Federation of Nunavut:

In the [Nunavut Land Claims] Agreement, it describes the objectives of the land claims agreement and its implementation process. I would like to remind you about one of these five objectives. It is the one that states the Agreement is intended to encourage self-reliance and cultural and social well-being of Inuit. I think this objective is perhaps much more important than the land ownership rights and the billion dollars Inuit receive as compensation. If we cannot preserve our culture and our dignity as Inuit throughout this process, we will not survive as a people.

Complaints that women in the North have expressed towards the land claim resolution process reflect institutional biases in the process. There is little doubt that institutions governing the North have changed in a direction towards more Aboriginal control with the resolution of land claims and establishment of Aboriginal governments. However, Natcher & Davis (2007) argue that the devolution of control over natural resource management in the Yukon has resulted in new institutions that, while having Aboriginal involvement, do not reflect Indigenous forms of management. The authors argue that rather than a true devolution of control there has been a “deconcentration of preexisting forms of state management and the perpetuation of values that support them” (Natcher & Davis, 2007, p. 277). This has serious consequences for Aboriginal women in the North. Even if more Aboriginal women participate in the negotiation process of land claims and management processes for natural resource extraction, they have to contend with pre-existing patriarchal values.
A result of Canada’s comprehensive land claims process is co-management boards of natural resources which allows for more Aboriginal control. The literature suggests that while these boards increase participation of Aboriginal people, there are conflicts that can occur when different cultural groups with different values enter into a coordinated resource management process (Natcher, Davis & Hickey, 2005). Patriarchal values of resource management are likely to continue even after the resolution of land claims agreements.

Aboriginal women have historically been able to show their power when organized and politically motivated. In the 1970s, women from the Tobique reserve in New Brunswick occupied their band council, making national headlines and showing the power of publicity. The ability of women to garner attention from the media, and the knowledge of how to do so successfully, lead to Aboriginal women across Canada demanding the Indian Act be amended to enfranchise women who had lost their Indian status due to 100 years of sexual discrimination (Silman, 1987). In 1974, Aboriginal women in northern Saskatchewan formed La Ronge Native Women’s Council, a group that Sanderson (2012) argues was successful in empowering Aboriginal women by “increasing the spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities” (Sanderson, 2012, p. 17). The Council empowered women in a variety of formal and informal ways which assisted Aboriginal women in education, training, employment and provided support for Aboriginal women’s health and combating family violence.

**Conclusions and areas for future research**

The research on gender and resource development is varied but displays some trends. Overall there remain many knowledge gaps. Most studies have adopted a case study methodology and focus on Aboriginal women rather than on a more complex understanding of gender relations. Furthermore, much of the research does not draw connections between economic, social, cultural and governance spheres. We therefore make several recommendations.

To increase the generalizability of research across the north we see a strong impetus for comparative research and for the use of multiple methods, such as the inclusion of some
statistical analysis. Second, we feel that the absence of a more critical understanding of gender constitutes a significant research gap. We feel that a more nuanced approach is necessary to understand the complexity of community change resulting from resource development. Finally, a systematic investigation of the gendered dimensions of social and cultural life in northern Canada has yet to be undertaken, let alone one that considers the ways in which gender intersects with resource extraction industries. Such an investigation would need to be sensitive not just to women, but to men and masculinity, and would account for the complex, intersecting importance of gender, Indigeneity, colonization, sexuality and class. It would also involve a critical examination of taken-for-granted understandings of the gendered dimensions of Indigenous community life, many of which are based on outdated (and thoroughly gendered) anthropological scholarship. We hope that this research can help to link resource development with gendered dimensions of social suffering in the north (which are not currently well explained or linked to economic change), such as high male suicide rates and high school dropout rates.
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