

Constraints to Wildlife Harvesting Among Aboriginal Communities in Alaska & Canada

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Objectives:

How extractive resource development impacts subsistence activities is poorly understood because overall barriers to these activities are poorly understood. The objective of this project was to gain an understanding of the factors that constrain Aboriginal access to wildlife resources in northern Canada and Alaska.

Research Findings:

Based on 2,463 household surveys, 1,119 barriers to wildlife harvesting were identified. Those barriers include: 1) financial costs of harvesting; 2) time limitations associated with attendance in school/training; 3) time limitations associated employment; 4) being physically unable; 5) childcare; 6) a lack of interest or knowledge to harvest; and 7) limited availability of game during the survey period. Among the barriers reported, time limitations associated with employment was identified most frequently (366/1,119 or 33%). This barrier was followed by financial cost, which accounted for 22% (243/1,119) of all responses. Together, employment and financial cost served as the primary barriers to wildlife harvesting for over 55% (609/1,119) of all respondents. The third most frequently cited response was the lack of interest and/or knowledge to harvest wildlife resources. This constraint was reported by 188 of the 1,119 respondents (17%). The remaining barriers—physically unable (16%), childcare (4%), lack of game (2%), school attendance (7%)—accounted for 323/1,119 or 29% of the total responses. *However, the results demonstrate that the constraints are experienced differently depending on region, community, age, gender, and the political environment in which wildlife harvesting occurs. These findings underscore the diversity of factors that can influence one's access to wildlife resources, and one's chance of being food insecure.*

Policy Implications:

The factors that currently limit Aboriginal access to wildlife resources are complex, dynamic, and occur at multiple scales of experience. Because of this we should not expect a single strategy or policy response to reverse the trends that have long been in the making. Rather, if Aboriginal access to wildlife resources is to help mitigate conditions of food insecurity, a range of programs and policy instruments will be required. This will, however, require a committed effort on the part of government to allow for flexibility in policy design, and a responsiveness to the plurality of constraints that challenge Aboriginal food systems.

Future Requirements:

If wildfoods are going to making a meaningful contribution to alleviating food insecurity in the North, subsistence harvesting will need to be considered a vital and equally legitimate form of economic production in the eyes of government. For too long Canada's policies regarding Aboriginal food security have been premised on modernization schemes that fail to consider other viable and culturally relevant forms of economy that exist. By normalizing subsistence economies, Aboriginal communities should gain comparable levels of support as those directed to other economic activities, particularly extractive resource industries.

Gender and Decision-making in Natural Resource Co-management in the Yukon
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Objectives: Natural resource co-management boards have been heralded by many as an effective means to engage resource users and government managers in a collaborative and more equitable approach to environmental decision-making. Although a considerable amount of multi-disciplinary research has examined the various social and political dimensions that influence the effectiveness of resource co-management, little has been done to understand how gender might affect collaboration and decision-making within this resource regime. This gap in understanding is particularly evident in the northern Canadian context, where women make up 16% of all current co-management board members.

Research Findings: This study set out to examine the ways in which a gender imbalance influences board decision-making and the experiences of those involved in co-management boards that have been established in the Yukon Territory. Written surveys and semi-structured interviews demonstrated that the representation of women within these institutions was important to establishing a holistic decision-making process and positive institutional culture that facilitated effective decision-making. The presence of women on these boards also influenced the scope and efficacy of decision outcomes. Participants found that though opportunities to participate in decision-making existed, there were still barriers preventing board members from acting on these opportunities. These barriers were often experienced by men and women in different ways. Implicit within these findings are the gendered roles and characteristics that shape the activities and expectations of those involved with co-management institutions. Gendered roles in the community and on the land were particularly relevant to these boards.

Potential Policy Implications: The policy recommendations stemming from this work apply to multiple levels. Co-management boards themselves need to provide training for the position of chair, ensure they are being responsive to the logistical barriers faced by board members, and reflect on the types of knowledge that they engage, and whether or not it accurately encompasses the board's mandate. More broadly, the government bodies that appoint or nominate board members need to improve how they communicate and look to fill openings on co-management boards. It is also important to ensure that opportunities for filling board member positions are structured to be more inclusive to women, so that they both want and are able to participate. And finally, they need to recognize the importance of representing diversity in general, not just diversity in gender.

Future Research: The most significant opportunities for future research are in informal decision-making. Co-management boards represent only one avenue for making decisions about natural resource management, and research elsewhere has demonstrated that women often have significant influence in more "informal" settings. Although this was beyond the scope of this research, there were still some indication of these informal avenues. For example, several women referred using family ties to influence decision-making. Future research could explore the extent and complexities of these relationships.

Gender and Resource Development

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Objectives: In this research project, we ask: a) How are decision-making processes governing participation in northern resource extraction gendered? b) How do northern Indigenous women understand the relationship between increased resource development and gender relations? and; c) What do northern Indigenous women see as important policy interventions with regard to resource development decision making and governance/implementation?

Research Findings: Scan of Environmental Assessment/decision-making processes on three projects in northern regions: Mackenzie Gas Project (NWT), Voisey’s Bay Mine and Mill (Nunatsiavut), Meadowbank Gold Mine (NU) - The interventions of women in each of the three regions in EA processes drew attention to anticipated negative outcomes of the shift to greater reliance on resource extraction for families, communities and the environment. Women, however also encouraged proponents and governments to broaden their focus to include the social economy and traditional economies more fully. Though assessments differed in their institutional support for women’s participation, on the whole, they tended to adopt a masculine lens, focusing primarily on both waged resource work or on male production and participation in land-based activities. The social economy, women’s roles in the production of Indigenous knowledge and broader understandings of economy were overlooked.

Focus groups with Inuit women in Nunatsiavut - The opening of the mine coincided with the signing of the Inuit Land Claim Agreement and the creation of new institutions so it was not possible to isolate the the effects of the mine from these broader changes. Some changes that women felt were related to the mine included deepening inequality, greater jealousy among residents and less sharing in coastal communities. Other changes observed since the opening of the mine included more opportunities for education, more varied employment options and a greater range of goods for consumption. Several women communicated a strong sense of injustice vis a vis the mine, however. These participants felt that people should not be allowed to go hungry in light of the mine making large profits from the extraction of minerals on their lands.

Potential Policy Implications: There is a need for Environmental Assessments to reflect broader understanding of northern economies and how they relate to the resource development. Additionally, research from Nunatsiavut points to the need for funding and programs that alleviate poverty, strengthen community connections and promote sharing, particularly those that target food insecurity. Last, women in Nunatsiavut felt that they needed stronger mechanisms to hold companies accountable to ensure that IBA promises were met.

Where do we go from here? - Women in the Sahtu region were interested in supporting and listening to the youth in their community. Research that maps all of the institutions involved with resource development for their gendered implications would be an important next step. Last, women in Nunatsiavut desired advocacy and change rather than further research.

Labour Mobility and Community Participation in the Extractive Industries – Yukon
Gertrude Saxinger (PI) and Susanna Gartler, University of Vienna (AT)

Objectives: The LACE projects objectives are gaining understanding of fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) and rotational shift work in mining regions in the Yukon Territory. This comprises impacts and benefits on the life of the mobile workforce and their social environment as well as on the community. Issues such as boom and bust cycles, and the interaction between communities and corporations when it comes to employment are touched upon. The key output of this research project is a so called “Mobile Workers Guide”, which is a lay language handbook for early career miners and people interested in working in the sector. Stories and advice from experienced miners build the basis of this guide. It is also helpful for corporations, decision makers and administration. It will be published in February 2017.

Research Findings: Mining projects and adjacent jobs are generally welcome to community members and governments in the Yukon Territory. People expect from companies that high environmental standards are adhered to. Corporations are furthermore expected to meaningfully obey the “Comprehensive Benefits Agreements” with the FN Self-Governments. In particular for FN workers the income from the extractive industry enables to afford equipment for “living off the land”. A crucial idea is that mining should not be a vehicle for “quick revenues”, but one for more long-term, sustainable development in the region: mineral wealth should remain in the ground for future generations to profit. A strong awareness of the benefits as well as of negative impacts is prevailing. Environmental issues and impacts on subsistence are main concerns of the local First Nation population, which call for strong regulations - although the industry and state-bodies are worried about the attractiveness of the Yukon Territory for more investment under current legal frameworks. A large proportion of citizens are eager to participate in community-industry relations. Rotational shift work is an accepted mode of labour organisation. Two weeks at home without job obligations allows for longer hunting and trapping trips, vacations and time spent with family and relations. Families who are experienced in this lifestyle cope rather better than newcomers. When it comes to break-ups or other social troubles, usually additional factors are in play. A strong mind set on part of the individual worker and family members is crucial to be aware of the heavy impact from exhaustive work and the absence of a spouse. Spouses at home see themselves as part-time single-parents and the mobile spouse sometimes as a guest at home. Younger single (male) workers are more likely exposed to drug and alcohol abuse as well as to heavy spending of the suddenly high salaries, for example on gambling or expensive hobbies, especially when they enter the sector. Work in mining is not seen as an acceptable employment option for women, while their children are very young. Females, migrants and First Nation workers remain by trend employed in entry-level and/or lower paying jobs. Reports of sexism, abuse and racist incidents are very few and the sector seems to have improved in that sense. Publicly available information on the characteristics of a mobile life-style is largely missing.

Potential Policy Implications: Potential policy implications based on findings from over one hundred interviews with population and stakeholders in a variety of communities and towns

- 1) Continue working with and on meaningful community-industry agreements;
- 2) Provide information campaigns for early career workers and potential employees on the specifics of FIFO;
- 3) Include information about FIFO and rotational shift-work specifics for private life, work attitude requirements as well as drug, alcohol and financial management into mining training curricula;
- 4) Carefully consider locating FIFO workers in camps nearby or in distance;
- 5) Carefully consider benefits and negative impacts of mining roads;
- 6) Develop community development plans that foster complementary economic activities to the mining sector;
- 7) Provide incentives for local and First Nation entrepreneurship as sub-contractors for the mining industry;
- 8) Support and foster a mining sector that provides long- term and

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sustainable economic benefits for the region; 9) Develop legal regulations, which ensure even more environmental protection, consultation and strong collaborations between companies and communities during all stages of project development; 10) Provide high-end educational programs targeted towards sectors of the population who remain employed in entry-level and/or low paying jobs, such as women and First Nation individuals (as well as to a lesser extent migrants).

Further research: General: 1) Converting research results into training material; 2) Attraction and training of local community researchers to assess as well as analyse continuously cultural, social and economic development in relation to the EI; 3) Extensive studies with communities with the aim to facilitate development of complementary business sectors to the resource industry 4) Ways of getting prepared for the next boom/bust [planning scope, economic diversification, vocational training before the boom etc] Mobility: 1) History of demographic development: cultural changes & related cultural revitalisation processes 2) FIFO labour flows – interregional scope 3) Permanent settlement of transient population and housing market dynamics 4) Intersectionality approach in FIFO research [gender, age, ethnicity etc] 5) Back-migration of youth after studies outside of the home community 6) IT and connection to the “world”.

Land Claims and Subsistence Economies in Nunavut

Josh Gladstone, Carleton University

At the time of the Berger Inquiry, Indigenous leaders and Canadian political economists articulated a radical vision for the role comprehensive land claims agreements might play in the future development of northern societies, particularly with regard to “renewable resources.” Building on Mel Watkins' *From Underdevelopment to Development* (1977), this presentation will outline an account of renewable resource sector restructuring under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993) that addresses the role of harvester support programs and other social policies in the organization of subsistence activities in Nunavut's mixed economy. I explore how Nunavut's harvester support regime reinforces social insecurity and undermines shared economic values to the detriment of collective social welfare. Options for harvester support reform are discussed.