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“Man Camps”: Temporary Housing Facilities or Sites of Permanent Devastation? The Cases of British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nunavut

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Major Research Paper

by

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The art of expressing gratitude is made easier when the list of those who offered guidance during this journey has been remarkably transformative and has had a profound impact on my project. There are many individuals to address in such little space. In summary, to the department of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario, to my supervisor, to my family, and to my friends:

I extend my deepest and most sincere thanks.

Dedication

To contribute to research regarding violence toward Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people as part of the necessary steps toward achieving ethical resource extraction practices in Canada that prioritize Indigenous safety and security.

~

A note to my readers: Prepare to read the uncomfortable truth. The first steps toward ending the violent cycle and healing the nation are acknowledgement and action from all living within it. Humble yourself and allow your perspective to shift.

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"I will never forget the first guy. I will never forget the smell of baby oil.
His hair: parted. Middle-aged. Blue-collar type. That look in his eyes…
He knew I was terrified, and he did it anyway."[1]

- April Wiberg, a Cree woman from Mikisew Cree First Nation, northern Alberta, speaking about an encounter with a male worker in Edmonton, Alberta

Abstract

Violence, harassment, and sexual abuse against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people is an issue that currently plagues our nation. There is a disproportionately high number of incidents occurring at Canadian resource extraction sites, both on "work camps," colloquially referred to as "man camps," and within nearby communities. While arguably the most salient consideration in the assessment process, it often does not receive the attention it requires. Consequently, this issue not only adds to the wider systemic imbalances that reproduce racist, sexist, and colonial patterns, but it further contributes to the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) national tragedy. This dynamic is a result of the beginning of the settler colonial period and the power imbalances that were first established by primarily white European men. Adopting a critical race feminist approach and applying an intersectional lens to the matter reveals a complex picture of the lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people and how they experience harm due to their multifaceted identities. The cases of British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nunavut are examined and based on the analysis, this paper examines necessary recommendations for an ethical way forward that prioritizes Indigenous human rights, security, and safety before environmental impacts.

Introduction

Violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people[i] is not a myth; nor should it be considered a private matter.[ii] It is a systemic issue that stems from the first point of contact between European settlers and Indigenous peoples on North American soil. Indisputably, the issue continues to plague our nation today. As public awareness initiatives have launched to inform people of the existence and complexity of the matter that is distressing Canada's Indigenous populations, media creators have begun to strategically use television platforms to educate millions of consumers and foster dialogue between various ethnic groups. *Eagle Vision*, the Manitoba-based production company founded by Lisa Meeches, an Ojibwe woman from

[i] Two-Spirit is the umbrella term that encompasses individuals who identify with both female and masculine spirits.
[ii] To preface this paper, although "Aboriginal" is still often recognized as the legal term within Canadian institutions, I was taught that the root meaning of the word "ab" derives from the Latin prefix "not" and hence suggests that individuals who identify within the distinct group are "not original" to the land, which is inaccurate and hinders reconciliation efforts. Thus, "Indigenous" replaces the former term. Nevertheless, the two terms are used interchangeably in the context of this paper as many documents still employ the term "Aboriginal" in their findings.

Long Plain First Nation, partnered with two other production companies to bring the legal drama, *Burden of Truth*, to primetime television. As the fourth season unravels, viewers watch as two lawyers defend an Indigenous woman from a mining company looking to reopen a gold mine on her family's land. With each passing episode detailing the dark operations of Oro Mine, viewers learn that the mine is a site for an ongoing human trafficking ring where women are taken, violently assaulted, and held captive on site. While the show may be a work of fiction, the plot is largely indicative of real events that occur at resource extraction sites across Canada. For instance, April Wiberg is a survivor who openly recounts her story to raise public awareness of the issue. She is an Indigenous woman who was coerced and "groomed" into engaging in sex work at a vulnerable age and was sent to Fort McMurray for consecutive weeks to have sexual intercourse with the male workers.[2] According to Victoria Sweet, for Indigenous populations, human trafficking is simply "the new name of a historical problem;" Indigenous peoples have been exploited at the hands of others, primarily white European men, for generations.[3]

Thorough reports, including *The Final Report of the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls* (MMIWG), detail the unacceptable physical, sexual, and racist behaviour against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people at "work camps," colloquially and hereafter referred to as "man camps," and within nearby communities affiliated with such projects.[4] Often, the perpetrators of these offences are primarily non-Indigenous male workers employed by private or public resource extraction companies – although this is not to say that there are not acts of violence committed by Indigenous men. Rather, intragroup violence is simply not the focus of this paper. Male employees work long hours, are socially isolated from their partners, their communities, and largely, the rest of society while housing on these large, secluded sites for weeks or even months at a time. While many men "retain their humanity,"

others go astray, thereby situating these camps as sites of violence and in extreme cases, sites of female sex trafficking.[5] Explored further in the paper, there are various factors reviewed in resource extraction impact assessment processes that are often considered "standard considerations."[6] However, despite the detrimental impacts and the inclusion of Section 22 of the *Impact Assessment Act* that asserts that sex, gender, and other identities are sensitive factors that must be considered in the process, Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people still remain deeply affected today.[7] To confirm, this paper does not argue that absolutely *no* attention has been properly accorded to the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. Rather, it argues that there is *not enough* attention to the impacts and ethical considerations for ways forward that prioritize their safety and security. This paper first examines the critical race feminist perspective and the intersectional lens used to analyze the issue and second, presents the methodology. The latter sections further introduce the issue, outline the assessment process, and identify developmental benefits. The subsequent section individually examines the three case studies of British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nunavut. The last section examines potential recommendations for an ethical way forward, prioritizing the most vulnerable.

Critical Race Feminism and Intersectionality

A prominent issue in this area of work that assesses impacts on Indigenous women is that a gendered lens is often "missing" from the analysis.[8] Research demonstrates that the experience of one woman differs greatly from the experience of another due to their identity. Thus, the approach needs to be an inclusive one that can be used to further understand the power relations embedded in societal structures that largely impact non-white, non-masculine identities. As such, this paper adopts a critical race feminist and intersectional lens.

The ways in which gender is conceptualized and discussed in terms of Indigenous women has altered as researchers are forced to confront the challenge of employing frameworks that accurately capture the different needs, experiences, and perhaps most importantly, identities of women. Critical race feminism, coined by Richard Delgado (1995) examines how society operates based on the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, and other social hierarchical classifications.[9] In this perspective, there is a call "for institutional accountability that requires a critical examination and transformation of hegemonic structures and practices from within before any genuine, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships with communities of colour can be developed."[10] The perspective largely grapples with questions related to oppression, conflict, and power relations between individuals and groups, therefore validating the voices of Indigenous women in the process.[11] Critical race feminism largely leans on many of the principles of the theory of intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) first coined the term "intersectionality" that has since evolved as a "central tenet of feminist thinking" due to the beneficial ways in which it has altered conceptions of gendered research.[12] The notion of intersectionality gained momentum due to a political necessity for "feminism to be inclusive in order to be able to keep up its own foundational premises."[13] Definitions of the theory may vary slightly according to the primary researcher, but this paper situates intersectional theory as the way in which feminist researchers evaluate how inequality is experienced differently when gender and various other ascriptive characteristics such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality combine to create unique forms of oppression for women at different intersections. The oppression is not only "greater," but unique. Further, all women are disadvantaged in patriarchal systems that situate them as subordinate to men, but when a woman has a multifaceted identity, she often faces greater forms of discrimination and oppression.[14]

When combined, these frameworks emphasize the "different and possibly conflicting needs and goals of the respective groups from which an [Indigenous individual] draws their identity."[15] Thus, to comprehensively understand the interconnected relationship between violence, "man camps," and Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people, we must first understand how their identities as either heterosexual Indigenous women or as Two-Spirit people impacts their experiences and ultimately, subjects them to greater forms of violence.

Methods

A large portion of the analytical component of this paper focuses on three case studies: British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nunavut. The proposed provinces and territory have made Canadian news headlines several times over the last decade due to the ongoing threat of "man camps." Indeed, my analysis concerning the case studies is not entirely new. I was unable to hold interviews or focus groups with local community members or Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people due to the limited time constraints outlined for the completion of this project combined with the temporary research restrictions imposed due to the international Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). In my initial research dive, I struggled to locate peer-reviewed case studies, thus making it challenging to conduct a cross-case comparative analysis and identify themes and patterns. However, details of the incidents of violence occurring at various "man camps" were accessible on websites, online newspapers, and intertwined within public Indigenous government reports. As such, grounded in theory and historical research while simultaneously incorporating the voices of those who were previously interviewed by other researchers, this paper attempts to concisely compile information to contribute to the expanding body of literature on this topic.

Violence

The Beginning: Colonialism

Many Canadians are still deeply misinformed about the true colonial history of Canada. The nation as we know it today is what Joyce Green (2005) refers to as a "fairly recent political manifestation."[16] Prior to European settlement, most Indigenous societies were matriarchal with women situated at the top of the cultural hierarchy. For instance, Mohawk women enjoyed considerable autonomy and were respected for their strong qualities such as their intelligence and vision.[17] The Ojibwe and Cree believe that it was a woman who descended from a hole in the sky to protect Turtle Island[iii] and that it was a woman who first educated Indigenous peoples about traditional healing and sacred medicines.[18] Upon arrival to North America, European settlers formed alliances with Indigenous peoples who offered support and the material means to survive. As settler numbers increased, they began to push their Christian values, patriarchal ways of life, and traditional nuclear families on Indigenous communities. Settlers attempted to eradicate Indigenous culture, Indigenous populations, and coerce Indigenous peoples into relocating off their sacred lands, further destroying Indigenous languages and communities.[19] Further, and arguably the most salient impact for the context of this paper, settlers negatively altered the view of Indigenous women. Indigenous femininity became viewed as "degenerate;" its "discursive as well as material expulsion from spaces of respectability… allowed settlers to come to know themselves as white and as entitled to land through their ability to engage with the "degenerate" while remaining unscathed."[20] Newspapers portrayed Indigenous women as "squalid and immoral" while glossing over the fact that they frequently reported British men as their abusers.[21] Sherene H. Razack (2000) echoes the former fact by emphasizing that the "near universal conflation of Aboriginal women and prostitutes" validated accounts of "sexual and

[iii] Turtle Island is the Indigenous terms typically used to describe the land that non-Indigenous peoples refer to as North America.

physical violence," which hindered their ability to be considered subjects deserving of protection.[22]

Contemporary Context

The disproportionate objectification of Indigenous women and their racialized femininity persists today and continues to perpetuate a pattern of intergenerational disparities.[23] Women and girls continually face harmful stereotypes and are labelled promiscuous beings, prostitutes, and addicts, simply due to historical contexts. Although they account for merely two percent of the population in Canada, Indigenous women are disproportionately affected by both sexual abuse, violence, and in many cases, even homicide.[24] Specifically, Indigenous women are three times as likely to fall victim to violence than non-Indigenous women.[25] However, most cases remain unsolved with many others unreported due to strained relations with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The MMIWG national tragedy, or, rather, this modern-day genocide, suggests that the bodies of Indigenous women are disposable. Devalued. Unworthy. Marian Meyers (1997) paints a bleak image of the experiences of Indigenous women in Canada today:

> Compared with high-status [white] women, poor and/or racialized crime victims are often depicted in the news as more blameworthy for their victimization. To illustrate, in sexual assault and sexual homicide cases, if a victim is judged to have deviated from patriarchal notions of appropriate feminine behavior by drinking/using drugs, dressing provocatively (or not conservatively), and especially if she engages in sex for money, she is likely to be constructed as, at least partially, responsible for violence against her.[26]

The treatment remains the same on extraction sites where women face a variety of additional hurdles. Those who typically fill housekeeping, laundry, and kitchen staff positions on development grounds are often put on display for the male gaze and are subjected to increased levels of harassment by male workers.[27] For instance, housekeeping roles bring women directly in contact with men in "man camp" living quarters. It is not uncommon for men to use the interactions as opportunities to sexually exploit them as they try to work.

Although Canada tends to present itself as a nation that has transitioned into a post-colonial era, it is clear that colonial relationships continue to operate in ways that advantage settler descendant male workers "at the expense of colonized nations" and confine women to racialized and sexualized stereotypes, simply because they identify as Indigenous.[28] Further, the historical landscape has contributed to contemporary power imbalances and securing white settler futurity where European descendants remain in positions of power and privilege today.[29] Canada attempts to reconcile with Indigenous peoples and communities over its violent actions yet reiterates a narrative that is one of "Indigenous dysfunction rather than a story of colonial violence and dispossession" of female bodies linked to colonialism and hegemonic understandings of Indigenous women.[30] This narrative reproduces systemic, racist, sexist, and colonial behaviour, which is why the former theoretical lenses are necessary to evaluate the situation.

The Assessment Process

> "The structure of the current impact assessment process can reproduce colonial power relations."[31]
>
> *- Manning et al. (2018) in Strengthening Impact Assessments for Indigenous Women*

The *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) is the Government of Canada's process for assessing impacts of large-scale project operations on federal lands or land located outside Canadian borders. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, colloquially referred to as the Agency, initiates the process and works with affiliated provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities. IAAs are used to determine "environmental, health, social, and economic effects, …impacts on Indigenous peoples and their rights, …and inform decision-making."[32] This can include minor impacts, such as assessing increases in air quality and pollution due to transportation to and from "man camps" to potentially severe water contamination. However, different jurisdictions conduct

their assessment processes differently. For instance, in Manitoba, the prospect of eroding Indigenous languages is a standard consideration. In addition, Indigenous communities may negotiate with governments to allocate areas for harvesting if they have reduced access to the land or if the land is flooded due to a hydroelectric project. However, in northern Alberta, the former considerations are not standard in the jurisdiction.[33] In Newfoundland and Labrador, examining the Muskrat Falls hydropower development, key concerns of the Nunatsiavut and Innu Nation governments were related to environmental impacts on woodlands and working conditions. However, the groups involved in the process faced "differences in interpretation and expectation" and this misinterpretation resulted in fractured relationships that were irreparable.[34] The main point of the former examples can be encapsulated in one sentence: there is not a one-size-fits-all model for conducting assessment processes.

The same critical lens that can be used to assess the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people must be applied to the ways in which governments consult with Indigenous peoples. There are salient impacts on these individuals, which is why Susan Manning, Patricia Nash, Leah Levac, Deborah Stienstra, and Jane Stinson's report, *Strengthening Impact Assessments for Indigenous Women,* cited that governments have a duty to consult when a project may conflict with Indigenous rights or treaty rights.[35] Key informants identified that Indigenous women were less frequently consulted than men, which is a "failure" of the Crown's duty to consult.[36] There is also limited information provided to Indigenous women and the rest of their communities about the assessment process.[37] According to Valérie Courtois of the *Indigenous Leadership Initiative*, "there [is] a different understanding between the different factors about what environmental assessment actually is, what it can do for you, and how you can actually prepare for it."[38] Consequently, it is common for there to be inadequate

consultation. After calls for stronger frameworks, as of 2019, Section 22 of the IAA asserts that sex, gender, and other ascriptive identity characteristics are sensitive factors that must be considered in the process.[39] However, the extent to which this has been appropriately implemented remains undetermined. For instance, in B.C., many "man camps" lie along *The Highway of Tears*.[iv40] In February 2021, notably after the implementation of Section 22, police arrested Line 3 male pipeline workers for sex trafficking offences related to Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people.[41] The failure for the Agency or a review panel to adequately conduct the assessment reproduces systemic, racist, sexist, and colonial behaviour.

Impact Benefit Agreements

The result of the environmental assessment process is typically encapsulated in an agreement, usually referred to as an Impact Benefit Agreement (IBAs) or Community Development Agreements (CDAs). IBAs are agreements between governments, organizations, or private sector actors and Indigenous nations regarding deals surrounding existing or planned projects on Indigenous territories.[42] Their goal is to provide Indigenous communities affiliated with projects some control over the situation as well as economic and social benefits.[43] In these deals that can be negotiated at different stages of the assessment process, government fiduciary duties are presented to private corporations and the government is omitted from negotiations. The deals tend to be private and confidential, and there are often clauses that preclude Indigenous protest. As such, Indigenous communities willingly enter these agreements, although they are not necessarily endorsed by all members as women are not adequately included in the process. As such, there are varying views on who is included in the term "community" and what it means to consult Indigenous communities in a meaningful way.[44] Again, there is a lack of

[iv] Many Indigenous women and girls regularly disappear along *The Highway of Tears*, which is a road that stretches across part of B.C.

resources used for increasing Indigenous community involvement. While there may be available funding, Indigenous communities may struggle to gain access to it. For instance, although funding was to be made available for Indigenous groups, Charlotte Wolfrey, a Nunatsiavut Beneficiary involved in the *Voisey's Bay Women's Committee*, mentioned that the Committee was left in the dark for a long period of time and when they did receive funding, they were only given $10,000, which was a relatively small amount considering the size of the project in Labrador.[45] Labrador has also suffered from inadequate consultations with Indigenous women. Rather than speaking to a representative group, those involved in the assessment process typically took "one or two" women from a community, brought them to an urban area, and consulted them there rather than in their own community.[46] *Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada*, the organization that represents Inuit women living in Canada, reinforced this by stating that they did not have the resources that were necessary to fully "participate in the impact assessment process, despite representing all Inuit women in Canada."[47].

Resource Project Benefits

With resource extraction projects providing numerous community benefits, not all projects occur against the will of *all* Indigenous communities. The sites provide well-paying jobs for workers and the steady income allows families to afford livelihoods that they otherwise would be unable to. Becoming employed by an established, well-known company gives many workers an "ego-boost," leaving them feeling "proud."[48] There are also noteworthy positive impacts for nearby communities. The mere presence of project sites creates a financial influx and employment opportunities for those living in the area. For instance, due to the royalties of the mine in Kangiqsujuaq, Nunavut, nearby businesses were able re-evaluate their operations. One hotel hired two full-time workers while a gymnasium was opened with mine royalty money and was able to hire five full-time workers, changing the livelihoods of those individuals as well.[49]

Family life dynamics and stereotypical gender roles can also change for the better. Whereas the traditional family unit typically involves the man working while the woman stays at home, the reverse occurs for those women employed at project sites; the man stays home and assumes child-rearing obligations and other domestic responsibilities while the woman works.

Cases

British Columbia

> "Coastal GasLink has repeatedly flouted the conditions that were spelled out in their previous certificate, and shown only contempt for our people. My cousins are listed among the Murdered and Missing Women and Girls (MMIWG), BC must not be allowed to bend the rules to facilitate operations that are a threat to the safety of Wet'suwet'en women."[50]
>
> *- Dinï ze' Smogelgem, a Hereditary Chief of the Laksamshu (Fireweed and Owl) Clan*

Royal Dutch Shell, a multinational oil and gas company, selected TransCanada to plan, construct, and operate a 670-kilometre Coastal GasLink pipeline in British Columbia (B.C.).[51] The pipeline proposal included a plan to export fracked gas from north-eastern B.C. to northwestern Kitimat, B.C. to then be exported to international stations. As the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office (BCEAO) oversees required environmental assessments, they permitted an extension of the pipeline without fully addressing or acknowledging the severe and direct impacts this development and its proposed 14 "man camps" would have on Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people.[52] For instance, when men arrive to the project site, they "fetishize" over Indigenous women while remaining "faceless" and "nameless," making it easier to commit crimes without facing the repercussions.[53] In return, Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs applied for a judicial review of the BCEAO's 5-year extension considering "over 50 instances of non-compliance by Coastal GasLink and a failure" and the findings of the MMIWG Inquiry that found a clear relationship between "man camps" and violence.[54] The hereditary chiefs issued an eviction to TC Energy Corporation, owner of Coastal GasLink, over violations of Wet'suwet'en

laws.[55] Shortly after these incidents, protests erupted across the area where thousands gathered to protest the continued construction of the pipeline and to honour Indigenous victims. Members of the Unist'ot'en clan, (part of the Wet'suwet'en nation), protested in solidarity with blockades.[56] Access points including ports, bridges, border crossings, and railway corridors were obstructed.[57] In addition, as red dresses are symbols to honour MMIWG, many dangled at the Unist'ot'en camp in solidarity.[58] Although this was the first time that the Indigenous groups contested the pipeline and vocalized concern for women, the RCMP still arrested twenty-eight people. According to Coastal GasLink file documents obtained by *CBC News* under the *Access to Information Act*, the RCMP spent $13.1 million over two fiscal years and "dozens of people were arrested," but only pertaining to "alleged injunction violations," not on the matter of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people.[59]

Manitoba

> "There was a big camp out of the town. There was a big bar that held 1,000 people. You'd get on a bus and go to the bar and drink and then leave. Of course, they were always after women. It had a really bad impact on the community. There were girls getting raped and everything. And this is happening now. But you know when you're walking around in your community and there's men driving around looking for a woman, it's scary. Grandmothers are talking about their granddaughters coming to Keeyask, and they're scared and worried. I wouldn't send my grandchild to work there because it's not safe."[60]
>
> *- An anonymous elder's interview with Amnesty International regarding the impact of "man camps" on Manitoban communities*

Advancing hydroelectric power in Canada is a critical piece of North American energy goals.[61] There are 22 hydroelectric plants presently under developmental review in Canada, all of which are slated to be within 100 kilometers of Indigenous lands and communities.[62] Manitoba Hydro is an electric power and natural gas company that provides energy services to thousands of Manitoban communities. Currently, the company regulates 15 interrelated stations. The Keeyask Hydroelectric Generating Station, in particular, has been a site of substantial

controversy. The 2017-2018 annual report recorded over 580,000 customers and nearly 6,000 worker employees; of these workers, only 1,026 identify as Indigenous.[63] In an interview between Melissa Martin (2019) and Fox Lake community members, there was significant concern related to the sexual violence and exploitation of Indigenous women by men working for Manitoba Hydro.[64] Racist and sexual allegations toward workers at hydro developments have caused devastation for communities since the 1960s.[65] A report from the *Clean Environment Commission* was released in May 2018 presenting 165 pages worth of testimonies from survivors who courageously came forward and identified male workers' conduct as a prominent contributing factor. The accounts detail the severe exploitation of racialized Indigenous women at the hands of male workers, accounts of rape, trauma related to the inability to intervene and help, and the failure of the RCMP to act on filed complaints.[66]

Manitoba Hydro is said to provide workers with reliable income and benefits, allowing them to sustain their livelihood and families which in return helps the economy.[67] However, although it is one of the largest integrated corporations, Manitoba Hydro has "been portrayed as an inefficient government monopoly which, by virtue of it being publicly owned and governed by *The Crown Corporation Governance Accountability Act*, is susceptible to questionable manipulation by government."[68] Manitoba Hydro has an intricate and distressing past with First Nation and Métis communities. There has been environmental and social disruption in First Nation communities due to hydro development projects, which has resulted in severe "distrust" of the government as well as Manitoba Hydro.[69] Reports of sexual exploitation and violence against Indigenous women and girls in the surrounding communities have also exacerbated this mistrust.[70] As such, reports led to the *Calls for Justice* from the Final Report of the National

Inquiry into MMIWG, which include specific recommendations for Manitoba Hydro. As per the *Calls for Extractive and Developmental Industries*, 13.4 states:

> 13.4 Governments to fund studies to better understand the relationship between resource extraction and other development projects and violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. At a minimum, we support the call of Indigenous women and leaders for a public inquiry into the sexual violence and racism at hydroelectric projects in northern Manitoba.[71]

However, as per dialogue surrounding the MMIWG National Action Plan, there remains issues at hydroelectric projects.

Nunavut

> "This one guy; I knocked when he was nightshift; I always call him the creepy stalker.... Other guys call him my French poodle... he's French. He followed me like a lost puppy everywhere I went... I knocked on his door. Every time he opened the door... It was like he tried to sleep in on purpose 'cause he knew I was the housekeeper... He'd open the door every time I knocked, butt naked. So, I got one of the janitors to...go knock. He didn't believe... So, he goes walking in, and he starts banging on the door; and the creepy stalker opens the door. 'Ahhhhh' and just walks away without saying anything. And he looks at me: 'fucking bitch.'"[72]
>
> *- An Inuit focus group participant discussing an incident that occurred in Qamani'tuaq, Nunavut*

The mining industry in the Canadian Arctic has witnessed rapid growth since 1957. The Meadowbank gold mine, which is privately operated by Agnico-Eagle Mines (AEM), is an open-pit gold mine located in the Kivalliq district of Nunavut, Canada. Meadowbank is located 70 kilometres north of Qzamani'tuaq and commenced operations in 2010.[73] In 2013, the national women's organization, Pauktuutit, collaborated with the School of Social Work at the University of British Columbia on the *Report for the Canadian Women's Foundation* titled *The Impact of Resource Extraction on Inuit Women and Families in Qamani-tuaq, Nunavut Territory – A Qualitative Assessment*, to understand the Meadowbank's impacts on Inuit women from Qamani'tuaq, also recognized as the Baker Lake region.[74] An intersectional lens is used to examine the interactions between racialization, colonial violence, and intergenerational trauma,

but most importantly, why the focus on femme individuals is crucial.[75] Women in Nunavut experience violence at disproportionately high rates, almost 13 times higher than all other Canadian provinces.[76] A woman's risk of falling victim is 12 times.[77] Nevertheless, these figures are likely underestimated due to a failure to report all incidents to Human Resources in fear of losing their job.

Participants in the qualitative assessment proposed that the presence of women mitigates "industrial tensions through sexual distraction and sexual relations."[78] The heavy consumption of alcohol and drugs by workers at mining camps significantly impacts everyone around them. It affects families, fuels violent behaviour, and creates room for further incidents of sexual abuse.[79] This issue was also found in the 1990s with the Makivik Corporation. All workers are banned from drinking alcohol or doing drugs during mine operational hours. Consequently, they freely and excessively engage in such activities after-hours to "make up for lost time."[80] This involves travelling into nearby communities that consequently see an increase in harmful incidents involving women. A social service worker from the community reported that women, adolescents, and children are victims of violence.[81] At Meadowbank, women in housekeeping roles often reported negative experiences. Many of these individuals reported incidents of harassment while simply walking to and from buildings; others detailed the power imbalances and an awareness of sexual expectations that male workers have for women. According to Inuit focus group participants, problems pertaining to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are also on the rise, which have led to calls to further educate workers.[82] In addition, men and women may house together. Due to the abuse allegations that are not new ideas, participants believe that all mines should provide assigned gendered housing.[83]

Beyond Canadian Borders

Violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people in the context of "man camps" is not an issue unique to Canada. For instance, thousands gathered in 2016 to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), a 1,172-mile extractive project created to transport oil from Bakken, North Dakota, to an oil tank farm in Patoka, Illinois.[84] While pipeline advocates argued that the project adhered to environmental safety standards while increasing United States (U.S.) independence, job creation, and charitable donation opportunities, the impacts on women and girls bears a striking resemblance to the former three cases.[85] Investigations into the "man camps" built for the project were found to escalate incidents of violence, both physical and sexual, and contribute to an increase in trafficking of Indigenous women and girls.[86]

A Way Forward

A variety of questions should be considered that while perhaps are premature at this stage, are necessary for determining solutions to the issue. What accountability mechanisms should be enforced to ensure that there is adequate implementation of policies? What sort of time frames should be imposed to determine the effectiveness of policies? In what ways should the policy solutions promote solidarity with Indigenous communities? How can feminist, intersectional responses be provided that are grounded in sustainable approaches for future Indigenous generations? This paper does not have the space, nor the adequate advice on behalf of professional policy advisors to answer each proposed question. However, it can act as a starting point for thinking about a way forward. As such, this paper assumes the position that "from an ethical policy perspective, the focus of government policies and the practices they generate must be first and foremost to ensure that individuals, families, and groups are not left worse off than prior to [an impact] upon their life."[87]

The MMIWG Calls for Justice presents *Calls for Extractive and Development Industries* in which two clauses clarify the priorities of the future of the development process:

> 13.1 We call upon all resource-extraction and development industries to consider the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, as well as their equitable benefit from development, at all stages of project planning, assessment, implementation, management, and monitoring.
>
> 13.4 We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to fund further inquiries and studies in order to better understand the relationship between resource extraction and other development projects and violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. At a minimum, we support the call of Indigenous women and leaders for a public inquiry into the sexual violence and racism at hydroelectric projects in northern Manitoba.[88]

However, since these calls and the update on the MMIWG National Action Plan, the frequency of these incidents today is undetermined. As such, further research must be devoted to the current violence toward Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people in the context of "man camps" and in affiliated surrounding communities to comprehensively understand the impacts on women today and the frequency of which these incidents occur even after the implementation of Section 22. However, there should be more than the identification of potential impacts on Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. As many informants identified that women received inadequate consultation, which is a "failure" of the Crown's consultation duties, and many developments were put on hold because of COVID-19, there must be follow-up when projects resume.[89]

As demonstrated, resource extraction projects tend to present new windows for understanding the unique experience of Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people.[90] Further consultation must be had with female workers employed by resource extraction companies and living in surrounding communities to understand their needs and determine how they can be implemented before new projects begin operations. In addition, there is a lack of

resources for Indigenous victims. Indigenous women reported that the mental health services offered by project companies are "inadequate" to help cope with traumatic experiences.[91] As such, spaces for healing, accessing information, and seeking assistance on site must be improved. As emphasized in *The Steering Committee of the Aboriginal Women in the Canadian Labour Force Report* (1993) and the *Strengthening Impact Assessments for Indigenous Women Report* (2018), further education, awareness, and training programs are essential for combatting the issue.[92] As such, existing training programs, if any, must be revised to ensure adequate information is provided to workers regarding anti-racism, anti-sexism, violence and sexual harassment prevention, and safe sexual education to combat STI transmission on and off project sites. Additional self-defense training must be implemented to provide female and queer workers with the tools to learn better safety strategies, to increase their self-confidence on project sites, and to deal with men in potential assault or abusive contexts.

Depending on who you ask, the IAA process is often viewed as a tool for perpetuating colonial dispossession of Indigenous land.[93] Esketemc First Nation members involved in the Prosperity Mine assessment process in B.C. assert that there is considerable "power and control" embedded in the environmental assessment process and "panel hearings echo other forms of power imposed on the community such as residential schools."[94] This colonial relationship impacts the participation of Indigenous women in the assessment process, which is a barrier for moving forward. As such, it is ethical to consult Indigenous women and place their needs at the forefront.[95] Despite the introduction of Section 22, Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people are still racialized and sexualized. Thus, there must be follow-up accountability tools for the Agency or the review panels that conduct the assessments. For resource industry proposals to be received in a more positive light by Indigenous peoples, there will need to be new planning,

consultation, reviews, and approvals to ensure that Indigenous women are protected in the process.[96] Nevertheless, while policies can provide guidelines, it is largely up to all actors involved in the process to ensure that they act in accordance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while extractive projects undoubtedly create various political and economic benefits, they tend to simultaneously generate a substantial amount of both controversy and pushback from different communities for a variety of reasons. Stereotypes, framing, discrimination, and racism that stem from European settler men have persisted over time and contributed to the ongoing issue of violence and sexual abuse against women, girls, and Two-Spirit people on "man camps" and within communities surrounding development projects. In what is commonly thought to be a masculine, heteropatriarchal space, Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people find themselves most vulnerable and at risk. Adopting a critical race feminist approach and applying an intersectional lens reveals a complex picture of the experiences and the way that Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit experience varying levels of harm due to their multifaceted identities. Their gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality are all contributing factors that explain why their bodies are continually devalued by non-Indigenous male workers. As for extractive developments, the onus is on the parties involved to ensure that development projects reflect the interests of women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. I recognize that I have not first-hand engaged Indigenous peoples in the project. I hope that the words and experiences of those whom I was able to include provides a core foundation for thinking about ethical policy options that prioritize women, girls, and Two-Spirit people.

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