"We are the Living Dead": The Gendered Impacts of Open-Pit Mining in the Dominican Republic

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
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Abstract

Despite a rhetorical commitment to enhancing community well-being, Canadian mining corporations have a history marked by ecological degradation and human rights violations, with women experience disproportionately negative impacts. While Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a desired topography for open-pit mining, the geographical area of the Dominican Republic has been largely absent from the literature. As such, this dissertation, rooted in decolonial ecofeminism, enacted a critical narrative inquiry with 7 women from the Dominican Republic to explore the gendered impacts of open-pit mining on their health and well-being.

This thesis is composed of six chapters, with chapter one introducing the rationale, guiding research questions, key terminology and researcher reflexivity. Chapter two consists of a scoping review which synthesizes the peer-reviewed literature regarding the gendered impacts of mining in LAC, revealing gaps which initiated this research. Chapter three provides an in-depth discussion of the methods, methodologies, paradigmatic understandings and reflexive insights of the research process. Chapter four presents a thematic analysis which reveals the seven main themes that arose from the critical narrative inquiry. These themes include ecological destruction; physical health and well-being; emotional health and well-being; sociocultural erosion; deception and corruption; systemic forces of power; and resistance and repression. Chapter five consists of a critical analysis of the findings, illuminating significant contributions, discussing methodological insights and presenting the dissemination of research findings. The concluding chapter reveals the broader implications of the findings and future directions of research in the field of gender and mining.

Through a decolonial ecofeminist perspective, this dissertation situates women’s narratives within systemic forces of power and illustrates the severity of gendered experiences caused and perpetuated by open-pit mining projects. This work makes a new and important contribution to a growing body of literature regarding gender and extraction, disrupting dominant narratives of transnational extraction and promoting health and well-being for mining impacts communities.
Key Words: Gender, Health and Well-Being, Open-Pit Mining, Decoloniality, Ecofeminism
Summary for Lay Audience

While Canadian mining corporations claim that they are beneficial to the health and well-being of communities in which they operate, community narratives dispute such claims, noting severe ecological destruction and human rights violations, which are often felt most deeply by women. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a prime location for mining corporations, but despite this, the Dominican Republic has not been an area of research in existing literature. Therefore, this dissertation uses a critical narrative inquiry, rooted in a decolonial ecofeminism, to understand the lived-experiences of 7 women living in proximity to an open-pit mining project in the Dominican Republic. A critical narrative inquiry uses storytelling to illuminate lived experiences while understanding how these experiences are situated within larger systems of power, such as colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism.

There are six chapters within this thesis. The first chapter introduces the rationale, guiding research questions, key terminology and reflexivity of the researcher. Chapter two consists of a scoping review which synthesizes existing literature regarding the gendered impacts of mining in LAC. This chapter reveals gaps which initiated the research questions presented in this thesis. Chapter three provides a discussion of the methods, methodologies, theoretical understandings and reflexivity in the research process. Chapter four presents the thematic findings of the research, consisting of ecological destruction; physical health and well-being; emotional health and well-being; sociocultural erosion; deception and corruption; systemic forces of power; and resistance and repression. Chapter five consists of an in-depth discussion and analysis of the findings, illuminating significant contributions, methodological insights, and the distribution of findings. The concluding chapter reveals the broader implications of the findings and future directions of research.

Through a theoretical perspective of decolonial ecofeminism, this dissertation positions women’s narratives within systemic forces of power, illustrating the severity of women’s experiences caused and maintained by open-pit mining projects. This work makes new
and important contributions to the field of research surrounding gender and extraction
and aims to promote health and well-being for mining impacted communities.
Co-Authorship Statement

I, Klaire Gain, acknowledge that this dissertation includes six chapters that resulted from collaboration with co-authors. Throughout each chapter, the primary contributions were made by the first author who: researched the methodologies and theoretical underpinnings, conducted the scoping review, sought appropriate ethical approval, established relationships with and recruited participants in the Dominican Republic, collected and transcribed all data, completed data analysis, and led in the writing of the monograph.

The contribution of co-author Dr. Angela Mandich, was primarily through research supervision of the primary author, theoretical and methodological guidance, and support in the intellectual and editorial process of each chapter.

The contributions of co-authors, Dr. Debbie Laliberte Rudman and Dr. Allyson Larkin included reflexive dialogue, theoretical and methodological guidance, and support in the intellectual and editorial process of the research and writing.
Dedication

For my family. Thank you is not enough. You have supported me through the ups and downs of the last four years. To my partner Jorge, my Mom, my Dad, my Stepdad, my sisters and my in-laws, I would not here today without your endless love and guidance (and childcare!) I am so lucky and so grateful.

For Cruz, my four legged fur baby who gained his angel wings on the last chapter of this dissertation. Thank you for being my writing buddy for the last four years. For resting your head on my lap as I worked and for keeping me grounded during difficult times. You got me to the last lap with your unconditional love and I am forever grateful for your companionship.

For Camila, from my belly to the sling, you have been with me throughout the whole research process, both in Canada and in the Dominican Republic. You have given me a new understanding of love and have made me a better person. You will do great things in this world, and I am so lucky to be your Mom.

Finally, for the women in the Dominican Republic who shared their stories, no hay palabras suficientes. I am in awe of your strength. Gracias. La lucha sigue…
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Angela Mandich, who provided continuous support, guidance and mentorship throughout the entirety of this dissertation. Your patience, understanding, flexibility and confidence in my work made this project possible. Thank you.

I am also grateful to my committee members, Dr. Debbie Laliberte Rudman and Dr. Allyson Larkin for your insights and feedback throughout this process. You supported my commitment to scholarly activism, and provided invaluable theoretical and methodological guidance to enact this critical research. I am very grateful to you both.

Lastly, words cannot express my gratitude to the communities in the Dominican Republic. Thank you for your continued friendship over the last decade and for trusting me to share your stories.
Table of Contents

Abstract................................................................................................................................. ii
Summary for Lay Audience...................................................................................................... iv
Co-Authorship Statement .......................................................................................................... vi
Dedication................................................................................................................................. vii
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ viii
Table of Contents ...................................................................................................................... ix
List of Tables ............................................................................................................................ xii
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................... xiii
List of Appendices .................................................................................................................... xiv

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Plan of Presentation ........................................................................................................... 3
   1.2 Rationale and Relevance ................................................................................................. 4
   1.3 Guiding Research Questions ............................................................................................ 6
   1.4 Defining Key Terms ........................................................................................................ 6
   1.5 Researcher Reflexivity .................................................................................................... 10
   1.6 Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 15

2. Mapping the Literature Regarding Gender and Mining in Latin America and the Caribbean ...................................................................................................................... 16
   2.1 Methods .......................................................................................................................... 16
   2.2 Background .................................................................................................................... 21
   2.3 Findings .......................................................................................................................... 25
   2.4 Discussion ....................................................................................................................... 46
   2.5 Limitations ...................................................................................................................... 48
   2.6 Gaps in the Literature ..................................................................................................... 48
2.7 Conclusion....................................................................................................................49

3. Methodology and Methods ..........................................................................................51

3.1 Paradigmatic Positioning ..........................................................................................52

3.2 Methodology and Methods .......................................................................................58

3.3 Researcher Reflexivity: Navigating Tensions in the Field ........................................67

3.4 Conclusion..................................................................................................................72

4. Findings .......................................................................................................................73

4.1 Ecological Destruction ..............................................................................................75

4.2 Physical Health and Well-Being ...............................................................................77

4.3 Emotional Health and Well-Being ..........................................................................80

4.4 Sociocultural Erosion ...............................................................................................84

4.5 Deception and Corruption ......................................................................................91

4.6 Systemic Forces of Power .......................................................................................93

4.7 Resistance and Repression .....................................................................................97

4.7.2 Relocation ...........................................................................................................98

4.8 Conclusion.................................................................................................................100

5. Discussion ..................................................................................................................102

5.1 Summary of Thematic Findings ..............................................................................102

5.2 Interpretations and Discussions ..............................................................................103

5.3 Methodological Insights and Limitations .................................................................114

5.4 Reflexive Insights and Sincerity ..............................................................................118

5.5 Dissemination and Mobilization of Findings ..........................................................120

5.6 Conclusion...............................................................................................................121

6. Conclusion ..................................................................................................................122

6.1 Chapter Insights .......................................................................................................122
6.2 Implications .................................................................................................................. 125
6.3 Future Directions ......................................................................................................... 129
6.4 Concluding Remarks ................................................................................................. 131
References ....................................................................................................................... 133
Appendices ....................................................................................................................... 150
Curriculum Vitae ............................................................................................................. 163
## List of Tables

Table 1: Search Strategy by Database ................................................................. 18

Table 2: Key Themes and Subthemes of Findings ............................................. 74
List of Figures

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram for Primary Review..................................................20
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Approval........ 150
Appendix B: Letter of Information and Informed Consent ........................................ 151
Appendix C: Letter of Information and Informed Consent Spanish Version.......... 156
Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement..................................................................... 162
Chapter 1

1. Introduction

This doctoral dissertation is situated within growing discourse surrounding the impacts of open-pit mining on the health and well-being of neighboring communities. Canadian corporations assert that they are a global leader in the mining sector and are committed to making a positive difference in the communities in which they operate (Mining Association of Canada, 2021). However, community narratives have continuously disputed such claims, noting severe ecological destruction and human rights violations perpetuated by transnational mining corporations (Coumans, 2009; Engler, 2012; Gordon & Webber, 2008; Gordon & Webber, 2016; Li, 2015; Rondon, 2008; Veltmeyer, 2013).

Existing literature has demonstrated that while communities at large are impacted by open-pit mining, the gendered impacts are distinct, resulting in uniquely challenging lived-experiences and contextual conditions for women living in proximity to mineral extraction (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2012; Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015; Caxaj et al., 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Jenkins, 2014; Li, 2008; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008). Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a desired topographical location for mineral extraction, and between 1970 and 2018, mining in the Latin American region increased six times (Bárcena, 2018). While there is expanding exploration of gender and mining in the literature, the area of the Dominican Republic has been largely absent. This is significant as the Dominican Republic is home to one of the world’s largest open-pit gold mines, and saw an export of $2.15 billion dollars in ‘critical metals’ (gold, silver and nickel) in 2021 (BNamericas, 2023), demonstrating a need for further investigation in this geographical context. Further, it is imperative to centre this research in paradigmatic understandings and methodological approaches which value and recognize the strength of women’s narratives, shaped through histories of colonialism and ongoing exploitation perpetuated through a capitalist patriarchy. Therefore, this doctoral research utilizes a decolonial ecofeminist theory and critical narrative methodology to investigate the gendered impacts of mining in the
Dominican Republic, facilitating space for women to share their unique lived-experiences in ways that intentionally sought to optimize their voices with power and control over their stories.

The focus on health and well-being throughout this narrative inquiry stems from my position as a doctoral student in the Health Promotion field at Western University. It is explained that health promotion is a “multidimensional concept that can be viewed from multiple perspectives” (Western University, 2023, para. 1) and I understand the field to centre intersectional frameworks in promoting global health equity. Through this, one can recognize the various social, cultural, political and economic factors which impact the ability to achieve positive health and well-being. The Ottawa Charter has defined priority areas for action in health promotion, several of which are pertinent to investigations of open-pit mining, including healthy public policies; creating healthy environments; and reinforcement of community action (Government of Canada, 2017). By adopting a critical approach to health promotion through a decolonial ecofeminist perspective, this dissertation aims to resist the systemic forces which contribute to health inequity for women in mining impacted communities.

This research was co-created with 7 women in the Dominican Republic, neighboring one of the world’s largest open-pit mining sites, owned and operated by a Canadian corporation. Through this chapter, I provide an overview of the contents of this doctoral dissertation, outlining the overall plan of presentation as well as the rationale and relevance for this research, noting the significance of investigating the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. Next, I outline the guiding questions to this research and provide an overview of the key terms and theoretical concepts which underpin the work. I then provide an in-depth reflexive discussion surrounding my own positionality as a researcher and activist with a long-standing relationship with the community in the Dominican Republic.
1.1 Plan of Presentation

This introductory chapter serves as a foundation to frame and situate this doctoral dissertation. This monograph consists of six chapters, providing a detailed investigation surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

Chapter 2, “Mapping the Literature Regarding the Gendered Impacts of Mining in Latin America and the Caribbean” offers an in-depth synthesis of the current literature surrounding gender and mining within LAC. Through this, a comprehensive review of 16 articles revealed thematic consistencies, including health and well-being; social impacts; ‘womanhood’, resistance and activism; and systems of power and oppression. Chapter 2 situates the remainder of the dissertation by revealing gaps in the literature, specifically related to theoretical foundations and under-researched geographical areas such as the Dominican Republic.

Chapter 3, “Methods and Methodology” details the foundational theories, methods and methodologies, which have guided this dissertation. First, the paradigmatic positioning of the research is discussed, proposing the collaboration of two key theories, ecofeminist theory and decolonial theory to underpin the research. Next, the chosen methodology is outlined, discussing the use of decolonizing methodologies in the form of a critical narrative inquiry. The methods utilized to carry out this research are then discussed through the overview of the study sites, recruitment, interview process, data collection and data analysis. Further, through a reflexive analysis, this chapter explores how the researcher navigated tensions in the field, including tensions of power and privilege, tensions of relationality and tensions of bilingual research.

Chapter 4, “Findings” delivers the findings of this research that evolved from a process of critically informed thematic analysis. Through this, seven key themes emerged, including ecological destruction; physical health and well-being; emotional health and well-being; sociocultural erosion; deception and corruption; systemic forces of power; and resistance and repression. Within chapter 4, these central themes, along with several subthemes, are presented through the narratives of community members, demonstrating shared
experiences regarding the gendered impacts of mining on the health and well-being of women in the Dominican Republic.

Chapter 5, “Discussion”, presents an interpretation of the findings of the research through a critical analysis and deeper discussion of the narratives which emerged and situates them within larger theoretical frameworks and understandings. Through interpretations of each key theme, this chapter identifies and highlights the contributions of this research within the wider literature surrounding gender and mining and includes a methodological evaluation of the quality of the work. To further demonstrate quality of research in regards to sincerity, reflexive insights pertinent to the entirety of the research process are discussed, particularly in attention to research positionality and community relationality. Lastly, this chapter outlines the dissemination of research findings, emphasizing a commitment to community-collaborated scholarly activism.

Finally, Chapter 6, “Conclusion” provides an overview of this dissertation by highlighting the key components of each chapter. Further, the implications of the research are discussed, highlighting contributions to the field of health promotion, decolonial ecofeminist theoretical understandings and Canadian Foreign Policy. This chapter aims to conclude the doctoral dissertation through a recognition of successes, failures and the possibilities of decolonial ecofeminist research to promote mining and gender justice on a global scale.

1.2 Rationale and Relevance

The Canadian mining industry is the most prominent in the world, comprising over 75% of all mining companies operating abroad (Global Affairs Canada, 2019). Due to the significant presence of mountainous topographies holding “considerable reserves of critical minerals” (Purdy & Castillo, 2022, para 3) LAC has become a principal destination for mineral extraction. This extraction spans from colonial exploration which led to the genocide of the Indigenous Taíno peoples (Rivas, 2019) to current Canadian corporate exploitation sustained through neoliberal capitalism and favourable political legislation (Gordon & Webber, 2008). Canadian corporations dominate the mining
industry, with over 60% of all mining projects in LAC involving Canadian companies (Lama, 2021).

The substantial presence of Canadian mining corporations throughout LAC holds significant impacts for communities neighboring mineral reserves. The Canadian government claims that Canadian mining corporations abroad are committed to meeting environmental, social and governance objectives, “positioning Canada as a global leader in responsible business practices and responsible sourcing” (Government of Canada, 2023, para 1). However, community narratives refute this, with allegations of ecological harm, health concerns, community deterioration and human rights violations (Deonandan et al., 2017). Communities throughout LAC share that these concerns are exacerbated for women, with intensified impacts on their health and well-being through disclosures of environmental impacts; physical health; emotional health; and social impacts (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015; Caxaj et al., 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Jenkins, 2014; Li, 2008; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008).

Despite these community narratives, there is limited research explicitly focusing on the gendered impacts of mining in LAC, with no gender specific research in the geographical area of the Dominican Republic, where there is a heavy presence of Canadian mining corporations. Therefore, this doctoral research explores the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. The purpose of this project is to further understand and situate the social, emotional and physical well-being of women neighboring open-pit gold mining operations, while supporting participants to act as co-researchers in telling their own stories. This research was conducted through a methodology of critical narrative inquiry, grounded in a decolonial ecofeminism, with the goal of sharing-power in the research process and understanding shared narratives within larger systemic forces of colonization, patriarchy and capitalism.

Through this research, I have aimed to generate knowledge which will contribute to the under researched areas of mining, health and gender by generating a new understanding of the intersections between health and well-being, gender and mining. It is my goal that
this research can be used as an advocacy tool for communities impacted by mining through accessible distribution of findings, allowing for increased support for women’s health and well-being. This research can also be applied to other open-pit mining sites allowing for inclusion of various categories of metals and countries of extraction. Further, this research will be used to advocate with organizations, governments and mining corporations to influence policy, promoting the health and well-being of women in mining impacted communities.

1.3 Guiding Research Questions

This research was informed by three guiding questions; specifically:

1) What are the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic?
2) How do the gendered impacts of mining deter health and well-being?
3) What are the systemic forces that shape the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic? This inquiry will consider how women in impacted communities experiences are shaped by existing structures of power.

1.4 Defining Key Terms

The section below provides a brief definition of key concepts and terms that will be utilized throughout this dissertation. While each term will be further theorized and discussed through the remainder of this dissertation, the following definitions situate the terms and concepts in relation to the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

1.4.1 Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of an individual based on their sex (biological attributes) (CIHR, 2023). Gender is influenced by biological, psychological and social factors and is connected to systems of power through the understanding and representation of gender in society. Gender is hierarchical and “produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic
inequalities” (WHO, 2023, para. 2). Gender is traditionally understood as binary (man/woman), yet the concept of gender is becoming increasingly diversified through differing gender identities. While I understand gender to be a spectrum of diverse identities, for the purpose of this research, the term gender is utilized when discussing the lived-experiences of women-identifying individuals (henceforth referred to solely as women) impacted by open-pit mining in the Dominican Republic.

1.4.2 Gendered

The term gendered is an adjective applied to an action which is significantly biased towards one sex (Klivingston & Wood, 2016). Issues and discussions of gender often perpetuate a gendered understanding of these differences, advancing stereotypes, hierarchies and power structures (Shannon, 2019). Therefore, in living in a gendered society, the functioning of our lives have been constructed in a way which “reproduces both the differences between men and women and the domination of men over women” (Kimmel, 2000, p. 16). Within this research, gendered impacts signifies the ways in which one’s gender identity intersects with the social, cultural, economic and political factors influenced by the presence of open-pit mining. This refers to ways in which women neighboring mining sites are uniquely and disproportionately impacted, in comparison to men, through the extractive process of open-pit mining.

1.4.3 Health and Well-Being

In accordance with the World Health Organization (2021), health and well-being refers to the “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease of infirmity” (para. 2). While health has largely been referred to as positive physicality, there is a growing conceptualization of health and well-being as holistic, recognizing the importance of psychological and emotional stability and positive social engagement in addition to physical well-being (Ninivaggi, 2020). In relation to the gendered impacts of mining, health and well-being refers to the full lived-experiences of women neighboring open-pit mining sites and the effects these experiences have on their physical, emotional and social state.
1.4.4 Systemic Forces

Systemic forces refer to macro level systems of power and oppression such as neocolonialism, imperialism, racism and patriarchy. These systemic forces exist at institutional and structural levels (economic, social, political and cultural) and have historical roots, perpetuated through the “intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on their identity while advantaging members of the dominant group” (National Equity Project, 2023, para. 4). In relation to this doctoral research, forefronting systemic forces allow for a critical conceptualization of gender and extraction, recognizing historical and contemporary systems of oppression which uphold and reinforce the gendered impacts of mining.

1.4.5 Coloniality

Coloniality is the process in which truths, knowledges and practices exist within Eurocentric frameworks of western modernity and global capitalism (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Central to coloniality is the colonial matrix of power (Quijano, 2000), which describes the legacy of colonialism that “articulates race and labor, space and peoples, according to the needs of capital and to the benefit of white European peoples” (Mignolo, 2010, p. 39). This matrix of power has shaped the world since the colonization of the Americas and is rooted in structures of domination and oppression. Quijano (2000) maintains that the colonial matrix of power has four interrelated domains: control of economy, control of authority, control of gender and sexuality and control of subjectivity and knowledge. While each of these domains will be further discussed in Chapter 3, they are deeply connected to the gendered impacts of mining, with coloniality both rooted in and perpetuated through sites of extraction.

1.4.6 Decoloniality

Decoloniality aims to resist the colonial matrix of power through the “ongoing undoing of colonization” (Hundle, 2019, p. 298) and opposes Eurocentric and colonial modes of knowledge production. Decoloniality values voices, narratives and knowledges of those who have been ‘othered’ through colonial structures of power. Through an active refusal of exploitative systems of modernity, decoloniality is anti-capitalist, and rejects
ecological extraction as ‘development’ at the expense of Indigenous and Campesino peoples (Rural peoples of LAC). For the purpose of this research, decoloniality is understood as a key concept for situating the narratives and lived experiences of women impacted by mining in the Dominican Republic. Further discussion regarding decolonial theory will be presented in Chapter 3.

1.4.7 Neocolonialism

Neocolonialism is described as the reproduction of colonial structures of power through “socio-economic and political activity by former colonial rulers aimed at reinforcing capitalism, neoliberal globalization, and cultural subjugation of their former colonies” (Taiwo, 2016, para 3).

The connections between neocolonialism and resource extraction are profound, with transnational mining corporations utilizing economic and political control to exploit global ecologies of Indigenous peoples. The propagation of extraction as ‘development’ perpetuates neocolonial systems of domination, reinforcing the subjugation of the ‘other’. In the case of the Dominican Republic, transnational mining corporations have been referred to as “worse and more dangerous than Christopher Columbus” (Ashly, 2021, para 73), signifying the neocolonial foundations of resource extraction.

1.4.8 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a political ideology that promotes a set of “social, cultural and political-economic forces that puts competition at the centre of social life” (Wilson, 2017, p. 2). Neoliberalism centralizes a privatized market economy, promoting individual liberties as freedom of the market. Neoliberalism rose to significance in the 1980’s, with the ideologies still enforced through contemporary systems of capitalism (Birsbois et al., 2021). Through deregulation of the market, privatization and free-trade, neoliberal ideologies drive transnational mining companies, promoting foreign resource extraction for corporate interests.
1.4.9 Imperialism

A traditional understanding of imperialism refers to “the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory” (Said, 1994, p. 9). Imperialism is executed through force, political collaboration or economic, social or cultural dependency (Said, 2012) and is connected to neocolonialism through the creation and perpetuation of systems of domination over the ‘other’. However contemporary imperialism no longer relies on the forced settlement of colonies, but is instead deeply connected to systems of capitalism, in which imperialism has become “almost entirely a matter of economic domination, in which market imperatives, manipulated by the dominant capitalist powers, are made to do the work no longer done by imperial states or colonial settlers” (Wood, 2003, p. 153). Therefore, when speaking of extraction, imperialism will be referred to in the context of capitalism, where the domination and control over LAC by imperialist powers such as Canada is primarily driven by the exploitation of natural resources for capital gain (Gordon & Webber, 2016).

1.4.10 Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is considered a convergence of feminism and ecology and theorizes the ways in which both women and ecology are exploited and oppressed under a capitalist patriarchy (Gaard, 2011). An ecofeminist analysis links the current day ecological crisis with a “Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture built on the domination of nature and the domination of women as nature” (Salleh, 1996, p. 13). This culture is not only built on patriarchal dominance, but is also the foundation for an economic system in which such domination is inevitable. For the purpose of this dissertation, ecofeminism provides a theoretical framework to explore the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic through a critical analysis of larger systemic forces such as capitalism, patriarchy and neocolonialism.

1.5 Researcher Reflexivity

1.5.1 Researcher Positionality

In discussing decolonizing methodologies, Smith (1999) explains that “research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that
occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (p. 5). Qualitative research is rooted in colonial histories, beginning with ethnographers in the 17th century observing ‘primitive’ and ‘uncivilized’ cultures, aiming to understand the ‘other’ (Vidich & Lyman, 2000). This ‘other’ was typically non-white, revealing the Eurocentric and racist foundations of qualitative research. It is essential to understand the problematic and colonial histories of qualitative research to avoid the reproduction of methodologies that are rooted in neocolonial ideologies. Therefore, researcher reflexivity, rooted in decoloniality, is imperative throughout the research process.

Finlay (2002) argues that through self-reflexivity, “researchers openly acknowledge tensions arising from different social positions in relation to such factors as class, gender and race” (p. 535). As a white, middle-class, able-bodied, cis-gendered (she/her) settler of European decent on Turtle Island, I recognize myself as an ‘outsider researcher’ (Minkler, 2004). To reduce ‘insider-outsider’ tension, I am committed to engaging in a continuous process of critical reflexivity regarding my own position of privilege (Minkler, 2004). Mignolo (2017) encourages scholars to “know your place in the colonial matrix of power” (p. 1) and I have consistently reflected on the power I hold throughout the entirety of the research process, as well as in the researcher-participant relationship. As a white settler, I am privileged on both on the traditional lands of the Anishniaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Chonnonton nations where I currently reside on Turtle Island (often referred to as London, Ontario, Canada), as well as on the traditional lands of the Taíno peoples in Quisqueya (now known and here-in referred to as the Dominican Republic). I recognize that both myself and my ancestors have and continue to benefit from colonization and the ongoing systems of neocolonial racism which maintain white-settler power. Further, I acknowledge the class and financial privilege that I possess as a university educated, employed, upper-middle class woman. This is significant in working with Campesino communities in the Dominican Republic where over 40% of the population lives in poverty, with 10.4% experiencing extreme poverty (World Food Program, 2023). Privileges of class and citizenship (as a white settler Canadian), have allowed me several social freedoms that are not granted to most in the Dominican Republic, including the freedom of movement, both financially and without the requirements of a travel visa forced upon most who reside within the ‘Global South’.
In investigating the gendered impacts of mining, it is essential to critically reflect on my own social location. As a cis-gendered woman living in a patriarchal society, I recognize the ways in which patriarchy and misogyny exist and are perpetuated at personal and systemic levels. However, my experience as a white woman existing with multiple factors of privilege differs greatly from the women with whom I conducted research. The concept of intersectionality grew out of critical legal and critical race studies (Crenshaw, 1989) and has become an analytical tool to understand the ways in which race, class, gender and other social locations intersect in systems of domination. An intersectional analysis recognizes that each individual has diverse identities which overlap to create distinct lived-experiences in relation to power, privilege and oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). While I may have some shared gendered experiences with research participants, my locations of privilege in relation to my race, class, and citizenship vary greatly. Recognizing privilege and oppression on a multidimensional, rather than a single categorial axis allows me to consider the ways in which intersectionality impacts ones’ lived-experiences. While I cannot dissociate from these positions of privilege, nor the meanings that they hold, specifically within the context of Canadian mining in LAC, I adhere to worldviews and methodologies which necessitate the sharing of power and strive to promote emancipation, equity and social justice throughout the research process.

Smith (1999) argues that “researchers are expected to have some form of historical and critical analysis of the role of research in the Indigenous world” (p. 5) and I have come to understand a decolonial ecofeminist theory as a strong framework for engaging in research with marginalized communities. Through a decolonial ecofeminist theory, I am able to recognize not only colonial histories, but also current coloniality and the gendered impact this has on populations with whom I work. Having an understanding of connections between modernity, capitalism, coloniality and gender have enhanced my capacity to further understand the structures of ecological and human oppression experienced due to Canadian mining. Further, a decolonial ecofeminist perspective has provided me with a framework for understanding how research can recreate coloniality through systems of power and privilege. Mack & Na’puti (2019) argue that “enacting a politics of colonial resistance is understanding that our work is sometimes to unlearn, shift and reframe what we have accepted as common sense when it is actually colonial
imposition” (p. 365). Through decolonial and ecofeminist concepts such as ‘de-linking’ and ‘other’ thinking, I strive to unlearn colonial epistemologies and utilize critical narrative inquiries to give power to the voice of marginalized populations.

1.5.2 Researcher Motivations

In understanding that “research is always conducted from someone’s point of view” (Savin-Badin & Howell-Major, 2012, p. 70), this doctoral research stems from my passions as a feminist, environmentalist and social justice activist. Through my academic career in Social Justice and Peace studies at King’s University College and Social Justice and Equity Studies at Brock University, I have spent over a decade engaged in critical education regarding gendered oppression and ecological destruction, as well as the systemic forces through which they are perpetuated. Further, I am conducting this doctoral research within the field of Health Promotion and as such have a commitment to universal health and well-being and disrupting dominant systems which intensify health inequity in diverse communities. I recognize that holding a strong passion for environmental justice impacts the way in which I view and therefore research Canadian mining, and it may be argued that due to this, I hold a preconceived bias regarding my findings. Locating and acknowledging my values and worldviews within my research allows me to recognize potential bias through all stages of this dissertation, as will be noted throughout the following chapters.

While structures of power and privilege can complicate projects and produce ethical dilemmas, Benjamin-Thomas et al. (2018), argue that reflexivity can also “create spaces for researchers to explore, navigate, challenge and share the process of attempting to break traditional power difference” (p. 11). Therefore, I adhere to a critical worldview and believe in collaborative research as a form of social change. I value working directly with community members in solidarity and fostering positive, reciprocal relationships (Savin-Badin & Howell-Major, 2012). While this can be challenging through the unavoidable power structures discussed above, it can also create opportunity for solidarity while utilizing academia as activism for ecological and community justice. Mack & Na’puti (2019) explain, “sharing knowledge is a long term-commitment. It is much easier for researchers to hand out a report and for organizations to distribute.
pamphlets than to engage in a continued knowledge-sharing process” (p. 16). Through power sharing with community and accessible distribution of findings, I have aimed to utilize my position of privilege to create research that will disrupt the systemic forces which exploit and oppress Campesino women in the Dominican Republic.

Tracy (2010) notes that reflexivity is an imperative aspect of research and requires researchers to be “introspective, assessing their own biases and motivations, and asking whether they are well-suited to examine their chosen sites or topics” (p. 843). Therefore, it is important to be transparent regarding my past experiences and current relationship with the community of research, which led me to this dissertation. I first became conscious of the impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic in 2012 while on an experiential learning trip throughout my undergraduate degree. Since then, I have returned to the Dominican Republic twelve times, in both activist and teaching roles, facilitating delegations with over 100 students to learn from impacted communities. Through this activism, I have developed strong relationships with women who are mobilizing in resistance to Canadian mining. It is crucial to be reflexive of research across relationships, recognizing the inherent power structures that exist within the ‘researcher’/‘researched’ context and the changing relationship dynamics this posed with women whom I have known for over a decade. However, Lugones (2010) also notes the importance of relationships in decolonizing methodologies which calls for plurality of epistemologies and world views and requires engagement of individuals both in and outside of the colonial difference through intersubjective relationships. These relationships are central to decoloniality as they “rest on the production of deep coalitions among those who are oppressed at various fractures loci within the colonial difference” (Mack & Na’puti, 2019, p. 353). While strong pre-existing relationships of solidarity support in navigating the inevitable power structures that occur within international research, a continuous process of reflexivity is nevertheless required. Due to the significance of deep reflexivity, this will be integrated throughout the remainder of this dissertation, with further discussion regarding reflexivity at all stages of the research process.
1.6 Conclusion

Through a decolonial ecofeminist critical narrative inquiry conducted with 7 women from the Dominican Republic, I have aimed to further understand the gendered impacts of open-pit mining on the health and well-being of women neighboring the extractive project. The three primary questions which have guided this research include: 1) What are the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic? 2) How do the gendered impacts of mining deter health and well-being? and 3) What are the systemic forces that shape the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic?. Through a deep reflexivity and critical reflection regarding researcher positionality, I have aimed to carry out this research in ways that amplify the lived-experiences of women and disrupt systemic forces which uphold and perpetuate the oppression and exploitation of women in mining impacted communities. The following chapter consists of a comprehensive scoping review, situating this research within broader knowledge regarding the gendered impacts of mining in LAC.
Chapter 2

2. Mapping the Literature Regarding Gender and Mining in Latin America and the Caribbean

Through this scoping review, the extent and nature of the peer reviewed empirical literature regarding the well-being of women in mining impacted communities is synthesized, providing a framework for the primary research informing this dissertation. Following a detailed description of the systematic methods used, results of a thematic analysis of 16 included studies are presented. Five themes are used to convey the foci and depth of existing scholarly research, including: environmental impacts; health and well-being; social impacts; womanhood; and resistance and activism. This mapping of key findings of existing research addressing gendered impacts of mining also serves to reveal gaps, specifically in relation to the need for critical gendered analysis. In particular, it is argued that knowledge within the field would be enhanced through application of a critical theoretical lens of decolonial ecofeminism. In addition, an exclusive focus on women’s experiences, which was not prevalent in the existing literature, is imperative while discussing mining impacted communities, due to longstanding gendered relations of power that manifest at familial, communal and political levels. These gendered relations of power, which are embedded within systems of capitalist patriarchy, are emphasized and perpetuated through open-pit mining practices. The following scoping review provides a foundation for this doctoral research, while revealing the necessity for a decolonial ecofeminist analysis of the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

2.1 Methods

A scoping review of the literature was conducted using Arksey and O’Malley’s (2005) methodological framework for scoping studies. This approach utilizes five steps to identify and map relevant literature in a specific area of research (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). This approach was selected to ensure a rigorous exploration of the nature, extent
and depth of existing literature regarding gender and mining in LAC. The five steps completed throughout this scoping review include identifying the research question; identifying relevant studies; study selection; charting the data; and collating, summarizing and reporting the results.

2.1.1 Identifying the Research Question

The question “What is the nature and extent of the peer reviewed literature surrounding the gendered impacts of open-pit mining in Latin America and the Caribbean?” was investigated. This question intended to guide a comprehensive overview of an area of study lacking an extensive review, specifically focusing on gender and mining within the geographical context of LAC. The term gendered was used to reflect the unique experiences of women, utilizing a critical feminist framework to recognize the unequal power relations that exist within capitalist patriarchal structures in the context of open-pit mining.

2.1.2 Identifying Relevant Studies

In order to identify relevant studies, an inclusive, yet concise research strategy was applied. This strategy was developed in consultation with a university librarian and underwent several stages of revision. While much information regarding gender and mining exists at an organizational level, grey literature was excluded from the search due to the primary goal of synthesizing peer-reviewed research. The final search strategy involved five separate searches on five primary electronic databases including Omni, Scopus, Web of Science, Sociological Abstracts and Gender Studies. Citation tracking was also completed through reference lists of relevant sources. The primary search identified 1,670 articles which were entered into the reference management software Zotero. An additional 20 articles were added through citation tracking, and 1,181 duplicates were removed. This left 509 articles for stage 3 of study selection. The search strategy, databases and number of article hits are documented in Table 1.
Table 1: Search Strategy by Database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Search Terms (Article, Abstract, Key Words)</th>
<th>Omni</th>
<th>Scopus</th>
<th>Web of Science</th>
<th>Sociological Abstracts</th>
<th>Gender Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>‘Gender’ OR ‘Women’ AND ‘Mining’ OR ‘Anti-mining’</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>2,270</td>
<td>2,205</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>‘Gender’ OR ‘Women’ AND ‘Mining’ OR ‘Anti-mining’ AND ‘Health’</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>‘Gender’ OR ‘Women’ AND ‘Mining’ OR ‘Anti-mining’ AND ‘Community’</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>‘Gender’ OR ‘Women’ AND ‘Mining’ OR ‘Anti-mining’ AND ‘Health’ OR ‘Well Being’ AND ‘Community’</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Articles located through citation tracking: 20

Total Articles: 1,690

Duplicates Removed: 1,181

Total Articles for Primary Review: 509
2.1.3 Study Selection

A primary title and abstract review based on inclusion/exclusion criteria was conducted on the 509 primary articles identified through the search engine to determine relevance to the research question. Therefore, to be considered for a full, secondary review, the studies were required to be peer-reviewed articles (no grey literature, conference proceedings or book chapters/reviews), concentrating on open-pit mining in LAC. The studies were required to focus on the experiences of communities living next to open-pit mining projects and have a gendered component, focusing on women 18 years and older. Articles in both English and Spanish were considered from the date range of 1980-2020. This date range was chosen due to the neoliberal expansion of the mining industry within LAC in the 1990’s (Gordon & Webber, 2008).

After a primary title and abstract review, 474 articles were excluded based on exclusion criteria. 35 articles which met the criteria for inclusion were assessed through a full-text review and 19 were excluded for not meeting the necessary criteria. Therefore, 16 articles were included for the full scoping review. These articles were reviewed in-depth to synthesize the literature related to the gendered impacts of open-pit mining in LAC. Table B demonstrates the study selection process through a PRISMA Flow Diagram.
Identification:
- Records identified through database searching (n=1,670)
- Additional records identified through citation tracing (n=20)

Duplicates removed (n=1,181)

Screening:
- Records screened (n=509)
- Records excluded based on title and abstract (inclusion/exclusion criteria) (n=474)

Eligibility:
- Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n=35)
- Full text articles excluded with reason (n=19)

Included:
- Studies included in thematic analysis (n=16)

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram for Primary Review
2.1.4 Charting the Data

Arksey and O’Malley (2005) emphasize the process of charting key information identified through the full-text reviews of relevant articles to inform synthesis and interpretation. The information charted for each of the 16 articles included: authors, title and year of publication; country/region; participant and level of participation; conceptualization of women throughout the research; aims of the study; methods/methodology; theoretical perspective; findings; and limitations. Charting provided an opportunity to organize and synthesize the data, revealing key information consistent throughout the research.

2.1.5 Collating, Summarizing and Reporting the Results

Finally, a thematic analysis focused on the findings of the studies, was completed to collate and summarize the results. This thematic analysis utilized an inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998) and consisted of charting common themes and identifying those that were most prevalent throughout the studies. Themes were recognized through a process of coding, in which each article was methodically reviewed and color codes were assigned for predominant findings throughout the literature. Five common themes, with sub-themes throughout, were selected based on prevalence in the chosen articles. These included environmental impacts; health and well-being; social impacts; womanhood and resistance/activism. Each theme has a specific gendered focus, noting the unique experiences of women.

2.2 Background

A discussion surrounding the gendered impacts of open-pit mining in LAC must be situated in a historical and contemporary structural analysis of systems and power and oppression. These systems support extraction and exploitation and reinforce unjustified power structures which exist between the ‘Global North’ and the ‘Global South’, disproportionately impacting women. Deonandan et al., (2017) explain that mining conflict and gender inequity is not created at a community level, but “these conflicts are layered on larger, more complex socioeconomic, cultural and political realities in the
context in which the mining struggle is occurring” (p. 417). This conflict is rooted in, and perpetuated through, intersecting systems of colonialism, capitalism, and neoliberalism.

2.2.1 Colonialism

There is a significant legacy of colonialism throughout LAC, and one that is argued to still continue through the extractive industries. Indigenous women in mining impacted communities are making connections between historical colonialism and current day mining practices, with a woman from Guatemala explaining “They [Goldcorp] entered the way the Spaniards entered 500 years ago to extract the riches of the Indigenous peoples” (Caxaj et al., 2013, p. 220). Authors have coined the term resource colonialism to describe the connections between racist ideologies and capitalist extractive economies, which “ignores land ownership and other distinct rights through the legal/political construction of Indigenous communities as dependent domestics” (Caxaj et al., 2013, p. 215). This resource colonialism is perpetuated through the environmental exploitation, detrimental health impacts, emotional and physical violence and destruction to community and culture by the mining industry. For instance, in Guatemala, a mining company funded English/Spanish programs as part of their community development. However, these are the language of the colonizers and the programs competed with existing institutions teaching Mayan Mam and cultural rejuvenation (Caxaj et al., 2013). Such actions perpetuate the eraser of Indigenous language and culture, with communities feeling that the mining corporations are aiming to “shut us out from what we are recovering” (Caxaj et al., 2013, p. 221). Further, the processes of land appropriation including bribery, intimidation, threats and violence parallels colonial histories of dispossession and genocide.

Resource colonialism is also intertwined with theories of environmental racism, illuminating the intersections between extraction and racialized geographies on a global scale (Caxaj et al., 2013; Isla, 2017). Caxaj et al., (2013) explain that projects of extraction often occur on Indigenous territories, with “racialized communities commonly targeted for industrial projects and waste sites” (p. 215). Isla (2017) notes that “Indigenous peoples, similar to women, are naturalized; their land is labelled ‘unoccupied’ or ‘unused’ and thereby easily appropriated by those who claim they can
make it ‘productive’” (p. 97). Linking productivity to ecology implies that despite the ongoing colonial nature and ecological destruction associated with the mining industry, extraction is still promoted as a form of sustainable development. As such, local communities are seen as impeding progress and labelled ‘anti-development’ when opposing extractive practices that are encouraged through capitalist economic systems.

2.2.2 Capitalism

Throughout LAC, particularly within Indigenous communities, resistance to Westernized notions of development is growing (Li, 2008). Such development is inherent to a capitalist economic system, with the primary focus on perpetual growth. Perreault (2012) notes that with capitalism comes a process of “peasant immiseration, commodification, rural expulsion, privatization of the commons, land grabbing and the ‘new enclosures’” (p. 25). Indigenous communities are recognizing the connections between capitalism and ecological destruction and discussing the value of economic wealth versus environmental health, recognizing that through mining extraction, communities often suffer “because it’s not only that they take [the gold], but they leave the land destroyed, rights violated, serious problems with contamination… No way it is going to be for our development or wellbeing, it’s simply a matter of profit for the companies” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 19).

Communities are also connecting capitalist political interests and governmental support for extractive development. A woman from Peru explained that “our governments very much protect the economic interests and are not invested in the human aspect…The economic factor justifies all sorts of harm to fundamental rights” (Jenkins, 2015 p. 19).

To further conceptualize these experiences, authors have applied Harvey’s theory of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ drawn from a Marxist analysis of ‘primitive accumulation’ (Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Perrault, 2012). It is argued that as capitalist processes of development expand, subsistent modes of production practiced by small communities are seen as incompatible with notions of progress and infinite financial growth. They are therefore devalued, leading to dispossessing Indigenous peoples from traditional livelihoods and lands (Deonandan & Bell, 2019). The authors note that while capitalist dispossession is a global economic approach, it is “distinctively present in Latin America’s extractive sector where resource firms and the states that host them are
systematically appropriating Indigenous lands and harming life and culture in the process” (Deonandan & Bell, 2019, p. 30). In understanding the systems of power and oppression that fuel the mining industry, it is important to recognize that a capitalist economy is intertwined with free-market neoliberalism, which enables and promotes transnational corporate extraction within LAC.

2.2.3 Neoliberalism

Through neoliberal policies, transnational mining corporations are able to extract with little regulatory intervention from the state. The drastic growth in mining in the 1980’s throughout LAC is rooted in neoliberal policies which privatized and transnationalized the mining sector and “increased demand for minerals on global markets” (Brain, 2017, p. 411). Li (2008) notes that these neoliberal ideologies prioritize privatization, free markets and wealth accumulation at any cost. This is also accomplished through bilateral free trade agreements such as NAFTA and “institutionalized neo-liberal reforms by reducing tariffs and export taxes on investments” (Isla, 2017, p. 95). Further, these agreements provide legal protections for corporations, and prohibit governments from changing legislation which may risk the profits of extractive projects (Isla, 2017).

Through neoliberal policies, there are also few mechanisms in place to hold corporations accountable for violations of environmental or human rights laws (Rondon, 2008). These human rights violations are often perpetuated through imperialist policies, which hire paramilitary to secure their assets. This militarization increases instances of gender-based violence, and can be referred to as ‘militarized masculinity’. Militarized masculinity explains the “historical and political interconnections between gender inequality and organized violence and the ways in which they reinforce one another” (Deonadan & Bell, 2019, p. 52). The imperialism inherent to neoliberal ideologies protects multinational corporations from opposition through intimidation and violence, promoting the commodification and exploitation of ecology while silencing resistance.

The privatization of natural resources, and the silencing of ethical violations that accompany this commodification are imperative to a neoliberal ideology. Therefore, financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
hold enormous power in persuading governments within LAC of the economic benefits in lieu of deregulated privatization, advancing the extractive industries with little recognition of the ecological and social harm (Caxaj et al., 2013). Brain (2017) explains that dependency on extractive industries necessitated by international financial institutions increased as “Andean countries accepted strict neoliberal austerity measures facilitated by the IMF and World Bank that required them to globalize trade and attract foreign investment in an effort to pay off their debt” (p. 411). Rondon (2008) predicts that due to enhanced trade agreements, neoliberal policies and elite interests, a dramatic expansion of mining extraction throughout LAC is inevitable. Such growth in the industry, situated in systems of power and oppression is a great cause of concern, increasing criticisms at local and global levels regarding environmental and community health, specifically within a gendered context.

2.3 Findings

Of the 16 studies included, three were critical overviews and 13 were primary research. Of the 13 primary studies, 12 utilized qualitative research methods in the form of interviews, while one employed mixed methods, engaging in both traditional qualitative interviews as well as distributed household surveys. Seven articles had a specific gendered lens, focusing solely on female identified participants, while the remaining six interviewed both men and women in the communities of interest. Geographically, all articles focused on LAC, with 7 concentrating specifically on the Andean region (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia), 4 on Guatemala, and 2 on Mexico. 10 authors were transparent with a disclosure of theoretical perspectives, all of which were grounded in critical theory with perspectives such as anti-colonial, feminist, ecofeminist and Marxist guiding their research.

2.3.1 Environmental Impacts

The ecological impacts of open-pit mining in LAC is widely addressed throughout the literature. Catalan-Vasquez and Riojas-Rodriguez (2011) note that such impacts particularly effect campesino communities (farmers and peasants throughout LAC) due to their dependency on their surrounding ecologies. As a woman from Peru explained, “we
live from our water and our land, we sow, we harvest and we survive. This is our work… We work the land, we sow, we produce and from this we live” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 13). The documented environmental destruction from mining is caused by the removal of ecology, destruction of biological diversity, the presence of heavy metals and toxic chemical compounds such as cyanide, mercury and arsenic, and excessive use of natural water sources, all of which have drastic environmental impacts (Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). Further, the literature notes that such environmental impacts disproportionately affect women, often due to gender inequality and gendered divisions of labor (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Caxaj et al., 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Jenkins, 2014; Li, 2008; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008). The most commonly discussed themes in relation to the environmental effects of open-pit mining in LAC include the impacts on local water sources and land and agriculture.

2.3.1.1 Water

Researchers note that in communities impacted by open-pit mining, increased water scarcity is detrimental to their livelihoods. For instance, Perreault (2012) found that in the area of the Huanuni Valley in Bolivia, over 64% of community members surveyed stated that they do not have sufficient water sources to meet their daily needs. It is argued that this is attributable to the water-intensive needs of the mining industry, in contrast with campesino subsistent agricultural techniques depending largely on rainfall and micro-irrigation systems. Perrault (2012) also reported that 40% of households were required to carry water from neighboring towns due to mining induced scarcity, a task that most often falls on women due to the gendered divisions of labor. As a woman in Peru noted, “Women are very aware of the water problem, because we are in the kitchen, we have to do laundry, and if there is no water we have to find it somewhere for the animals and the family” (Isla, 2017, p. 101). Additionally, due to ongoing mining projects in their communities, women noted having access to running water for only a few hours a day. As noted in one study, this required them to wake at 4:00 in the morning to gather enough water for cooking or showering (Isla, 2017). A woman from Ecuador echoed this, explaining how “it is women [who are most affected] because we are the ones who stay at
home… the woman has to see to the cooking, washing, bathing the children, everything. She has to clean the house, everything needs water” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 10).

In addition to scarcity, communities note that their previously fresh water sources are now often unsafe for not only human consumption but also animal intake and irrigation (Isla, 2017; Perreault, 2012). Such contamination causes dangerous impacts for subsistent communities in relation to their health and their livelihoods. A woman from Guatemala explained that open-pit mining is having a detrimental impact, “especially with the shortage of water.. it has impacted our crops… they are not growing like before.. [The mine is] taking away our water... taking away our crops which is our food, so what does that mean for us?” (Deonandan et al., 2017, p. 409). In campesino communities, land based economies are predominant and authors note that water contamination drastically impacts economic activities such as animal and small-scale agriculture (Li, 2008). Due to this, there have been instances of mining corporations monetarily compensating communities for damaged or decreased water sources (Li, 2008; Perreault, 2012); However, Li (2008) critiques this practice, noting that water is not a resource that can be monetized as it is “part of a complex set of relationships between people and the landscapes” (Li, 2008, p. 101). These connections to, and reliance on, the natural environment are not exclusive to water and also concern the land, agriculture and animals.

### 2.3.1.2 Land

The mining induced water contamination, land loss and agricultural destruction, often experienced predominately by women, creates difficulties in self and familial provisioning. Community members in Guatemala explained, “Pollution and scarcity of water also worries us; animals are dying and the avocado and fruit trees are drying up, even in communities not in the immediate vicinity of the mine” (Macleod, 2016, p. 91). Communities emphasize the decreased productivity of their agriculture, once a primary source of their livelihoods. Some women contended that the decreased productivity was due to airborne emissions from the mine, which impacted the precipitation (Deonandan et al., 2017). A woman from Guatemala noted, “They are taking all of the riches out of our land, they are destroying it, and it no longer produces healthy crops” (Deonandan et al.,
Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez (2015) maintain that the destruction of agriculture is detrimental for livelihoods, as women now have to buy what they previously obtained from the earth. Authors explain that the contamination of the land does not just impact crops, but also livestock and animals that sustain campesino communities. A woman from Guatemala reflected on memories of grazing animals as a young child, explaining, “It was lovely; we would go out to herd the animals and the air was pure…now when I see them exploiting and extracting the gold I start to cry, it hurts me so much. The company has destroyed the forest, there is no longer anywhere [for the animals] to graze” (Macleod, 2016, p. 93). Isla (2017) notes that in a mining impacted community in Peru, there have been reports of high levels of animal deformities and dead fish. Perreault (2012) echoes this, noting that of the mining impacted households surveyed in Bolivia, 74% noted having at least one animal sickened and 47% reported at least one animal dying from the contamination.

Issues of land are not solely confined to contamination and productivity, but also the land rights of communities neighboring open-pit gold mines. Authors have noted that mining companies have been guilty of forced displacement, land theft and pressures to sell (Jenkins, 2014; Caxaj et al., 2013). A community member from Guatemala explained that while people do not want to sell their land, the threats and intimidation from the mining company, as well as intense contamination, leave them little option, noting “those who haven’t sold are the ones that are suffering even more” (Caxaj et al., 2013, p. 221). Land is also often taken without prior and informed consent or proper compensation, particularly in the case of women landholders, emphasizing the gendered dynamics of power between mining corporations and women, particularly in Indigenous communities (Caxaj et al., 2013).

Environmental impacts relating to agriculture, livestock and land rights further the gendered relations of power within communities due to loss of traditional roles, including women’s land-based work. Further, Jenkins (2014) argues that decreased production, scarcity and food insecurity perpetuates male privilege and dominance, noting that as environmental degradation decreases the ability to perform traditional roles, women’s “workloads increase, and women are excluded from community decision-making
processes and lose control of household finances, overall becoming more economically dependent upon men” (p. 336). Authors note that these growing concerns related to environmental exploitation have significant impacts on both the physical and emotional health of women in mining-impacted communities.

### 2.3.1.3 Health and Well-Being

The contamination of the environment and the conflict that accompanies mining projects have several consequences related to health and well-being for communities neighboring open-pit mining sites. These consequences were primarily addressed in relation to both physical and mental health impacts, which authors note disproportionately affect women.

#### 2.3.1.4 Physical Health

Jenkins (2014) emphasizes the gendered impacts of open-pit mining projects through highlighting that women are more likely to experience the physical health related effects of mining since women’s exposure to “contaminated lands and waters is more frequent and intensive because of their primary role as agriculturalists, and their responsibilities for the day to day social reproduction of households and communities, leaving them more vulnerable to the effects of polluted water” (p. 333). Rondon (2008) reiterates these detrimental health impacts, noting that in Peru, the Ministry of Health confirmed high levels of lead, arsenic and mercury in blood and urine samples of communities neighboring a mining tailings pond. While these results were not gender specific, authors have made connections between heavy metal presence and adverse impacts on women. For instance, through qualitative studies, community members have highlighted interconnections between open-pit mining and reproductive health, with higher rates of infertility, birth deformities, still births and miscarriages for those in direct vicinity of the projects (Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). Jenkins (2014) explains that a woman’s reproductive role increases her vulnerability when heavy metals enter the body, since “methylmercury is known to cross the placenta and can severely affect the development of the fetus” (p. 333). Catalan-Vasquez and Riojas-Rodriguez (2015) echo this, noting that women in a mining impacted community in Mexico now consider their bodies, particularly their uterus, to be ‘contaminated’, consequently birthing sick babies. One woman from the community explained, “Little kids 10 to 12
years old have already been operated on because they are already sick, because I think we are contaminated all the way to the uterus, and so now we contaminate the children, now they are born all rotten, you know” (Catalan-Vasquez and Riojas-Rodrigues, 2015, p. 48). In a qualitative study by Deonandan et al., (2017), a woman from Guatemala exemplified the severity of the situation, connecting the deterioration of community health to war, explaining that although the civil/political conflict within their country has ended, genocide of communities continues through mining. She notes, “The contamination of our lands, of our rivers, is killing us slowly. Perhaps they are not using arms as frequently as they did… but with all this contamination this is how they are killing us, it’s a different strategy” (p. 414).

2.3.1.5 Mental Health

In addition to physical health impacts for women neighboring open-pit mining sites, authors emphasize the mining induced deterioration of personal mental health, which has proven to be detrimental to individual, familial and community well-being. According to Caxaj et al., (2014) residents in a mining impacted community in Guatemala identified feelings consistent with Western constructs of depression, panic attacks, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They also reported feeling frightened and associated this with “loss of sense of worth, energy as well as weight loss, sadness, insomnia and physical pain” (Caxaj et. al., 2014, p. 54). While the research conducted by Caxaj et al., (2014) was not gender specific, other authors (Jenkins, 2014; Macleod, 2016) have made connections between gender and mental health. Jenkins (2014) notes that while there is little statistical evidence, testimonies suggest the association between women’s mental health and the arrival of large scale mining in rural communities, often attributing such effects to the destruction of the environment in traditionally land-based societies. In another study, a woman from Guatemala describes this sadness in relation to water pollution and scarcity, explaining, “this sadness is great, and it will be difficult to get over. It’s very deep, damaging your inner being; damaging families and their sentiments. The elders are very sad about what’s going on; nothing like this has ever happened here before” (Macleod, 2016, p. 91). Accompanying this sadness is fear for one’s physical health due to contamination. A woman from Guatemala explained, “sometimes I get it in
my head that I am going to die. Since I am already sick, maybe I am going to die” (Caxaj et al., 2014, p. 54). This anxiety causes feelings of distress, with participants noting recurring nightmares and hypervigilance (Caxaj et al., 2014).

In addition to distress caused by environmental destruction, authors note the mental health effects due to ongoing intimidation from mining corporations, particularly felt by women. Jenkins (2017) reports experiences of conflict, violence and threats as large community stressors. A woman from Guatemala explained, “When I see guns I get nervous, I start to tremble and I feel very anxious. It is always scary” (Caxaj et al., 2014, p. 53), exemplifying feelings of fear of mining security, paramilitary and police whose presence is intensified in areas of extraction. A woman from Peru states the fear she feels while opposing mining projects due to continuous death threats made against her, explaining feelings of “permanent worry” (Jenkins, 2017, p. 1451). Deonandan and Bell (2019) further this, noting that the presence of armed military and security that accompany mining projects is a daily reminder that communities are under constant surveillance, increasing emotions of fear and anxiety. Caxaj et al., (2014) state that community members identified fear induced sleep disturbances due to a need for constant alertness which has led to “difficulties with concentration/memory retention and other cognitive impairments, ultimately influencing residents’ ability to carry out daily tasks” (Caxaj et al., 2014 p. 54). Authors note that this is particularly detrimental for women, who perform the majority of household responsibilities and social reproduction (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Deonandan et al., 2017; Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Jenkins, 2014; Jenkins, 2017; Li, 2008; Rondon, 2008).

The mental health of women in mining impacted communities is also affected by feelings of ‘worry’ and ‘distress’ for the future, particularly future generations. As a woman from Guatemala explained, “I cry when I think about what will happen in these next ten years. How will it be?” (Deonandan et al., 2017, p. 409). Across several studies, women participants were identified as having more concerns and anxieties regarding the future than their male counterparts. They noted this as being due to their roles as caregivers of future generations and the environment (Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2017, Jenkins, 2015; Macleod, 2016). A woman from Ecuador explained, “This is most important to us
as women; we value the land, as bringing up our children falls on us. What will we be able to give our children and grandchildren? What will they drink? Where will they live?” (Macleod, 2016, p. 92). Rondon (2008) notes that the health of children is drastically impacted by the damaging effects of mining operations, producing great concern and anxiety for women, specifically mothers. Caxaj et al., (2014) thematically summarize community mental health concerns noting key findings of nerves; depression; panic attacks and somatic experiences; lack of hope; and ongoing grief. The emotional well-being of women is intertwined with overall familial and community health, and authors illustrate the significant societal concerns associated with the effects of mining projects.

2.3.2 Social Impacts

The social impacts experienced by communities neighboring mining operations demonstrate the vast disruptions and damages to familial and community well-being, predominantly for women. Deonandan & Bell (2019) note that this is due to women bearing “the lion’s share of the social burdens that stem from the harms of mining” (p. 38). This occurs through facets of economic precarity, community development, sex work and conflict/violence.

2.3.2.1 Economic Precarity

Within the context of mining projects, it is often assumed that mining will benefit communities in the form of poverty alleviation and employment. However, researchers note that the presence of mining often leads to further economic precarity through “new poverty manifested by precarious or exploitative work conditions, food insecurity, limited educational/career opportunities, and fragile agricultural economies” (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011, p. 225). While the mining industry does create employment opportunities, communities argue that this employment is typically precarious, poorly paid, dangerous and highly gendered, with the majority of opportunities provided to men (Deonandan et al., 2017).

Through their qualitative research, authors found that employment for women within the mining sector is limited, with most jobs adhering to gendered divisions of labor such as
cooking and cleaning (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Deonandan et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Macleod, 2016). For instance, women in Peru were hired to make lunches for mine employees, and while this work was inconsistent, they expressed gratitude as it provided supplementary income that didn’t previously exist (Li, 2008). However, Deonandan et al., (2017) note that such gendered divisions of employment reinforce hypermasculinity of the mining industry while also perpetuating “the relationships and power differentials between women and men in the larger society” intensifying women’s economic dependence on men (p. 410). Researchers found that when women were employed in technical or manual labor jobs in the mining sector, they were often tokenized for claims of corporate social responsibility (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Jenkins, 2014). For instance, a woman from Mexico explained that the only woman employed at the mining site “was used for a lot of propaganda by the mine… she was there but they fired her… she was just for the photos and videos” (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011, p. 223). This objectification and exploitation of female employees furthers gender disparities while portraying corporations as proponents of gender equity, hindering opportunity for real progress or economic autonomy.

Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez (2011) explain that while few residents do feel their situation has improved due to mine employment, the vast majority believe that their economic condition had either stayed the same, or they had experienced more severe poverty since the mining operation began. Further, residents shared that short-term financial gains of mining projects are futile with such destructive, long-term impacts on the environment and local communities (Macleod, 2016). A women from Guatemala explained the new poverty that has emerged in her community, stating, “what has the mine brought us? Complete disruption. This wasn’t the case before, we lived peacefully. Of course, there was poverty. Material poverty, but there wasn’t poverty in terms of land, trees, water…” (Macleod, 2016, p. 87). Those living in land-based economies often associate wealth with environmental well-being and are able to sustain their livelihoods through their mutual relationship with the land. Despite these strong associations that women make between environmental and community health, mining corporations often
portray their projects as community development that will bring progress to impoverished communities.

### 2.3.2.2 Community Development

Within LAC, mining projects are often promoted as development initiatives which claim to have significant benefits at both local and national levels. However, communities argue that instead, sustainable economies are often replaced with short-term, resource intensive projects that hold few long-term benefits (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011). Isla (2017) notes that mining is often portrayed as bringing progress, investment, infrastructure, job creation and poverty reduction, and through the lens of sustainable development, economic growth is a primary goal. Yet, as a woman from Peru explained, “I know that the mine is development, but in our communities, it is not, because they are agricultural communities… our communities produce everything” (Jenkins, 2017, p. 1454). Therefore, the economic development that is claimed to accompany mining projects is often inconsistent with the understanding of development within campesino communities. Authors note that within these communities, value is commonly placed on land-based and relationship-based development, as a woman from Guatemala stated, “For us, ‘development’ is when there’s friendship, sharing, good food and health, education, all these aspects of life” (Macleod, 2016, p. 93). Additionally, the communities themselves do not often reap the economic benefits of this so-called community development, with instances of poverty and inequality increasing with the introduction of mining projects (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011). Authors argue that this increase in poverty and deterioration of the environment places larger burdens on women, furthering the gendered division of labour within familial and community contexts.

### 2.3.2.3 Gendered Divisions of Labour

Through colonial histories inclusive of the introduction of patriarchal economic and familial systems, gendered divisions of labour are culturally embedded within LAC. Furthermore, authors argue that the presence of multinational mining corporations extenuates this division, increasing inequity between men and women (Deonandan et al., 2017; Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Jenkins, 2014; Jenkins, 2017; Li, 2008; Rondon, 2008).
Authors note that while the environmental destruction that accompanies mining impacts communities at large, since women’s traditional roles are in the domestic, private sphere, they experience a larger burden when food and water sources are polluted or scarce. This requires women to walk longer lengths from the contamination of the mining site to collect water, to graze cattle and to harvest crops. Further, Jenkins (2014) argues that women are responsible for the unpaid care work of family members and with increased illnesses throughout the community, women are given the extra work of caring for those who have fallen ill. Rondon (2008) also notes that women’s domestic roles of cleaning the household are increased, as a result of the intense dust produced from the mining site. With this, comes increased health risks, as a woman from Mexico explained, “Women are the ones who sweep all the dust [from the mining site], dust goes all over you, when you breathe it in, you have more risk of getting sick” (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015). With more pressure being placed on women to maintain a sense of normality in a highly polluted environment, and the influence of the hyper masculinized mining sector, researchers have found that the presence of mining projects has led to increased community and familial conflict.

2.3.2.4 Conflict and Violence

Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez (2011) emphasize that “by changing local economies and opportunities, particularly along gender lines, mining operations appear to change the social/familial structures of communities and exacerbate gendered inequities” (p. 223). This occurs primarily through the spheres of familial and community conflict, often perpetuated by alcohol and drug use, sex work, jealousy and militarization.

The presence of mining operations involve a switch from communities that were often subsistence-economies to money-based economies, disrupting traditional livelihoods (Isla, 2002). Further, employment at the mining sites is often reserved for men, giving them access to cash that is not available to women. Deonandan et al., (2017) argue that this leads to independent spending decisions without the consultation of female partners, increasing the economic inequity, precarity and dependency. Further, a woman from Guatemala explained that when men have access to money, they feel a sense of power and therefore are more likely to leave their wives and families (Deonandan et al., 2017).
Similarly, authors have found that a shift to a cash economy introduces drugs and alcohol into communities and increases the prevalence of substance abuse, which also correlates with a higher risk of domestic violence (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011). Additionally, Deonandan et al., (2017) note the increasing presence of sex work as a cause for strain in familial and community relationships.

With an influx of male employees at the mine and the loss of traditional, land-based economic activities, authors note that mining operations often increase the presence of sex-work in campesino communities (Deonandan et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2014). While sex work can be argued to be an autonomous, empowering form of legitimate employment through a theory of intersectional feminism, the literature demonstrates that the surge in sex workers represents a lack of employment options, increased poverty and a shift in cultural norms, particularly for Indigenous communities. Deonandan et al., (2017) explain that “traditionally in Mayan culture… cultural expectations are placed on Indigenous women to ‘wear the emblems’ of their community identity, marry local men, and bear and nurture children of the community” (p. 411). Therefore, the increase in sex work impacts both family units and young women as Jenkins (2014) notes that women within the community, and travelling from afar, are engaging in this form of employment, leading to changing gendered community dynamics and social conflict. A woman from Guatemala illustrated this, describing the connection between sex work and the disintegration of the family unit. She explained that an increase in cash leads to alcohol consumption, abuse, and the purchasing of sex, ultimately breaking apart families. The woman explained, “El Estor was not like this before. But now, there is a lot of prostitution, and many of the young girls go to these bars and drinking holes out of necessity to earn money” (Deonandan et al., 2017, p. 411). This statement also represents the need for employment, with communities experience a destruction of land-based economies and increased economic precarity. The presence of mining projects and the associated social impacts has also lead to community disarticulation, leading to “erosion of trust, a loss of significant relationships and a sense of isolation and betrayal” (Caxaj et al., 2014, p. 54).
In areas where mining is present, polarization as well as increased militarization fractures community structures and leads to social disarticulation (Caxaj et al., 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Jenkins, 2017; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008). Authors note that community division erodes a sense of unity and places individuals into groups of ‘for’ or ‘against’ the mine (Caxaj et al., 2014). This erosion is reinforced through bribes, gifts and threats by the company to gain support. Caxaj et al., (2014) note that “these reports of corruption and enforced allegiance led to deep-seated divisions between ‘friends of the company’ and individuals critical of company operations” (p. 53). Further, a division emerges between those with employment and those without, causing money-fuelled jealousy and disputes between families. A woman from Peru explained that the mining company has caused significant division, noting, “It has made us fight with each other. Before we worked together…and the people were united, but now there is disunity. It’s a terribly thing because now people just want to be paid, everything is about getting paid” (Jenkins, 2017, p. 1448). This has shifted power balances in communities and “we are attacking each other… everyone is just trying to get ahead… and that creates jealousy between families” (Deonandan et al., 2017, p. 411). A deeper dependence on a money economy also leads to fears and accusations of corruption, causing a lack of trust in democratic structures and community leaders. For instance, a woman from Ecuador explained that they found proof that the leader of the community had been ‘bought off’ by the mining company, receiving a monthly salary for their support and endorsement (Jenkins, 2014). This suspicion of community and political leaders has also leaked into a general fear, with illegal activity and intercommunity violence increasing with the presence of mining. Communities from Guatemala note that increased community violence, compiled with an overall sense of community disarticulation, “residents connected Goldcorp’s impact on the local community to experiences of… cultural and spiritual genocide” (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011, p. 221).

Authors explain that in addition to familial conflict, drug and alcohol consumption also has consequences at the community level (Isla, 2002). Jenkins (2014) notes that mining projects bring the arrival of predominately single male temporary workers, which “changes community dynamics, including fuelling the opening of bars, nightclubs and brothels to satisfy demands” (p. 335). This results in an increase in alcohol consumption,
sex work, community violence and high levels of HIV/AIDS within mining communities (Jenkins, 2014). Additionally, women reported feeling “safe and peaceful” within their communities before the arrival of mining companies (Caxaj et al., 2014, p. 53), but this feeling has been altered by an influx of mine employees from other areas and they now fear for themselves and their children. For instance, Caxaj et al., (2014) reports an increase in guns within the community, primarily by mine workers who feel the need to defend their wages. Further, a woman from Guatemala noted an instance of her young niece being sexually harassed by employees from the mining corporation while walking to the store (Rondon, 2008). The disarticulation of community structures is also exacerbated through the increase of military presence, causing enhanced feelings of fear, anxiety and distrust.

Mining communities experience intense militarization both through private security forces and increased police presence, both seeking to protect the mining site and supress community resistance. Caxaj et al., (2014) describe community feelings of overt targeting, threatening and control by local militia hired by the mining corporation. Community members noted that this changed their environment and social structures, as they were constantly feeling like criminals under surveillance. Further, Caxaj et al., (2014) notes that participants felt “isolated without protection or resources, resulting in feelings of powerlessness (loss of control, agency, voice) and despair” (p. 53). They equated this to living in a war-zone, and witnessing increased violence and militarization led to deep shifts to the previously strong sense of community cohesion (Caxaj et al., 2014).

As women are traditionally seen as agents of community solidarity and organization, authors note that they are particularly affected by mining induced societal polarization. Deonandan et al., (2017) explain that such divisions “disrupt the roles women normally play, and render it difficult for them to perform their expected functions as identity gatekeepers” (p. 411). Jenkins (2017) notes that women shared community fragmentation as one of the most concerning aspects of mining activities, shifting traditional community spaces, dynamics, relationship and power structures. Since women often hold the responsibility for building and sustaining community cohesion, they face the most
pressure and consequences when this is damaged (Jenkins, 2017). Further, a woman from Guatemala explained the despair women experience from the growing lack of empathy, noting, “people’s hearts are growing cold” (Macleod, 2019, p. 91). Authors have found that women often connect the responsibility they feel for their community, as well as their environment, as an essential part of their identity as women, mothers and grandmothers.

### 2.3.3 Womanhood

While much critical feminist theory critiques the essentialist linkage of women to motherhood, nature and the feminine, authors note that women in mining impacted communities often make strong connections between the impacts of mining and a sense of unified womanhood. This is often expressed as female solidarity or sisterhood and refers to women as life-givers and protectors (Deonandan et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2015). While Jenkins (2015) recognizes the essentialized notions of femininity in women’s narratives, she notes that “rather than simply reinscribing traditional gender roles, these narratives can be understood as performing a more symbolic and strategic role” (p. 8).

The first notion of womanhood discussed within existing literature is through the emotional and spiritual connection that women identify as having to their environment. When discussing the contamination to their local ecologies, women from Mexico note that their ancestral knowledge helps them to identify environmental destruction from the mine. For instance, they discuss knowing how to distinguish between a healthy cloud and a contaminated cloud by the sun’s rays (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011). Further, women from Peru discuss Andean cosmology and the connection between water and the feminine. This connects women directly to water as a source of life and reproduction, and provides women with a stronger sense of responsibility as water protectors (Li, 2008). A woman from Ecuador described their role in environmental protection noting, “just like Mother Earth, she gives life, so we are life givers... So we say to ourselves, what will become of us without water?... Water is life and without water there is death” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 12). Particularly for Indigenous women, land holds cultural and spiritual meaning and threats to this are seen as threats to Indigenous identity (Caxaj et al., 2013). This often connects women with the Indigenous belief in ‘Pachamama’, the earth mother of the Andes. A woman from Ecuador noted that
“women, like Pachamama” have a particular responsibility for their environment (Jenkins, 2015, p. 12). Authors also note that women in mining-impacted communities often identify their own existence and well-being with their surrounding landscapes. As a woman from Peru explained, “the miners believe that the mountains are not alive and are there to be crushed. However, for us, a mountain means a lot. It is our protector, our guardian, it is what gives us water, medicine, and it is our company” (Isla, 2017, p. 100).

A responsibility for future generations is another aspect of this concept of womanhood widely discussed in the literature, with woman noting their roles as mothers and grandmothers as deepening their responsibility to their local environment. A woman from Guatemala noted, “Women take the time to think: what will happen tomorrow?” (Deonandan et al., 2017, p. 409). Deonandan et al., (2017) also found that women distinguish their concern for the environment to be separate from men’s, explaining, “We as women, think about the future. That is why I have said many times, men do not value what women are and do… if we don’t take care of things ourselves, who will?” (p. 409).

While it should be noted that from a critical feminist perspective such gendered standards extenuate gender roles and are rooted in patriarchy, women identify this with their innate role as mothers, explaining, “who will we leave to suffer? Our children. What shame! We have given birth to and raised our children. What example are we giving to our grandchildren?” (Macleod, 2016, p. 92). This sense of womanhood is often discussed as a catalyst for female-led resistance to mining operations, with a woman from Ecuador noting, “Mother Earth gives life to us all. She is crying out for us to help her, for us to defend her” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 12).

2.3.4 Resistance and Activism

Throughout LAC, women are often on the frontlines of resistance movements against open-pit mining operations. Isla (2002) notes that “women are central in the mining protests, both as leaders and as those whose lives are most affected” (p. 148). Deonandan et al., (2017) explain that the resistance to mining is gendered, as strategies are rooted in “women’s experiences as women, and as Indigenous women within a particular socioeconomic and historical context” (p. 406). Authors note that a sense of female solidarity serves to fuel the resistance and, in some cases, resistance movements have
provided a realization of the strength and capacity that they have as women (Deonandan et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2017; Li, 2008; Rondon, 2008). However, despite this, women face dire consequences for mobilization that are often gendered, including criminalization, militarization and political violence.

2.3.4.1 Criminalization

Criminalization of activists resisting mining is a main strategy utilized by extractive industries to supress the voices of communities and ensure the financial success of projects. Deonandan & Bell (2017) note that a variety of techniques are used to criminalize communities, including introduction of anti-terrorism legislation to deem those resisting as ‘terrorists’. Jenkins (2017) echoes this, noting that women in Peru explained “and here we have a case of women comrades who are now elderly, they are grandmothers and accused of terrorism” (p. 450). Similarly, activists are threatened or given arrest warrants for their resistance as a form of repression. A woman from Guatemala explained, “I have an arrest warrant. I am not ashamed of this, as I haven’t stolen; I haven’t taken anything away from the company. What I am doing is fighting for justice. Our grievances are fair and I am defending a just cause” (Jenkins, 2017, p. 1452). Criminalization as a method of silencing has also occurred in Peru, as a female activist explains, “I said that strip-mining projects are synonymous with the total destruction of nature… for these words, I was taken to court” as the company claimed defamation. The court system, who often aligns with transnational mining corporations, forced her to resign from her role in municipal politics and fined her $3,250 CDN (Isla, 2002, p. 152).

Unfortunately, arrest warrants and criminalization hold a heavy weight for women, as this often means they are unable to leave their village or are involved in long legal battles. This has particular impacts for families as their livelihoods may be disrupted due to legal costs as well as a disruption to daily routines of social reproduction (Jenkins, 2017). Deonandan & Bell (2019) also note that women’s vulnerability due to gender inequity intensifies their risk, through the inability to hire lawyers, file documents, or appear at hearings. This has specific consequences for Indigenous women as “when racism intersects with patriarchy, the odds against Indigenous women prevailing in the legal system become even more remote” (Deonandan & Bell, 2019, p. 46). Additionally,
criminalization can lead to community ostracism as women are not conforming to traditional gender roles placed on them within a patriarchal society (Deonandan & Bell, 2019). To enforce the criminalization of resistance, communities impacted by mining experience heavy militarization which leads to cases of repression, violence and even death.

### 2.3.4.2 Militarization and Political Violence

In spaces of mining extraction, militarization is often inherent to the mining project. This can take place in the forms of public military or private paramilitary and security, with the purpose of controlling local residents and to intimidate and silence opponents of the project (Caxaj et al., 2013). A woman from Guatemala explains that prior to the arrival of the open-pit mine, there was no military presence in their town. However, “when the company came, when there was a mass protest, the mining company saw a way to justify bringing soldiers here” (Caxaj et al., 2013, p. 222). Deonandan & Bell (2019) explain that the increase in military and security is often portrayed as improved protection, particularly for women and children. However, the literature demonstrates that the contrary is often true, with militarization leading to increased insecurities for women, particularly in the forms of harassment, physical violence and sexual violence.

With the onset of mining projects, corporations often assume conflict will occur and incorporate the hiring of paramilitary into their cost analysis, thereby normalizing clashes with local communities (Caxaj et al., 2013). Jenkins (2014) argues that international mining corporations, states and paramilitaries fuel community conflict, “perpetuating a culture of violence and intimidation, and turning a blind eye to human rights abuse” (p. 334). The first phase of violence perpetuated through militarization often includes threats and intimidation. Caxaj et al., (2014) note that in Guatemala, threats are often delivered through phone messages, verbal harassment and yelling, or hand-delivered notes. For instance, a woman shared that her family received a message that read, “you are pure shit for the people, why don’t you want development, just leave the house and we will kill you” (Caxaj et al., 2014, p. 53), demonstrating that threats and intimidation are often targeted at those opposing capitalist ideals of development. Many women see this as a campaign to silence and neutralize their activism. A woman from Peru noted that her life
drastically changed in 2006 when she became engaged in anti-mining activism and began to be followed and threatened. She explained that this had impacted not only her life, but also her families and they all have to be vigilant as, “they say I’m a terrorist, they insult me, say that they know what I am doing, that I should keep quiet if I don’t want anything to happen to me” (Jenkins, 2017, p. 1452). While intimidation and threats drastically affect a sense of well-being and security in communities, militarization also increases instances of physical violence, which are argued to be particularly gendered.

In the case of the Marlin Mine in Guatemala alone, human rights groups have documented “16 death threats, 3 attempted murders, 9 cases of persecution/surveillance and intimidation, 4 cases of raids/forced entry and several cases of arbitrary detainment and beatings” of individuals opposed to the mining site from 2000-2011 (Caxaj et al., 2013, p. 222). While they did not provide a gendered analysis of these numbers, community members note that women are at an increased risk, as threats, intimidation and violence are premised on not only the opposition to the mine, but also their gender (Caxaj et al., 2013). Deonandan & Bell (2019) illustrate these risks with 2016 murder of anti-extractive activist Berta Caceres in Honduras, demonstrating the severe consequences that women land defenders face, including brutality, violence and death. While the case of Caceres received global attention, the authors note that femicide, the targeted murder of women, is more common than reported and is used as a final disciplinary tool when activists do not succumb to intimidation, threats, criminalization or violence. A woman from Guatemala echoed these risks, noting “I have lived through many painful things because of the mining companies and the government… I have seen blood run… I have so many scars on my body to remind me of this time- when the soldiers beat me in an attempt to kill me” (Deonandan et al., 2017, p. 413). A similar situation occurred in Ecuador, where a woman opposed to the mining site noted, “they kicked me, they damaged my head. Two enormous soldiers came up to me and said ‘kill her, kick her, finish her off, these daughters of whores, finish her off.’ I was on the ground unable to do anything” (Jenkins, 2017, p. 1451). Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents, and femicide and attempted femicide of mining activists is also reported in Honduras and Peru (Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Isla, 2017). In addition to the
physical violence that women experience, they are also vulnerable to militarized gender-based violence such as sexual harassment, assault and rape.

Authors note that the risks of sexualized violence drastically increase in areas where extraction is present. Deonandan & Bell (2019) explain that sexual violence is prevalent as hired paramilitary exploit the bodies of women as weapons against their own resistance. In these cases, sexual violence acts as both a tool for repression and a disciplinary measure for engaging in anti-mining activism. One of the most well-known cases of sexual violence in extractive communities occurred in Guatemala in 2007 in vicinity to a Canadian owned mine, where seven Indigenous women were gang raped by mine security, police and military. The women noted that the attackers had the mine logo on their uniforms and sexually assaulted the women as a last resort to evict them from their homes where they were considered illegal occupiers on mine property (Deonandan & Bell, 2019). Unfortunately, cases such as this are numerous, and women in mining impacted communities live with a constant threat of sexualized violence. Isla (2017) explains that in Peru, a state of emergency was declared after mass anti-mining protests, which the military used as an avenue to sexually assault young girls. Community members note that some of these girls, who were around 16 years of age, were impregnated from the rapes, and do not know who the fathers of their children are (Isla, 2017). While sexual violence occurs as a tool of repression and intimidation in the community, women are also at an increased risk during processes of criminalization. This takes place through arrests and imprisonment, as they are often subjected to “inappropriate touching, invasive body searchers… as well as insults and humiliations of a sexual nature while in detention” (Deonandan & Bell, 2019, p. 46). For instance, a woman from Peru notes that through their arrest and detention women were stripped and held naked (Jenkins, 2015). Further, Rondon (2008) notes that in Ecuador, women who were engaged in an anti-mining organizing were physically and sexually abused, as one woman described, “At 4:00pm, five policemen threw themselves against me; the police chief grabbed my breasts, while four others took my arms and legs and pushed me inside a police car” (p. 95). While many women are actively involved in the resistance, such gendered violence, along with threats, intimidations and mining-induced community
conflict has also been known to deter women from political participation in dialogue and organizing surrounding mining projects.

2.3.4.3 Political Participation

Women in mining-impacted communities have varying degrees of political participation, with some women leading resistance movements and others being largely disenfranchised and confined to the domestic sphere of the home. These differences vary in geographic and cultural context, also depending on community dynamics in relation to adherence to traditional gender roles. For instance, while some have noted a sense of empowerment through anti-mining organizing as previously discussed (Deonandan et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2015), the literature also reveals that in some contexts, women are largely disengaged from the political sphere of participation and organizing due to deep rooted patriarchy.

Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez (2011) note that women’s lack of political participation is “highly determined by the culture of chauvinism and violence, which prevails in the region” (p. 50). This leads to women’s subordination and suppression of women’s voices in communal and political spaces. For instance, women from a mining impacted community in Mexico noted that they needed permission from their husbands to be able to attend any type of demonstration (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015). Further, women note that their reproductive labour and role of mothers is often used as rationale to prohibit their political participation. A woman from Guatemala explained that when a woman is engaged “in public and political activism, she gets more blame than men. She’s blamed because of her gender, because she’s not spending enough time with her children, she’s not there when her children need her” (Deonandan & Bell, 2019, p. 47). The guilt and shame that accompanies these assumptions act as disciplinary measures to reinforce patriarchal gender norms, and restrict women to the private sphere of domestic and reproductive labour. This impedes the ability for women to participate in not only anti-mining resistance, but also to have voice in public decision making processes or community leadership roles (Jenkins, 2017). This is emphasized by disproportionately lower education and literacy levels for women as opposed to their male counterparts, making political participation more difficult (Caxaj et al., 2013; Jenkins, 2017). Women also noted that when they do engage, their intelligence, motives
and contributions are questioned by both members of the community and authorities, with those from Ecuador stating, “they say that we are mad women. They say we don’t know anything” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 17). Rondon (2008) notes that this lack of political voice is used to silence and deny legitimacy. This silencing does not just occur in familial and community settings to uphold patriarchal structures, but also is a tactic used by mining corporations to repress resistance.

In addition to using violent tactics to silence female activists, mining corporations and local authority often attempt to exclude women’s participation from decision making entirely. Women from Mexico noted that when it came to local assemblies to discuss mining projects, the authorities only invited the men in the community (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011). Similarly, Li (2008) found that while women in Peru are physically present at protests, they do not hold positions of power for organizing or making decisions surrounding water use directly related to the mining site. For instance, “in 2006, when 50 delegates were appointed by canal users to represent them in the latest round of negotiations with the company, only one of the delegates was a woman” (Li, 2008, p. 100). Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez (2011) note that while women want to be heard and believe they have the same responsibility as men to confront concerns of mining, the repression from the community, authority and the mining corporations has impacted their sense of self-worth, with one woman explaining “us women, we really aren’t much use now” (p. 48).

2.4 Discussion

This scoping review was conducted through a critical feminist lens, which seeks to understand the nature of gender inequality while recognizing that “accounts of nature and social relations have been constructed within men’s control of gender relations” (Harding, 1991, p. 141). Therefore, the 13 articles selected for analysis were analyzed through a theory of critical feminism, revealing key themes of environmental impacts; health and well-being; social impacts; womanhood; and resistance and activism. The five themes demonstrate the vast gendered impacts of the extractive industries in communities neighboring open-pit mining sites and the significance of these impacts on health and well-being. The severity of the findings illustrate the urgent need for critical research to
further inform the body of knowledge and contribute deeper understandings to promote
gender-based health equity and mining justice.

While existing literature provides a solid foundation for understandings of the gendered
impacts of mining in LAC, the scoping review does reveal gaps which require further
inquiry. While all of the articles included in this review had components discussing
gendered impacts, only 10 of the studies (of both review papers and primary research)
have a primary focus on women (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas Rodriguez, 2015; Deonandan et al., 2017; Deonandan & Bell, 2019;
Jenkins, 2017; Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Li, 2008; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008). Therefore, only 10 of 509 articles screened for review had a primary focus on the gender,
demonstrating a significant gap in the literature regarding the experiences of women in
mining-impacted communities. While numerous studies touched upon aspects of
gendered impacts of mining, the lack of focus and analysis of gender did not allow for in-
depth investigations of many pressing issues present surrounding open-
pit mining sites. For example, while there were discussions in the literature surrounding a loss of
traditional lands and ecological spaces (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015;
Caxaj et al., 2013; Deonandan et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Macleod, 2016; Perrault,
2012), there was no discussion regarding how this connects to loss of social space for
women, impacting their overall health and well-being. Further, only nine of the 16
articles provided a critical analysis regarding systems of power and oppression to situate
the research (Brain, 2017; Caxaj et al., 2013; Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Deonandan et al.,
2017; Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2015; Li, 2008; Perreault, 2012; Rondon, 2008). Of these 9,
only 5 include a section dedicated to the political background of their research (Brain,
2017; Caxaj et al., 2013; Deonandan et al., 2017; Perreault, 2012) with discussion
surrounding histories of colonialism (Caxaj et al., 2013), accumulation by dispossession
(Perrault, 2012) and neoliberalism and capitalism (Brain, 2017; Deonandan et al., 2017).
This lack of context to position the research leaves significant gaps in the literature and
does not disclose the important histories which have permitted and empowered the
practice of transnational mining in LAC throughout the years. Therefore, it is argued that
an analysis regarding the gendered impacts of mining must be contextualized through a
critical exploration of systems of power and oppression which are inherently intertwined
with extractive practices. Similarly, seven of the 16 articles reviewed did not explicitly note the theoretical lens employed throughout the research process. Issues of gender and mining in LAC are profoundly political, and therefore this review argues that transparency of theoretical positioning is essential to sincerity of the research project as well as evaluating coherence to the stated paradigm (Tracy, 2010). Critical theorists “conceptualize reality and events within power relations” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 130) and therefore, situating the research within critical theories is imperative in understanding findings within the larger social, cultural, political and economic systems which perpetuate the gendered impacts of mining.

2.5 Limitations

While this scoping review was thorough and systematic, limitations do exist. Rigorous strategies within the database search were employed to avoid omission of relevant articles, with search terms carefully selected and searches conducted over 5 databases. However, it is possible that the inclusion of alternative search terms, as well as additional databases, could have produced further results. Additionally, this review only examined peer-reviewed articles and did not focus on grey literature. While it is known that significant knowledge exists in grey literature, specifically through the work of non-profit organizations and journalists, the purpose of this review was to map the literature existing at a peer-reviewed level. However, work including grey literature, as incorporated in the discussion chapter of this dissertation, would provide breadth and depth to the synthesis of existing knowledge. Finally, this scoping review focused specifically on mining impacted communities, with little attention to those employed at the mining site. While this review noted the limited employment opportunities for women in mining-impacted communities, reviews including the unique experiences of women employed at open-pit mining sites may contribute valuable knowledge to the body of literature surrounding gender and mining.

2.6 Gaps in the Literature

Given the significance of theoretical positioning in research surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in LAC, it is notable that the review found only one article which
investigated the gendered impacts of mining through an ecofeminist theoretical location (Isla, 2017), which signifies a gap in existing literature. This is substantial as an ecofeminist perspective provides a deep foundation for understanding the connections between ecology, gender and a capitalist patriarchy. Further there was no research which merged decolonial and ecofeminist perspectives, overlooking the significant intersections between colonial, ecological and gendered violence. A decolonial ecofeminism has potential to situate the gendered impacts of extraction within systems of power and oppression, which is essential in understanding the construction and perpetuation of mining injustice.

Further, the review was unable to locate scholarly research related to gender and mining conducted in the geographical location of the Dominican Republic, with all research taking place in Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru or Bolivia. While grey literature regarding mining in the Dominican Republic, written by activists and journalists, exists (Gain, 2017; Gray-Donald, 2016; MacRae, 2018; Saunders et al., 2018), there is an apparent gap in the in peer-reviewed research. Therefore, this doctoral investigation of the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic through a decolonial ecofeminist lens contributes a unique standpoint and new knowledge to the growing area of mining and gender, promoting health and well-being for women in mining impacted communities.

2.7 Conclusion

Through a comprehensive, systematic process, this scoping review reveals the nature and extent of the literature in the context of gender and open-pit mining in LAC. The thematic analysis demonstrates the key arguments emerging in scholarly research including environmental impacts; health and well-being; social impacts; womanhood; resistance and activism; and systems of power and oppression. This review concludes that while there is a growing body of literature regarding the well-being of communities impacted by open-pit mining, further research through a decolonial ecofeminist lens, and in specific geographical locations is required. This gap is filled through the remainder of this dissertation, with the following chapter discussing the methods and methodology of
this doctoral research regarding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.
Chapter 3

3. Methodology and Methods

There are currently 748 Canadian mining corporations with active mining sites abroad. In 2021, their combined assets were $195.9 billion dollars (Government of Canada, 2023). Of these 748 companies, 46.8% are extracting in Latin America and the Caribbean, with an asset value of $91.7 billion dollars, a 6.0% increase from disclosed financial statistics in 2020 (Government of Canada, 2023). While these financial statistics may appear impressive through a lens of neoliberal capitalism, existing literature demonstrates detrimental impacts for communities neighboring mining projects, with women experiencing disproportionate consequences (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015; Caxaj et al., 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Jenkins, 2014; Li, 2008; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008).

Existing literature provides a strong foundation for understanding the gendered impacts of mining within LAC. However, Chapter 2: Mapping the Literature Regarding Gender and Mining in Latin America and the Caribbean, reveals significant gaps in scholarly work in relation to geographical locations and theoretical stance. First, despite an export of $2.15 billion dollars in ‘critical metals’ (gold, silver and nickel) in 2021 (BNamericas, 2023), the Dominican Republic has not yet been investigated in the peer-reviewed literature on the gendered impacts of mining. With extraction being the “most attractive activities for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Dominican Republic” with opportunity for major growth in the next several decades (Keller, Ruete & Disney, 2014, p. 7), country-specific investigation regarding the gendered impacts of extraction is imperative for community well-being. Further, while there is significant research regarding gender and mining in LAC conducted through critical theoretical perspectives (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015; Caxaj et al., 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Jenkins, 2014; Li, 2008; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008), the scoping review revealed no peer-reviewed literature which utilized a decolonial ecofeminist perspective. Given the roots of ecofeminist theory in feminist political ecologies, the colonial histories of the Dominican Republic and the
neocolonial practice of extraction, decolonial ecofeminism permits a gendered analysis
centred in a critical understanding of systemic forces such as neocolonialism, capitalism
and neoliberalism.

The following chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the theoretical foundations,
methodology, and methods of this doctoral dissertation. First, the paradigmatic
underpinnings of the research will be examined, with discussions surrounding
ecofeminist theory and decolonial theory. I will then make an argument for a
convergence of ecofeminist and decolonial theories, resulting in a theoretical framework
of decolonial ecofeminism to guide the research. Next, a methodology of a decolonial
critical narrative inquiry is presented, including a justification of suitability for this
research. Subsequently, a discussion surrounding the methods of this research is
provided, including the study sites, recruitment, sampling, data collection and data
analysis. Finally, I engage in a critical reflexive analysis regarding tensions that surfaced
within the data collection process, including deliberations surrounding power, privilege,
relationships and bilingual research.

3.1 Paradigmatic Positioning

This qualitative research is framed through a decolonial ecofeminist framework. While
both decolonial theory and ecofeminist theory have informed research independently, the
convergence of a decolonial ecofeminism provides a distinct contribution to existing
literature. Informing this research through this approach provides the necessary
theoretical framework to investigate the gendered impacts on health and well-being of
Canadian open-pit mining industries in the Dominican Republic, while situating these
lived experiences in larger systems of power and privilege.

3.1.1 Ecofeminist Theory

Ecofeminism is a convergence of feminism and ecology and is seen “as a progressive and
critical social theory and as a grassroots activist movement” (Lahar, 1991, p. 28).
Ecofeminism explores the connections between the unjustified domination of women and
nature and argues that such domination is the cause of environmental destruction by the
ruling patriarchal system (Warren, 2010).
The term ecofeminism was first used in the work of Francoise d’Eaubonne (1989) when she explained that the connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature were so deeply intertwined that one could not be liberated without the other. She further links the patriarchal oppression of women and nature to the current ecological crisis and explains that when men took possession of “the land, thus of productivity, and of a woman’s body, thus of reproduction, it was natural that the over exploitation of both of these would end in this threatening and parallel menace: overpopulation - surplus births, and destruction of the environment - surplus production” (p. 67). D’Eaubonne (1989) argues “the only change capable of saving the world today is that of the ‘great reversal’ of male power” (p. 67). Since then, several renowned scholars and environmentalists have contributed to ecofeminist thought including Maria Mies, Silvia Federrici, Ariel Salleh, Vandana Shiva and Karen Warren (Mies, 2014; Federrici, 2004; Salleh, 1996; Shiva, 2005; Warren, 2010).

A key aspect of ecofeminism is its understanding of capitalism as interconnected to oppression of women and ecology, explaining, “women’s power had to be destroyed for capitalism to be developed” (Federici, 2004, p. 17). Federici (2004) connects the beginning of capitalism and women/nature oppression with the enclosures of the commons. She contends that women are disproportionately impacted by the enclosures since privatized land and a shift from a subsistence to monetary economy marginalized women and confined them to reproductive labour, while reproductive labour was increasingly devalued by capitalist thought. Salleh (1995) furthers this by contending that an ecofeminist political analysis links the current day ecological crisis with a “Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture built on the domination of nature and the domination of women as nature” (p.13). This ‘culture’ is not only founded through patriarchal dominance, but is also the foundation for an economic system in which such domination is inevitable as a capitalist economy depends on infinite resources on a finite planet.

There are three fundamental characteristics of ecofeminist theory (Tong, 2014). The first involves the recognition of hierarchal thinking of privilege and oppression within society; ecofeminist theorists often define this as ‘Up-Down’ thinking which values what is
deemed as ‘higher’ (eg. man, white, money) over that which is ‘lower’ (eg. woman, black, nature). Secondly, ecofeminist theory describes dualisms as disjunctive pairs, which “place higher value on one disjunct rather than the other,” (p. 237) (eg. man/woman). Through this, dualisms are seen as oppositional and exclusive and are a source of conflict within society. Finally, ecofeminists contend that logic of domination is used to justify the subordination of both women, other-human others and nature throughout everyday life (eg. man/woman=nature). Warren (2000) contends that this logic of domination “assumes that superiority justifies subordination” and provides validation for maintaining the Up-Down hierarchy (p. 47). Such characteristics provide a theoretical framework for analyzing issues surrounding gender and ecological justice.

A final component of ecofeminism to be discussed is that of resistance and activism. Mies (2014) explains, “we did not learn our lessons by sitting in a library… but by participating in the struggles against global capitalist patriarchy and its neoliberal strategy to get control over nature and people for the sake of profit” (p. 1). Mellor (2005) notes that ecofeminists continue to mobilize against women/ecological domination on both global and local levels through the return to a subsistence economy as a way to reclaim the commons and ensure the restoration and protection of ecology. Therefore, an ecofeminist analysis is fundamental to this dissertation providing a foundation to examine the connections between gender, ecology, exploitation and resistance.

### 3.1.2 Decolonial Theory

From a decolonial perspective, it is argued that research is inseparable from notions of imperialism and colonialism (Smith, 1999). This produces the need for deep critical thought when proposing research projects with communities in the ‘Global South’. Further, it is imperative to understand the histories of colonial genocide of the Indigenous Taíno peoples in the Dominican Republic and connections to the ways in which colonialism and coloniality continues through extraction. The Dominican Republic has experienced fierce colonial genocide since the arrival of the Spaniards in 1492. According to Roorda (2014), when Christopher Columbus encountered the island inhabited by the Taíno Indigenous peoples, he brought with him “dozens of devastating new maladies, including influenza, cholera, smallpox, and many other infectious
pathogens, which assailed the Taino’s unprepared immune systems, destroying entire towns at a time” (p. 9). Furthermore, the Spanish lust for gold and forced labor of Indigenous people led to extensive violence which killed the remainder of the Taino peoples (Roorda, 2014). As such, it is imperative that I understand issues of colonialism, neocolonialism and coloniality in the context of research with Indigenous peoples. Therefore, decolonial theory is required to frame this research regarding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

While decolonial theory has been shaped by several key theorists (Escobar; Lugones; Maldonado-Torres; Mignolo; Quijano; Santos; Smith; Walsh), decoloniality “asserts the end of epistemic ownership and disciplinary private properties” and rejects individual theorists as sole creators of knowledge, noting the principle of ‘newness’ as inherently linked to colonialism (Mignolo, 2010, p. 16). Therefore, decolonial theorists often collaborate and share knowledge, recognizing that while colonialism ended in Latin America with political independence, “coloniality persists through dominant colonial/modern values and world views that are institutionalized and disseminated through education, the media, state sanctioned languages and behavioral norms” (Mignolo, 2010, p. 92). Thus, coloniality survives colonialism and is a cause of current injustices and violence (Mignolo, 2010).

The ‘colonial matrix of power’ (Quijano, 2000) is crucial to discussions surrounding extraction as it conceptualizes “race and labor, space and peoples, according to the needs of capital and to the benefit of white European peoples” (Mignolo, 2010, p. 39). This matrix of power has shaped the world since the colonization of the Americas (Dunford, 2017) and continues through extraction. Quijano (2000) maintains that the colonial matrix of power has four interrelated domains: control of economy, control of authority, control of gender and sexuality and control of subjectivity and knowledge. Control of the economy within the matrix includes land appropriation, exploitation of labor and control of natural resources, therein rooted in a Marxist critique of capitalism which recognizes capitalism “as a system of commodity exchange, which systematically distorts the real nature of human wealth and of human experience” (Parel, Macpherson & Flanagan, 1979, p. 295). Control of authority involves state controls such as government institutions,
dominant political structures, and armies. Control of gender and sexuality describes Eurocentric notions of family spheres, disseminated through dominant systems. Finally, control of subjectivity and knowledge highlights “epistemology, education and formation of subjectivity” (Quijano, 2010, p. 3). Each of the domains of the matrix of power are inherently linked to the gendered impacts of mining and provide a theoretical analysis to understand community members’ narratives rooted in larger systems of power and oppression.

Mignolo (2010) defines modernity as indistinguishable from coloniality. He explains, however, that while “modernity is presented as the rhetoric of salvation, it hides coloniality which is the logic of oppression and exploitation” (p. 4). He connects modernity, capitalism and coloniality to the matrix of colonial power, noting that they are “aspects of the same package of economy and authority, gender and sexuality and knowledge and subjectivity” (p. 4). Therefore, decolonial theory is inherently anti-capitalist and notes that for decolonization to occur, alternatives to modernity and neoliberalism must prevail (Mignolo, 2010). Although modernity/capitalism reinforce the coloniality of power, modernity as, “the burden of the colonial epistemic monoculture, is still accepted nowadays as a symbol of development” (Quijano, 2000, p. 25). Mignolo (2010) furthers that the logic of coloniality is “the implementation of capitalist appropriation of land, exploitation of labor and accumulation of wealth in fewer and fewer hands” (p. 331). Decolonial theorists argue that the pervasiveness and growth of capitalism has resulted in oppression of the ‘others’ as Indigenous peoples, while also noting “it is often in the heart of resource rich territories that Indigenous peoples exist in complex tension with extractive capitalism and land defense” (Gomez-Barris, 2017, p. 20). The connection of decolonial theory to gender and ecology provides an opportunity for the emergence of an ecofeminist decolonial theory to frame this proposed research.

### 3.1.3 Decolonial Ecofeminist Theory

Rodriquez & Inturias (2018) explain that a distinctive feature of environmental justice throughout Latin America is that of decolonial theory, which “explains social and environmental injustice as arising from the project of modernity” (p. 90). Decolonial theory recognizes Indigenous ways of knowing as harmonious with ecology which are
devalued and marginalized through coloniality. From this perspective, “by continuing to
rupture Indigenous cosmological relationships to the land, the state and corporations
expand their control and purview over nature in new forms of settler colonialism”
(Gomez Barris, 2017, p. 6). Mignolo (2010) discusses Indigenous peoples as a locus of
inferiority therefore defaulting nature to a locus of exteriority, linking the marginalization
of Indigenous peoples and exploitation of ecology. Through this, nature is viewed as only
a resource which “nature, turned into a resource, has no logic but that of being exploited
to its exhaustion” (Mignolo, 2010, p. xxxvi).

Just as it is impossible to separate coloniality from modernity one cannot separate
modernity/coloniality and ecological destruction. Environmental destruction is rooted
within the colonial matrix of power since “corporate entities and states are
indistinguishable in their economic interests and activities” (Gomez-Barris, 2017, p. 19).
Through decolonial theory, it is apparent that destruction of ecology “depends on prior
civilization projects, in which the Global South has long been constructed as a region of
plunder, discovery, raw resources, classification and racist adventure” (Rodriguez &
Inturias, 2018, p. 3). This ‘discovery’ is often seen through extractive capitalism, which
Gomez-Barris (2017) defines as an economic system that violently and forcibly steals,
pillages and exploits Indigenous lands. She explains that extraction and exploitation leads
to the “violent reorganization of social life as well as the land” (p. 18). While Indigenous
communities and ecology are indisputably oppressed through extractive capitalism,
decolonial theory also recognize intersections of oppression and the ways in which
coloniality/modernity divides nature and culture through gender.

Decolonial theory argues that binaries of gender emerged through colonialism, with
patriarchy and misogyny as structures of colonial violence. Mack & Na’puti (2019) argue
that violence against women is rooted in the “civilizing missions of colonialism as a guise
for brutal access to women’s bodies through unimaginable exploitation, violent sexual
violation, control of reproduction and systematic terror” (p. 349). This is connected to an
ecofeminist perspective which recognizes the destruction of women and the destruction
of ecology as inherent to a capitalist patriarchy. Therefore, a decolonial ecofeminist
theory links coloniality, gender and ecology and exposes the exploitation of nature and
women as nature as (neo)colonial, capitalist violence (Federici, 2004; Lugones, 2010; Mignolo, 2010). This is specifically important due to the histories of colonial genocide within the Dominican Republic and the recognition that “it is precisely the power of decolonizing feminist thought, grounded in women-of-color epistemology and engaging in systemic analysis, that the global coloniality seeks to suppress” (Mohanty, 2015, p. 986). The merging of ecofeminist and decolonial theory provides the framework for a comprehensive analysis of the gendered impacts of mining through neocolonial extraction. Research surrounding mining through a decolonial ecofeminist lens is limited, and therefore framing this research through a decolonial ecofeminist theory provides a significant and unique addition to existing knowledge and literature regarding gender and mining.

3.2 Methodology and Methods

3.2.1 Methodology

This doctoral dissertation utilized decolonizing methodologies in the form of a critical decolonial narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry focuses on story-telling as an iterative process of meaning-making, and centres “listening to people talk in their own terms about what had been significant in their lives” (Josselson, 1993, p. ix). However, traditional narrative inquiry as a Western epistemology has been critiqued for being colonial, hierarchical and exploitative. Critical and Indigenous methodologies, on the other hand, focus on dialogue, community, self-determination and cultural autonomy and “must be unruly, disruptive, critical, and dedicated to the goals of justice and equity” (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008, p. 3).

As opposed to a traditional narrative inquiry which is rooted in sociology and seeks to understand personal and human experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), a critical decolonial narrative inquiry takes this further by utilizing “methods critically, for explicit social justice purposes” (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008, p. 2). Indigenous scholars emphasize the connection between storytelling and knowing, and note the interrelationship that exists between narrative inquiry and research in Indigenous frameworks (Kovach, 2009). A critical narrative inquiry uses counternarratives to
illuminate marginalized experiences, creating space for participants to voice their own stories. Counternarratives explore the “intersections of gender and voice, border crossing, dual consciousness, multiple identities and selfhood in a postcolonial and postmodern world” (Matua & Swadener, 2004, p. 16). The counternarrative is rooted in social justice and emancipation and “presumes that the subaltern can speak, and does, with power and firsthand experience” (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008, p. 16), illuminating the appropriateness of a critical narrative inquiry to investigating the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

Further, storytelling is utilized to value contextual knowledge and is well suited for areas of critical study such as feminist theories (Kovach, 2009). A critical narrative inquiry is appropriate for research utilizing an ecofeminist theory as it allows researchers to “look, not only at the stories being told, but also at the contexts within which women make sense of and narrate their lives” (Woodiwiss, Smith & Lockwood, 2017, p. 14). Consistent with feminist research, Lessard et al., (2021) explain the importance of relationality in a critical narrative inquiry, noting that “it is important to begin with lives and with the people who are composing those lives, both as researchers and as participants” (p. 29). The researchers pre-existing relationships with community members has fulfilled this requirement within a critical narrative inquiry, allowing for a relational co-creation of knowledge regarding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

### 3.2.2 Participants

Through a process of purposive, snowball sampling, seven women participated in this critical narrative inquiry. This recruitment method permitted participants to recommend other community members that may have been interested in participating (Finlay, 2006). This form of sampling is coherent with decolonial methodologies as it is rooted in relationality, fostering connections of trust and power-sharing between the researcher and community. The participant recruitment was rooted in pre-existing relationships, beginning with three women who are leaders of active resistance groups against extraction. These women were invited to participate prior to the researcher’s arrival in the Dominican Republic via telephone. These women then contacted other women in the
community, sharing the opportunity to participate. If other women confirmed they wished to participate, the researcher met with them to explain further details of the inquiry. To avoid coercion in the recruitment process, it was made clear that participation was entirely voluntary and the acceptance or rejection of participation would have no impact on the pre-existing relationship with the researcher and other solidarity based-organizations that the researcher is involved with. Through informed consent that was written and verbally delivered in the Spanish language, the purpose, procedures, potential risks and measures of confidentiality were relayed to participants.

The inclusion criteria for participation included women living beside an open-pit mining project in the Dominican Republic. This included women between the ages of 18-90, allowing for the sharing of unique experiences throughout the lifespan. All women who expressed interest in the research met inclusion criteria and were included in the narrative inquiries. The seven women who participated in the research study ranged in age, representing several generations, and have all resided in the area where the mining project now exists for the entirety of their lives. While the sample size of seven was not predetermined and naturally evolved through snowball sampling, the size allowed the researcher time for rich in-depth interviews rooted in relationality and power-sharing, which is imperative to decolonial methodologies.

3.2.3 Data Collection

The research was conducted in communities in the Dominican Republic neighboring an open-pit mining project. Through a critical narrative inquiry, data was collected through a method of loosely-structured interviews, since “the more structured the interview, the less flexibility and power the research participant has in sharing her story” (Kovach, 2009, p. 99). Loosely-structured interviews, consistent with decolonial methodologies, provided space for participants to direct the interview, allowing the lived-experiences of women to organically surface through self-led narratives. Through this loosely-structured method, “the story breathes and the narrator regulates”, creating an open, participant-led counternarrative (Kovach, 2009, p. 100). The interviews began with researcher posed inquiries with the question, “Can you tell me about your experience being a woman living next to an open-pit mine?” The participant then took control of the flow and interview,
sharing narratives that they felt were important to have heard. As the participant shared their lived-experiences, the researcher engaged in active-listening, asking follow up questions such as “Can you tell me a bit more about that experience?” and “In what ways has that impacted your health and well-being?” Such inquiries provided space for participants to delve deeper into their stories. Further, consistent with decolonial methodologies, active-listening and follow-up inquiries centre relationality, recognizing the value of individual narratives and lived experiences.

The interviews took place over a two-week period, with one to two in-depth interviews conducted per participant. Two interviews were conducted if the participant later felt they had more to share regarding their stories, with one critical narrative inquiry conducted if the participants were satisfied with their interviews and had no further information they wanted to share. To determine the number of interviews conducted, the researcher utilized member-checking to engage in open-discussion with participants regarding their satisfaction with the narrative collected and to ensure that there are no further counternarratives to be included. This discussion occurred within two-week period of data collection, ensuring that participants had the opportunity to engage in a second, in-person interview if desired. With this, two participants engaged in two critical narrative inquiries, with 5 participants completing one. This method allowed the power surrounding the interviews to be held by the participants, as they were decision makers on the number of interviews they engaged in. This power sharing is critical to decolonial methodologies, which require researchers to value the knowledge and contributions of participants at all stages of the research process (Kovach, 2009). Further, the interviews had no specific time limit, allowing the participants to control the flow and length of the interviews. The interviews ranged in length from 46 minutes to 2 hours and 4 minutes and were recorded in the Spanish language.

3.2.3.1 Study Sites

Consistent with decolonial methodologies, women had full control over the site of data collection, shifting power and allowing comfortability of the participant. Of the nine interviews, five interviews took place in the homes of participants, three interviews occurred in a space of collective resistance where women gathered to organize against the
mining corporation, and one interview was conducted as a walking interview, where the participant led the researcher throughout the community, to provide visual evidence of the narratives discussed. While walking interviews were not intended for this qualitative research, in staying consistent with decolonial methodologies, it was imperative to value and honor the requests of the participant, who felt as though walking to different sites and locations was the most authentic way to tell her story. Carpiano et al (2009) introduced walking interviews as an alternative to traditional sitting interview that are typically utilized with a methodology of narrative inquiry. Walking interviews are an emerging method within health and interdisciplinary research, allowing participants to lead researchers through their lived experiences, examining “how physical, social and mental dimensions of place and space can impact people’s health and well-being” (D’Errico & Hunt, 2019, p. 347). Given the unique, place-based significance of the gendered impacts of mining, as well as the physical and environmental impacts, the walking interview provided a meaningful opportunity for the participant to hold power in visually and physically sharing significant aspects of her story.

3.2.3.2 Language, Translation and Transcription

All interviews were completed in Spanish, the native language of all participants. Kapborg & Bertero (2002) argue that “different languages create and express different realities, and language is a way of organising the world- one cannot understand another culture without understanding the language of the people in that culture” (p. 56). Although the researcher is proficient in Spanish, a translator was present to support in the interviews to overcome any potential linguistic barriers. Liamputtong (2010) raises concerns regarding the use of translators in research, explaining that translators are often not directly involved in the research and therefore “do not have a full understanding of the research aims and questions” (p. 144). In an attempt to mitigate these potential consequences, the translator was hired as a research assistant who signed a confidentiality agreement and was familiar with the research aims, questions and goals. While the research assistant is a Canadian citizen, who has family in the Dominican Republic, she has lived in the country for several years and has relationships with the community of interest. Traditionally, translators are to be value-free, to eliminate bias and maintain
objectivity. However, Temple (2002) views interpreters to be key informants in the interview process and, just as critical theorist researchers are required to engage in reflexivity of their own ontologies and positionalities, the translator should engage in rigorous reflexivity themselves. In this sense, it is argued that through the use of an interpreter the research could become subject to “‘triple subjectivity’ (the interactions between research participant, researcher and interpreter)” (Temple, 2002, p. 6).

Therefore, Laimputtong and Ezzy (1999) argue that if the interpreter is not aware of personal and cultural perspectives or bias, the quality and validity of the research may be in jeopardy. To mitigate this, Temple (2002) asserts that the researcher should not only be trained in the research topic, but also be transparent about their perspectives and theoretical alignment with the interpreter. In accordance with the researcher, the research assistant/interpreter had a critical education and thorough background surrounding mining justice as well as decolonial and ecofeminist theory. This fostered a shared understanding of systemic forces in the mining impacted community which the research assistant, researcher and participants were able to reflect upon. The researcher had a pre-existing relationship with the research assistant for over a decade, spanning social justice work in both Canada and the Dominican Republic. This pre-existing relationship supported the foundations of decolonial methodologies in the research, allowing for the shared engagement in deep reflexivity through the research process, rooted in relationality. To do so, the researcher and translator held debriefing conversations after each interview was complete to allow an opportunity to discuss the particular interview and any issues that may have risen due to cross cultural barriers (Liamputtong, 2010). These debriefs reflected upon several tensions surrounding bilingual research and were well-documented in the researcher’s reflexive field journal, which informed the critical reflexivity throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

All narrative interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim in Spanish and then translated in writing from Spanish to English. This was completed with the assistance of the same research assistant who was involved in the interviews and who, due to several years living in country, is familiar with the specific dialect of campesino communities in the Dominican Republic. Linguistically, direct translation is not always possible due to cultural differences or non-equivalent words (Liamputtong, 2010). Several examples of
this (further discussed below), arose in the research process, requiring iterative dialogue between the researcher, research assistant and participants to ensure that the adequate message was being captured in translation. This iterative process encouraged power-sharing in the research, while mitigating miscommunication or misinterpreted messaging throughout the transcription process. To further ensure credibility and trust, the researcher engaged in member-checking of the Spanish transcripts with each participant and all were confirmed as complete and accurate. Member-checking provided the opportunity for participants to remove any data they did not wish to have included prior to the data analysis process, although no participants chose to do so.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

3.2.4.1 Theoretical foundations of analysis

While critical theories are deeply embedded in the data collection process, it is less common to see the data analysis phase of qualitative research rooted in a theoretical framework (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). Traditional data analysis texts provide several techniques for analysis, yet often encourage neutrality and lack deep connection to theoretical paradigms. However, Finlay (2002) argues that one cannot separate a critical paradigm from any aspect of the research process and therefore, the data analysis of the narratives gathered was intentionally situated in a decolonial ecofeminist lens. This allowed the researcher to approach the analysis with an understanding of how systems of power and privilege manifest in personal, communal, economic and political spheres. Decolonial methodologies argue that analyzing data should be complete alongside “a way of knowing and thinking and… a way of being in relation to research” (Beck, 2018, p. 51). Beck (2018) argues that through decolonial methodologies, the approach to data analysis is not to produce knowledge, but to produce understanding. Through a deep commitment to a decolonial ecofeminism, the researcher utilized theoretical foundations to extract deeper meanings and understanding from the critical narrative interviews.

3.2.4.2 Thematic Analysis

The primary method of analysis utilized by the researcher was critically-informed abductive thematic coding, allowing for the generation of key thematic elements related
to the health and well-being of women in mining impacted communities. Thematic analysis is defined as “an umbrella term, designating sometimes quite different approaches aimed at identifying patterns across qualitative datasets” (Braun et al., 2019, p. 844) and as such, it is imperative to discuss the ways in which theoretical understandings influenced the data analysis phase. McGuire (2018) notes that “a central component of critical qualitative inquiry involves the relationship between critical theory and analysis” (p. 77) and engaging in data analysis through critical theory allows researchers to conceptualize and understand narratives in relation to power. Throughout the analysis, ideologies central to an ecofeminist decolonial theory such as patriarchy, capitalism and neocolonialism purposefully guided engagement with the data, situating women’s lived-experiences within theoretical understandings. For example, quotations such as “[the company] is doing to us what Columbus did to our ancestors, killing us for gold” (Rosalie), were thematically analyzed through a decolonial perspective, which recognizes the interconnections between extraction and neocolonialism (Rodriguez & Inturias, 2018). Yao (2018) explains that by employing critical analytical approaches, “researchers can uncover the explicit and implicit meanings both visible and hidden within qualitative data” (p. 160) and the theory-driven data analysis of this dissertation supported the meaning making process, strengthening the connections between individual narratives, collective experiences and structural power.

Seidel and Kelle (1995) note that “codes represent the decisive link between the original ‘raw data,’ that is, the textual material such as interview transcripts or fieldnotes, on the one hand and the researcher’s theoretical concepts on the other” (p. 52) and the theoretically driven data exploration was completed in several phases. First, hand line-by-line coding was used, where I went through each transcript three times. The first time, I read through the transcripts and created a separate document noting key themes which emerged. Secondly, colour codes were assigned to each theme and reviewed each transcript adding the colour codes to the text. Finally, each transcript was reviewed a third time, ensuring that no data was missed in the thematic coding process. After the hand line-by-line coding, all transcripts were input into the Quirkos data analysis software. Through visualization, this software further supported in data synthesis by allowing the researcher to review the transcriptions and extract key words and themes
which may have been overlooked in the first process of by-hand line-by-line coding. Utilizing a multi-layered approach to thematic analysis ensured a thorough and rigorous process of analysis, organizing the data to uncover deep and significant insights and themes.

In coherence with decolonizing methodologies, Datta (2018) calls for a collective analysis process, noting that equitable collaboration is “significant for researcher participants in understanding how their communities oral stories are transformed into a written format” (p. 18). Therefore, participants were active in the data analysis process through a collaborative approach of member checking and reflection. Through critical, reflective, dialogue with participants, I ensured that the themes generated from the data adequately represented their lived experiences. This dialogue occurred via telephone at the primary stage of analysis, as themes were being generated, and in the concluding phase of the process, before finalizing all themes. This iterative process supported in mitigating misrepresentation or dismissal of themes that may have held importance for participants. However, throughout the dialogue, there were no participants that wished to alter or add to the proposed themes and women shared that they felt the themes adequately representing their experiences.

A final, yet central aspect to the data analysis phase was reflexivity, which was incorporated throughout the entirety of the process in multiple forms. First, I was cognisant of the ways my ontological understandings impacted the analysis, therefore being clear and transparent about my theoretical alignment with critical theories, notably, a decolonial ecofeminism. Secondly, I viewed data analysis as an iterative process, consistently revisiting reflexive notes taken throughout the data collection phase to inform and better understand the shared narratives. For example, after the first day of interviews, I reflected upon potential community tension due to my presence, which could emphasize the discord between those who are employed by the mine, and those who resist it. This supported in informing the thematic emergence of sociocultural erosion which was emphasized throughout the narratives. Finally, I engaged in critical reflexivity throughout the analysis process, writing notes on thoughts, questions and uncertainties that emerged and how I was engaging in meaning-making from the gathered
narratives. These included questions such as “how can I ensure the emerging of themes that can most clearly articulate the injustices and call for social transformation?” While I may not have found a clear answer for such questions, reflexive notes ensured my commitment to the aim of critical theories promoting health equity for women in mining impacted communities.

3.3 Researcher Reflexivity: Navigating Tensions in the Field

Consistent with decolonial methodologies and critical theories, I made a conscious effort to engage in critical reflexivity throughout the entirety of the research process, specifically reflecting on structures of power and the equitable sharing of space. While this began at the pre-research stage through consideration of the researcher’s positionality and motivation, reflexivity was central to the in-country data collection process. This is demonstrated through extensive reflexive journaling within the two-week in-country research period as well as ongoing check-ins and reflexive dialogue with the research assistant, committee and participants, recognizing that “research participants also have the capacity to be reflexive beings” (Finlay, 2006, p. 535). Through this practice of reflexivity, three main tensions arose throughout the data collection and analysis phase including tensions of power and privilege, tensions of relationality and tensions of bilingual work.

3.3.1 Tensions of Power and Privilege

Despite the utilization of methodologies and theoretical foundations that aim to disrupt hierarchies and share power between the researcher and participants, it was inevitable that tensions of power and privilege prevailed throughout the research process. This was largely due to deep rooted systemic forces of white supremacy and colonialism that have shaped power dynamics throughout Latin America and the Caribbean since colonization. Savin-Badin and Major-Howell (2013) propose three ways in which researchers can address power through positional reflexivity. The first is locating themselves within the subject of research. Secondly, by situating themselves amongst participants, and third, through locating themselves within the research context and process. While I engaged in deep reflexivity regarding my own positionality during the pre-research, data collection
and analysis stage, I questioned whether reflexivity was truly enough to mitigate the realities of power and privilege while conducting this research. Through this reflexivity, I identified several instances where, despite best efforts, power dynamics emerged throughout this doctoral research, primarily in relation to race, class and citizenship.

My positionality as a white, middle-upper class, Canadian citizen had an undeniable impact on the research process. Jones (2015) explains that “the colonial past is always present in Caribbean societies” (para. 10), and systemic structures of racism perpetuate the linking of whiteness and power. Due to this, my presence within the predominantly brown and black community unintentionally reproduced such structures, through associations of whiteness to power and affluence. Further, privilege of citizenship was apparent throughout the data collection process, with community members noting the mining corporations lack of regard to community members due to their Dominican citizenship. I also recognize that throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, mining corporations have largely become the face of Canada, and there were times that it was assumed that because I was a Canadian citizen, I was working for the mining corporation. This was challenging to navigate, and while I hold strong pre-existing relationships with many members of the community, it took time to build trust with others so they felt comfortable sharing their stories. It was difficult to form deep relationships over a short, two-week period, but I prioritized spending several hours with women before engaging in the narrative interviews, including sharing meals and learning about their lives and families. The strong relationships that I held with several community leaders also supported in facilitating relationship, as they vouched for my trustworthiness due to long-standing community solidarity work.

An additional tension of power exists as it is with extreme privilege that I was able to travel to the Dominican Republic, without a visa, to conduct the research. In conversation, one community member spoke of their desire to come to Canada to confront the mining corporation at their headquarters, but noted the barriers of citizenship and financial means. While I engaged in a process of reflexivity surrounding these instances, both independently and with women through dialogue, it cannot be assumed that reflexivity can erase the systemic forces of power and privilege which are engrained
in the fabrics of society. Despite this, I was dedicated to decolonial methodologies and critical frameworks, and through intentional relationality and power sharing, strived to mitigate the reproduction of coloniality in the research process.

3.3.2 Tensions of Relationality: Scholarly Activism

Throughout the entirety of the research process, and primarily the data collection stage, I struggled with tensions surrounding shifting relationality between myself and community members. Through over a decade of activist work, I have strong relationships to the community in which the research was conducted, and have spent extensive periods of time not solely working in solidarity with them for mining justice, but also passing time, eating meals and caring for their children. Throughout the pre-research stage, I wondered how I would navigate the shift in relationality that is required for academic work. How would community members react to the formalities of academia such as reading and signing documents of informed consent? What would they think of an individual sit-down interview when we typically engage in community dialogue in informal settings? Would structures of power and privilege be heightened due to these new formalities? After much reflection, reading and dialogue, I came to the understanding that since relationality is central to decolonial methodologies, it would be incoherent to shift my existing ways of being in community. While there were new formalities such as paperwork that were required, I made a conscious effort to ensure that all other aspects of our relationship, such as comfortability, openness and trust remained consistent. This effort was made through the recognition of colonial traditions of research such as the erasure of relationality and the resistance of decolonial methodologies to ensure centrality of relationships. Through this, I came to the understanding that academia and activism are not dichotomous and have found significant value in the pursuit of scholarly activism through this dissertation.

The interconnections between academia and activism are complex and Muller (1969) noted that historically “in the simplest and most general terms, scholarship implied withdrawal and activism meant involvement” (p. 582). However, he explains that throughout his academic career, his perception began to change and he came to the understanding “not only that scholarship and activism are not incompatible, but that they
are becoming ever more inextricably intertwined” (p. 582). Consistent with decolonial methodologies, the primary aim of scholarly activism is to disrupt the systemic forces and dominant discourses that produce and perpetuate injustice. Reflecting on the possibilities of scholarly activism, rooted in decolonial methodologies, has supported my journey in navigating the tensions of relationality that have emerged throughout the research process, and valuing the sacred relationships I hold with community.

3.3.3 Tensions of Bilingual Research

Translation in research, specifically through a critical lens, can raise challenges and ethical concerns that require significant reflexivity. For instance, Larkin et al., (2007) note that utilizing a translator in transcription has the potential to influence the researcher through “virtue of their attempt to convey meaning from a language and culture that might be unknown to the researcher” (p. 468). To mitigate this potential, the researcher and research assistant engaged in critical reflexivity both after the interviews and throughout the process of transcription and analysis. Several tensions arose throughout this process, specifically in relation to translation and transcription that required attention. For instance, in one interview a community member was explaining a moment when they noticed that the wall of the tailings pond above their community was cracking. She then shared that in that exact instant “the rooster crowed three times”. Upon transcription, there was no significance of this instance to the researcher and research assistant, despite the research assistant living in the Dominican Republic and being fluent in Spanish. After discussion with the participant it was made known that this was a superstition of a bad omen specific to this campesino community, and therefore would not have been understood by outsider-researchers, even those from the Dominican Republic that are from a different community. Further, in another interview, a community member called the owners of the mining corporation ‘tigueres’. The direct translation of ‘tigueres’ to English is ‘tigers’, but in the context of the Dominican Republic, this translates to ‘thugs’. While the researcher is proficient in Spanish, without a deep understanding of slang in the Dominican Republic, it would be difficult to decipher such words without iterative dialogue with the research assistant and participants.
A final example of challenges within translation and transcription arose when a woman noted “nos la quito a la mala” when discussing how the mining corporation seized land that they were using as a site of resistance. The direct translation to this phrase is “they took it from us to the bad” and it is a challenging phrase to decipher since there is no English equivalent. Through discussion with the research assistant as well as the community member, the sentence “they took it from us, no matter the negative outcome” was decided upon. The aforementioned examples demonstrate the significance of cultural and community-specific context in bilingual research and while we were able to mitigate these tensions through continuous, reflexive dialogue with participants, there were other tensions that arose in relation to my own knowledge of the Spanish language.

While I am proficient in Spanish, I am not entirely fluent, particularly within varying cultural and place-specific contexts, where accents and vocabulary greatly. Throughout the interview process, the research assistant, who supported in translation was present to assist in any phrases or words that I did not understand. The interviews were conducted fully in Spanish with the intention that I would ask for clarification or translation as needed throughout the interview. However, I quickly felt discomfort in pausing the interview, only to speak in English to the translator regarding words or phrases that I required clarity for. It felt as though I was interrupting the flow of the interview and, at times, causing the participant to lose their train of thought. Further, the switch to English to inquire with the research assistant posed ethical challenges, as the participants did not understand the conversation and it felt as though it was reinforcing colonialities of power, emphasising Eurocentric systems of knowledge and language. After this first interview, the research assistant and I engaged in reflexive dialogue, pondering how we could mitigate this challenge, and how our decision would align with decolonial methodologies. After much deliberation, we decided that rather than pausing mid interview, I would write down a list of words or phrases I did not grasp and we would discuss them post interview. This approach was coherent with decolonial methodologies as it gave power and space to the participant to fully tell their stories without interruption. Further, it disrupted linguistic colonialities of power through limiting the use of the English language throughout the interview process. While it is impractical to assume all tensions could be avoided, reflexivity at all stages of the research process aimed to acknowledged, mitigate
and minimize the inevitable practical and ethical dilemmas surrounding bilingual research.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Through in-depth discussions of methodology, methods and theoretical foundations, this chapter illuminates the methodological and paradigmatic framework from which this research was conducted as well as the methods of data collection, analysis and reflexivity. The proposal of a decolonial ecofeminism establishes the critical theories which underpin all phases of the research project, from the pre-research stage, through the data collection and analysis, to the dissemination of findings. Rooting this research in a decolonial ecofeminist framework provided the foundations for understanding the large systemic forces that surround the shared narratives of participants. Further, decolonial methodologies centered relationality, power-sharing and self-determination of participants. Through the use of critical narrative inquiries, participants shared their lived-experiences in an authentic way, and data was analyzed through thematic analysis, rooted in decolonial ecofeminist theory. Through a reflexive discussion of navigating tensions in the field and the use of decolonial methodologies, the researcher aimed to avoid the reproduction of colonial structures of power and foster an equitable research project established through long-term relationality. Nine in-depth interviews were completed with seven women ranging in age across the life-span. Through a critically informed thematic analysis, seven key themes were generated to illuminate the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. These key themes include ecological destruction; physical health and well-being; emotional health and well-being; sociocultural erosion; deception and corruption; systemic forces of power; and resistance and repression. Within chapter 4, these themes, along with important subthemes, will be presented, illustrating the collective gendered experiences of mining within the Dominican Republic.
Chapter 4

4. Findings

Through the presentation of an in-depth thematic analysis, this chapter reveals seven main themes which arose from the critical narrative inquiry regarding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. This analysis is based on narratives that I co-constructed with 7 women neighboring an open-pit mining project, illustrating shared lived-experiences. These narratives depict their unique, individual stories while simultaneously portraying the collective gendered experiences of extraction and the impacts this has on the health and well-being of their ecologies, themselves and their communities. Further, the narratives demonstrate the systemic forces in which these lived-experiences are situated, recognizing that systems of power, privilege and oppression are intertwined with their experiences.

A process of theoretically informed hand line-by-line coding, the use of the Quirkos software, and on-going critical reflexivity, supported in the thematic analysis of the participants narratives revealing 7 key themes, along with several subthemes, depicting their lived-experiences neighboring an open-pit gold mine, as outlined in Table 2 below. Given the intensive process of mineral extraction, the first theme that emerged through data analysis was ecological destruction with a specific focus on water, agriculture and livestock. The shared narratives surrounding the devastation on ecologies was accompanied by disclosures regarding the second main theme, physical health and well-being. This theme includes discussions of the gendered impacts of mining on participants physicality, with further narratives portraying the physical effects on their children, emphasizing the weight of this reality on women as mothers and caregivers. Third, emotional health and well-being is discussed, with narratives depicting subthemes of despair and hopelessness, fear and anxiety and indignity. Next, participants emphasized gendered experiences of sociocultural erosion, through discussions of economic precarity, gendered divisions of labour, community and familial divisions and a deteriorating land-based identity. Such narratives were connected the next main theme surrounding community experiences of deception and corruption at communal, municipal, national
and international levels. While the adversities through their lived-experiences were prominent in their narratives, participants demonstrated strength and resilience through their accounts of community activism despite subjugation, representing the sixth theme of resistance and repression. Throughout the thematic analysis it was apparent that participants lived experiences were situated within larger systems of oppression, informing the final key theme of systemic forces of power to emerge. Engagement with theoretical underpinnings of decolonial ecofeminism generated a critical analysis of power relations, including subthemes of colonialism, power and control, neoliberal development and capitalist greed. Through the inclusion of direct quotations, women’s stories are shared in their own words, demonstrating the breadth of the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

**Table 2: Key Themes and Subthemes of Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
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| 1. Ecological Destruction | 1.1 Water  
                         | 1.2 Agriculture  
                         | 1.3 Livestock and Fish |
| 2. Physical Health and Well-Being | 2.1 Vaginal and Reproductive Health  
                                | 2.2 Sight, Smell, Sound and Touch |
| 3. Emotional Health and Well-Being | 3.1 Despair and Hopelessness  
                                   | 3.2 Indignity  
                                   | 3.3 Fear and Anxiety |
| 4. Sociocultural Erosion | 4.1 Gendered Divisions of Labour  
                           | 4.2 Economic Precarity  
                           | 4.2.1 Electricity  
                           | 4.2.2 Employment  
                           | 4.2.3 Loss of Traditional Subsistent Livelihoods |
| 5. Deteriorating Land Based Identities | 5. Deteriorating Land Based Identities |
| 6. Community and Familial Division | 6. Community and Familial Division |
| 8. Systemic Forces of Power | 1. Power and Control  
                                | 2. Capitalist Greed  
                                | 3. Neoliberal Development Model  
                                | 4. Neocolonialism |
| 9. Resistance and Repression | 1. Activism  
                              | 2. Relocation  
                              | 3. Violence, Repression and Militarization |
4.1 Ecological Destruction

4.1.1 Water

Given the intensive process of open-pit mining, women disclosed significant environmental impacts, effecting several aspects of their lives and livelihoods. The most prominent concern surrounding their ecologies is the water, as community members contend that contamination from the mining site has drastically impacted their water sources. For instance, Alejandra\(^1\) notes “once we had everything in abundance, because we had many rivers, many streams and our water was 100% healthy, but you know that wherever there is mining, everything is impacted- our environment is horribly damaged.” Other women further this, explaining that they once had 21 rivers, all of which have either disappeared or have been contaminated and now “we don’t have water, we don’t have a river, we don’t have a stream, we don’t have anything” (Fernanda) and “the river is now a living corpse” (Rosalie). The women note that not only are the unable to utilize the water from the rivers, but that they can also no longer collect rain water for daily use, as “we can’t use the water from the river, but the rain falls and we can’t use that either… the rain water is worse than the water from the river. Why? Because it rains with all of the poison that is in the air” (Fernanda). Elisa corroborates such experiences and connects the ecological destruction to the chemically intensive process of mining, noting, “the process of getting the gold is horrible, and of course all of those chemicals and gasses go into our air and then fall on our land through the rain.. when the rain falls and then the plants die, it is obvious that it is because of this.”

4.1.2 Agriculture

In making sense of change in agriculture in the area, including a significant decline in production since the mining project began, the women also point to water contamination. For instance, one woman explains that mangoes used to be fruitful in the community, with children regularly climbing trees to pick them. However, they share that “we don’t have any mangoes now, there were always mangos, but that is no longer something you find, you can’t find them anywhere, and if you do, they are black and full of worms”

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\(^1\) Pseudonyms have been used for all names to protect the identities of community members
(Elisa). Juliana furthers this, noting “it was beautiful here with gardens full of flowers. Now look at them… all of them have died. Nothing can survive here... there is no life here anymore.” Fernanda explains that the quality of the rain water is specifically impacted throughout their dry season, since “when it goes a long time without raining and it rains, all of the plants get damaged. The rain doesn’t even look normal, if you let the rain water fall into a bucket, the next day it will be discolored.” Participants unanimously attribute the decline in agricultural production to the mining site, with one woman stating “before they arrived, it was beautiful, luscious and green... now they are dry, all the production has ended… for me, everything has ended” (Clara), and another explaining “they have destroyed all of our production. They have destroyed everything” (Rosalie).

4.1.3 Livestock and Fish

Women in the community note that the contamination from the mining site does not only impact their agricultural production, but also the health of their livestock. For instance, Alejandra explains “here, we raise chickens and cows and other animals, but when it goes a long time without raining and then the rain comes, they all get sick and many of them die.” Paula reiterates this, explaining “When, let’s say, there are 10 days without rain, when that water falls all the chickens start to fall kicking, and then they die.” A similar narrative was shared regarding the fish in the community, with Fernanda stating, “it has been 15 days since all of the fish in our lake died. And why did they die? Nobody has said what they died from. Millions of fish died. The river from the tailings pond goes directly into the lake... but nobody will say why they died.” Women note that not only are they impacted by the rain, but it is difficult to find water for the animals since “there is nowhere healthy to bring them to drink” (Fernanda). Participants share that even if the animals survive, they are rarely fit for human consumption. Paula explains her experience with this, noting “when we killed the cows to eat, it was like their insides were rotten. No one wants to eat animals from this area anymore because it will make you sick.” Such quotations highlight the connections between the ecological destruction and communities’ physical health and well-being.
4.2 Physical Health and Well-Being

4.2.1 Vaginal and Reproductive Health

The shared narratives indicate significant concerns surrounding the physical health and well-being of women neighboring the open-pit mining site. A common experience surrounds women’s vaginal and reproductive health with Elisa sharing, “women are having miscarriages a lot.. way more than they used to when I was young. It happens to everyone now. I’m sure it’s because of the contamination.” Alejandra notes that while the water is contaminated, they have little option but to utilize it, explaining “as you can see, we don’t even have clean water to bathe, but it’s what we have, so we have to use it.” Rosalie identifies the gendered impacts this has for women explaining “it is hard to bathe as woman because of the openings in our body, so I try not to use it… I will go a week without bathing sometimes. I’ll try to use bottled water for the more dangerous parts and then the poison water for the rest of my body. I only wash by parts.” Participants believe that the contamination of the water has caused extensive health issues for women, issues which only began after the gold mine began production, explaining “as the years have gone by it has gotten much worse in terms of health for us women, we have a lot of health problems. For instance, there are many women who suffer from vaginal infections because of the water.. the water here is useless” (Alejandra). Women explain that these infections seem to be chronic, despite medical intervention. For example, Fernanda shares the story of a young woman in the community, noting “she is 18 years old and she came to me crying because she didn’t know what to do. And I told her ‘why my love?’ and she said ‘because I go to the doctor and buy medicine, it gets me better, and then the next time I bathe in the water, I get the same thing. So what am I going to do? There is no way I can get better. I’m always going to have this.” Another community member corroborates this experience, noting “I don’t know what to do, the doctor gives me these vaginal pills and I’m better for 2 or 3 days and then it returns. I’m tired of going to the doctor when I know the cause of the illness, but can’t avoid it” (Clara). They note that conversations surrounding their vaginal health are difficult to have in their communities, due to the shame and stigma that exists surrounding women’s bodies. Elisa explains “here, almost all of the women have chronic vaginal infections, but they don’t like to tell
anyone that they are sick or talk about it.” Fernanda furthers this, noting her attempt to advocate for women in the community despite the shame associated with discussion of vaginal health in a patriarchal society, stating “I always talk about the infections of the women and there are men who criticize me for that. But I think that it can’t be ignored because it is something serious. It’s your body, and when something so common is happening to us women, it has to be said.” Juanita furthers this, explaining “we can’t keep quiet when all the women are getting sick and going to have vaginal cancer. It has to be said- there is an outbreak of vaginal infections in our community that is just incredible.”

Unfortunately, vaginal health is not only an issue for women in the community, but youth and children as well. Fernanda explains, “here, there have been so many instances when a child of 3 or 5 years has to be taken to the doctor for vaginal infections. That has never been seen here before. When we take them to the doctor, what does the doctor say? That it’s the situation with the water. That there’s lots of contamination in the water… but if there is no other water, how are we going to bathe our children.” Lucia notes that sometimes these infections are severe, with several children having to be hospitalized due to vaginal infections since the mining operation began. Paula explains the impacts that this has on the youth, stating “the young girls in the community are always itchy and always sore. This is not something we ever had to deal with here when we were kids. It just isn’t fair.”

4.2.2 Sight, Smell, Sound and Touch

Participants explain that the impacts of the mining site are vast, impacting their health and well-being through multiple senses. First, women share concerns of the rainfall on their skin, explaining that they feel the impacts of the rainwater in numerous ways. For instance, Rosalie shares “When it’s raining, it makes one’s body itch. You see this rash here on my arm [pointing to arm], that is because yesterday I got caught in the rain.” The physical health impacts experienced by the ecological destruction are further intensified for women, who, due to gendered divisions of labour spend more time working with the water, with one community member noting “we women are the most affected out of everyone. We have to work with the water all day. Cooking, cleaning, washing clothes,
so we feel it more deeply than everyone else in the community” (Paula). This impacts their overall physical health, with Lucia explaining “Because we are more exposed, we feel like we are dying inside, everything hurts in my body. Sometimes I can’t even eat because everything hurts. We are being destroyed from the inside out.” Women note that children also experience the impacts of contaminated water, explaining one instance where, after a heavy rainfall, more than half of the children in the community suffered from a fungus on their heads (Fernanda). Clara furthers this, noting that, as children, they often want to be outside in the rain, but this comes with consequences including rashes and lesions on their bodies. She states “No, the children here can’t play in the rain like in other places. Here, no. It pains us, but we can’t let them.”

In addition to the impacts of the water on their skin, women in the community disclose that there is a large issue with eyesight in the community, which they explain is due to the contamination from the mining site. Alejandra explains “Everyone has horrible eyesight. Everyone, everyone, everyone. You will not find another province in all of the Dominican Republic with eyesight like this”. They explain that their issues with vision are particularly worse when it is dry and there is a significant amount of dust from the mining site, with Elisa stating “when the dust comes, we can barely open our eyes from the pain.. in my opinion, it’s the contamination from the dust that has damaged our eyesight.” Women note that accompanied with the dust comes intense smells from the mining site, which cause headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting. Alejandra explains a recent experience that she had when “a wave of smell came from the mining site and I immediately got a headache. I was outside hanging laundry and then I began vomiting and felt like I was going to faint. Other people in the community felt it too.” Paula reiterates this, explaining that the contamination from the mining site leaves her with a constant headache, noting “look, I can never get rid of my headache, last night I didn’t sleep at all because of my headache. I had to get up five times to take pills.” While instances like this occur quite regularly for women in the community, they note that it is even further intensified for those that are not from the community, explaining “it is almost as if we have adapted a little bit to the poison.. although we are dying from the inside, we don’t show it as much as we used to on the outside. But often when people from other communities come to support us they get very sick. One day there was a group
who came and many of them left vomiting from the dust and the smells. The majority of the group had some type of impact from the mine” (Fernanda).

The constant noise and light from the mining site is also impactful for women, particularly in relation to their roles as caregivers and mothers, noting “There are big trucks and bright lights at all hours. Here you can’t sleep. I haven’t slept a full night since [the company] arrived. How am I supposed to take care of my family and home when I don’t even sleep? There is no peace here” (Elisa). Paula furthers this, explaining “the noise does a lot of damage for us here, they never stop working. They are working all the time with their noise and bright lights. So we can’t sleep and we can’t have our mind at ease. That effects our bodies in all sorts of ways.” Rosalie explains that one of these impacts on their physical health and well-being is persistent headaches, stating “one of my biggest issues besides the pollution is the constant noise, because I always have a headache. The trucks and the excavators working at all hours. This place used to be peaceful, but now there is no quiet time.” Significant disruption to the community is also caused by the detonations used at the mining site, as Alejandra shares “just last week I was in my house in the kitchen and I heard 3 explosions. It sounded like the world was ending. My children screamed and I ran outside and said ‘Ay, señores, what has happened?’ and they told me it was the bombs from the mine that made the noise. We had a headache for the rest of the day.” Fernanda describes the challenges that women in the community experience due to the impact on their health and well-being, not solely physically, but emotionally as well, noting “it is hard for our bodies and it is hard for our minds. It is non-stop with the bad smells, the poison, the dust, the noise- that is all that we have received from the mine, nothing else.”

4.3 Emotional Health and Well-Being

4.3.1 Despair and Hopelessness

While the gendered impacts of the mining site on the physical health and well-being of women in the community is severe, the recognition of declining emotional health and well-being also arose as an area of great concern. Lucia explains “the people here are drowning. We are drowning in pain, despair, misery and poverty.” Women share
narratives of despair and hopelessness, with one participant noting “I always say the biggest curse was to be born where the gold is. Why? Because if we hadn’t been born where the gold is, we would be living calm lives, happy lives, not living in despair!” (Fernanda). Paula furthers this, stating “How are we supposed to continue living this life? So difficult, so complicated. I guess we just have very bad luck, being born where they put one of the 5 largest mines in the world. So we are just stuck here living in misery.” Women share that much of their despair comes from the ecological destruction of their environments, explaining “do you know how hard it is to wake up and there isn’t even a bit of water to drink?” (Lucia). It is evident that these experiences have had extreme impacts on women’s emotional well-being, as Clara declares “we don’t have happiness anymore. None. Everything is just getting worse. And we don’t have an alternative. We are going to die here because they aren’t willing to do anything for us.” Fernanda furthers this, explaining “with each passing day things become worse, with each passing day things become more difficult.”

Women in the community illuminate the gendered experiences, noting the intense emotional damage they have faced as both mothers and caregivers. Fernanda states, “sometimes it’s the middle of the night and our children wake up thirsty and we can’t even get them a cup of water. You can imagine their suffering when all of the colmados are closed. Sometimes we can’t even find clean water to prepare a bottle of milk. How do you think that feels for us as mothers who are supposed to care for our children?” Elisa expressed the weight she feels attempting to shield her children from the despair that she experiences, noting “sometimes the tears flow out of me and my children say to me ‘what is it mama?’ and I say “no my son, nothing’, because I can’t… how could I put this on top of them so they have to live sad like me?” Clara reiterates this, sharing “every day I cry for my children, no one can tell me that my children deserved this, they didn’t deserve this damage, this poison, this life. No.” Additionally, Fernanda notes, “everyone is affected, everyone. But us women… we are the most affected in all forms. Physically, emotionally… it is unbearable to see your children sick, to see them in pain, to not be

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2 A small shop
able to provide them with a safe place to live where they can breathe clean air. Unbearable.”

4.3.2 Indignity

Through their feelings of despair and hopelessness, women shared narratives revealing the indignity that the mining project has caused them. Lucia explains “all we can think about is that this company has denied us a dignified life, a life that as human beings, we must live. A life that us women deserve.” Other participants assert that the corporation has dehumanized them, robbing them of their rights, with Rosalie stating “we live a life worse than that of an animal”, and Alejandra declaring “here we are living an inhumane life!”. Fernanda echoes this sentiment, sharing “we have the right to life and here, they are not giving us the right to live. They are not giving us the right to health. We do not have the right to water. So, we don’t have the rights.. we have the right to a clean environment, but they are refusing us that right.” Further, several participants expressed feelings associated with death and mortality, emphasizing the magnitude of the impacts on their lives. For instance, Clara declares “We are the living dead… here, sometimes, we don’t even feel like we are alive. I feel dead. I feel empty.” Rosalie reiterates this feeling, sharing “there is no life here, we might as well just bury ourselves now.” Fernanda connects their lived-experiences to a form of torture, explaining “we used to live in peace, now we are living in a hellish place. Sometimes it feels like we are in hell. What did we women do to deserve this?”

4.3.3 Fear and Anxiety

Continued experiences of despair, hopelessness and indignity produce severe fear and anxiety for women in mining impacted communities, impacting their emotional health and well-being. Lucia explains “us women are terrified for our lives and our families all the time.. we are always thinking ‘how are we going to survive?’” Many of these anxieties arise from their roles as mothers and for the future of their children, with Paula explaining “as a woman, as a mother, I am always worried for the lives my children. What are we going to leave for them?” Rosalie reiterates these anxieties, noting “I live in
fear, and not in fear for myself, but in fear for my children. It is a horrible feeling as a mother. To think that your child is dying a slow death because of this contamination.”

One of the largest expressed concerns for communities in regards to the water is the tailings dam that sits directly above their homes. Tailings dams store mine waste, typically consisting of crushed rock, water, heavy metals and additives that are used in processing such as petroleum by-products, sulfuric acid and cyanide (Earth Works, 2023). While corporations claim to have extensive safety procedures in place for the tailings, failures of the dams are increasing in frequency and severity on a global scale. For example, in 2019, a tailings dam in Brazil collapsed, killing over 270 people and contaminating local waterways with over 9.7 million cubic meters of mine waste (Cheng et al., 2021). Research regarding all serious tailings failures since 1915 demonstrates that the rate of these failings is increasing and there are 19 catastrophic failures that are predicted between 2018 and 2027 on a global scale (Earth Works, 2023). Interestingly, modern mining practices are escalating, rather than mitigating, the risks leading to increased fear for mining impacts communities. This is an unfortunate reality for women in the Dominican Republic, as they have experienced what they have referred to as “several close calls” (Paula). Paula explains, “what makes me the most worried, what always has me worried, is the tailings pond that we have. Because when it’s rainy season we are always in fear wondering if the pond will explode. We know that it can’t handle heavy levels of rainfall.” Participants were aware of previous tailings dam failures, with one woman referencing the disaster in Brazil, noting “I see in other countries, like Brazil, where the ponds are built well and they still exploded. How can I live knowing that this is possible here?” Paula shared an experience where they felt as though their lives were at risk from the pond, and the fear that this brought to the community explaining,

Look that day a lot of rain was falling, and it was 5 in the afternoon. And a little boy tells me ‘Paula, the wall is breaking.’ I say ‘look, boy, don’t joke about that.’ He says ‘Yes, come and see.’ And when I go there behind, I say it’s true - the wall is collapsing. And I said to my youngest ‘lend mi your cellphone.’ And he says to me ‘Mami, what are you going to do?’ And I say to him ‘Come here, I’m going to make a video.’ So when I go to make the video, I began talking and the rooster
crowed. When it’s in the middle, the rooster crowed again. When it was finishing, the rooster crowed. The rooster crows 3 times in the video. After, my sister said to me ‘Paula, but the rooster crowed 3 times in the time that you were speaking.’ And many people who I sent the video to, they were talking to me about that. ‘That video that you did was like an omen…. each time that I see that video and hear the roosters, I get goosebumps all over my skin.’ …. The company came and they told me that nothing happened and it was fine. But the next day they were up there fixing it. So if nothing happened, why were they fixing it?

Participants share that a similar event occurred several years before where the pond rose to dangerous levels and there was a ‘red alert’ and “although there were sirens and people were evacuating the company didn’t tell us communities anything” (Fernanda). Paula notes that because of this experience, they live in constant fear, which impacts their overall health and well-being, explaining “now we never sleep at night. We always have one eye open to make sure that the tailings doesn’t explode on us.” Through such impactful quotations, women in the mining impacted community demonstrate the drastic effects of mining on their emotional health and well-being, which is further intensified by narratives of sociocultural erosion.

4.4 Sociocultural Erosion

4.4.1 Gendered Divisions of Labour

Through the ecological destruction and devastating impacts on health and well-being perpetuated by the mining site, women in the neighboring community share narratives of increased home and care work, heightened by gendered divisions of labour, as Lucia notes, “this situation is causing so much harm for women, because the man leaves for work in the morning, but the woman stays home dealing with all of the damage from the mine.” Other women speak of the hardships of intensified domestic labour due to the presence of the mine with Fernanda explaining “all of the dust and white stuff and dirt that the mine and vehicles cause, it all comes into our houses. It gets on the furniture, the

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3 After member checking with the community and ensuring accurate cultural context and translation, it was understood that a rooster crowing three times represents a bad omen.
chairs, the tables, the tiles, and us women have to be cleaning this toxic dust all day.” Alejandra furthers this, noting “the dust settles on our clothes and we are always doing laundry, but since there is no electricity the machine doesn’t work and we have to wash by hand, but the water we have to wash with is contaminated.”

The women also share that due to their gendered roles as caretakers of the household and family, they face increased burdens due to the presence of the mine. Elisa explains “everything falls on the women in this community- if we don’t have water for what we have to do in the house, or if there isn’t enough food in the house.. who suffers the consequences for the children? It’s us women.” Fernanda furthers this, noting “we have been very affected by the water, us women. Why? Because we are the ones who use the water the most. And we are the mothers of the families and at times we can’t even find clean water to bathe our children.” Elisa continues, “it has caused so many difficulties for us women because now we have to find water to cook, we have to find water to bathe our children, we have to find water for our families to drink.”

The ecological destruction and increased illnesses in the community further intensify the burden for women, with Rosalie noting “we get more diseases than the men, but when the kids are infected by the contamination it is still on us, everything is on top of the woman.” Due to the environmental devastation that is described, the gendered divisions of labour experienced by women is combined with increased economic precarity, producing financial instability, which disproportionately impacts women.

4.4.2 Economic Precarity

While extractive industries often assert that their presence brings economic development for neighboring communities, participants share opposing narratives, describing increased economic precarity with Lucia explaining “this could be the province with the greatest economic achievements because gold is extracted from here, but it is the worst place to live in the country.” Fernanda echoed this sentiment, noting “the only things that we are receiving are damages and losses. We are not receive anything from the mine. Nothing. Only the poison and the suffering.” Elisa speaks to the financial state of the community, asking “if mining brings money, why are we all so poor? Why can we not buy food to feed our families? Why can’t we buy water to bathe our children?”
Women discuss the financial impact of the destruction of their local water sources, explaining, “we used to collect our water from the river and now we have to buy it. Do you think that everyone has 50 or 60 pesos to pay for a bottle of water to drink, or to bathe?” (Lucia). Participants also explain that they have increased financial burdens due to the impact of the mining process on their homes, as Alejandra shares “when they blow their dynamite, the house shakes because of the impact. You can feel the shaking. And most of the houses are all cracked, especially the floors, and who is going to fix that? Not the company.” Fernanda furthers this, noting “here there are many houses… mine, for example, that have lots of cracks in them…with all the hard work it took me to build it. I am a single mother who has a special needs child who lives with me. The walls are opening, the floor is opening and I’m too poor to fix it.” The economic precarity experiences by communities is intensified through electrical issues, impacting several aspects of their lives, specifically for women.

4.4.2.1 Electricity

Participants share that despite the mass amount of energy consumed by the mining operation, the community is left with inconsistent electricity. Fernanda explains that one reason for this is that the intense energy use from the mining site hinders their access, with “very low circuits and continuous power outages”, and that “the trucks knock over the electrical posts and the explosions impact the power- we are constantly left in darkness.” She notes how challenging this is, particularly for women, sharing “we passed Christmas in the dark. We had to have dinner December 24th by candle. Us women had to make whole Christmas dinners by candle. Can you imagine?” Such experiences further their economic burdens, with Lucia stating “do you know how difficult it is to have to buy a candle every single day, buying a candle, buying a cancel, because there isn’t the tiniest bit of electricity.” Women state that the lack of electricity also makes it difficult to preserve food and provide for their families noting, “if we have food that needs to stay cool we have to buy ice to put it on, we can’t serve spoiled food to our families” (Alejandra). Elisa furthers this, stating “See this fridge [pointing to her fridge], it hasn’t been plugged in for over 3 months, why? Because everything inside goes rotten. So we are not in a good place here. No way.” Women also share that due to
the heat of the climate, intensified by the mining site, electricity is a requirement, with Lucia explaining “do you know how difficult it is to not be able to plug in a fridge to drink a bit of cold water? To not be able to turn on a fan for your children?” Women share that while the corporation has promised to fix the problem with electricity in their communities, they have yet to follow through, with Fernanda noting “It has been more than 10 years asking [the company] to fix the electricity. They agreed, but they still haven’t fixed it. Every day it seems like a new excuse.”

4.4.2.2 Employment

The economic precarity of communities is further intensified through community testimonies surrounding employment, with Rosalie noting “they say they will bring jobs for all of us, but if they are offering jobs and have a meeting, over 100 people will go and they will only hire 2 or 3.” They also share that while the mining site has brought some employment, it is often low waged, dangerous and precarious, noting “even if some people do get work, it’s usually just for a couple of months and then they are unemployed again, and the work that they are doing is hard work with dangerous chemicals” (Lucia). In the case that women do gain employment, it is difficult for them to maintain due to the mining induced impacts on communities physical and emotional health and well-being and the gendered implications of these effects. Fernanda explains, “how are we meant to attend work when we have infections? Or when we didn’t sleep all night because of the noise? Or when our children are vomiting from the smells? As women, we have to take care of our household and families, which makes it very difficult when everything is damaged or sick from the mine.” This is especially challenging for women given the erosion of their traditional subsistent livelihoods due to the mining-induced destruction of their ecologies, with Alejandra explaining “the majority of us women don’t have the same right to employment as a man, so when we used to live off the land and depend on our small businesses to sell the food that we harvested, but we can no longer do it, it is very very hard.”

4.4.2.3 Loss of Traditional Subsistent Livelihoods

As women living in campesino communities, participants share that for generations their survival and livelihoods have been rooted in their ecologies, with Lucia explaining “we
women have always been field workers, we cultivate the land and we live from the land.’’ However, with the decline in agricultural production, the contamination of their water sources and the death of their livestock, it has become increasingly difficult for women to provide for their families. Fernanda explains “Me, as a single mother, I have a little plot of land and I plant. But now we can’t even eat one yucca. We have to buy everything to be able to give our children dinner.” Alejandra furthers this, sharing “Here, we all used to go to the market to sell our produce, but now we have to go to the market to buy others’ produce. That is the reality that we are living. Why? Because our harvest isn’t the same.” Fernanda illustrates this reality, explaining “here, we can no longer even eat any of our fruit. We used to go and pick china. We didn’t need to make breakfast. With one jar of orange juice our families would be full. Now there is not a single china. You go look for an orange tree and you won’t find any.” Women assert that they have lost over 60% of their cacao production, which, before the mining project, was their communities main source of income, as Luisa shares “for us single mothers, if we don’t work, we don’t have income from anywhere else. When it was cacao season, we could buy things for our house and our children. Now when we plant the seeds they just dry out and rot.” Fernanda echoes this sentiment, illustrating the impact the ecological destruction has had on their livelihoods, “us as poor women, we still lived well because we had the land. We could have kept living- for example, I had so many chickens and turkeys in my yard at home and I could sell them. Now we can’t even do that. Our life is very difficult and each day our lives get more complicated.” Women note that even when they are able to harvest a small amount, the known contamination from the mining site impacts their ability to sell, as Elisa explains “I harvested some cacao and went to sell it in the next town and told my son ‘I’m going to sell a lot’ and I didn’t even sell one. Why? Because no one wants to purchase produce from our community. So that night, we didn’t eat.” Women’s narratives illustrate that the deterioration of their subsistent livelihoods has consequently weakened their generational land-based identities, leading to a loss of individual, familial and community collectivity.

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4 Oranges
4.4.3 Deteriorating Land-Based Identity

Through generational subsistent livelihoods, women neighboring the mining project have rooted their sense of self in their relationship with the land, as Luisa notes, “I’ve never seen my land as a simple habitat. It is my land, it is my home, it is my ancestors home and the home of my 3 boys.” Fernanda furthers this, explaining “we are one with the water, we have always been one with the water, my mother and my grandmother swam in that stream, what are we now without it?” Participants share similar sentiments regarding the erosion of their environments with Alejandra stating “I’ve always been a farmer and have been proud that I’ve been able to provide for my family from the land.. but now I am no longer” and Paula sharing “we used to be known for our cacao production- that’s what everyone thought of when they thought of our province, now all they think of is the mine.” Clara illustrates the generational shift in land-based identity due to the presence of the mining site, noting “my mother used to take us to that stream to swim [pointing to the stream], that’s where I grew up, they could never get me out of the river. It was part of me. I did the same with my children, the river is like our family. But now I have to yell at my grandchildren if they even go near it. They don’t know the land like we used to.” Through a loss of collectivity, the deterioration of land-based identity resulting from the mining site has also contributed to community and familial division, weakening social cohesion and solidarity.

4.4.4 Community and Familial Division

In discussing their relationship with the land, women reflect fondly on their experiences growing up in a clean and lush environment, sharing the cohesion this brought to their community. For instance, Fernanda shares “that river there [pointing to the river], all of us women used to bathe, we used to laugh and share stories and we used to carry water to the house together.” However, with the increased mining-induced contamination of their land, women identify a breakdown in community, noting “without the river, we no longer have a space to gather and share, in the Dominican people are always outside, but here people now stay in their houses to avoid the dust and smells.” Paula echoes this, sharing the specific gendered impacts this has had for their community, sharing “we had two main rivers where us women washed our clothes and swam, it was a time to be with
just women, without the problems of men, now that’s impossible because one of those rivers was taken over by [the company] for the tailings pond and the other is now as if it were a corpse.” Clara echoed this, explaining “I’ve lived on this land for decades and now, as an old woman, my life is lonely, because a lot of people used to come here by the river to play dominos, to bathe, to entertain each other, and now the people don’t come. Now it’s just me.”

While the loss of community for women is profound, they also note that the presence of the mining site has induced familial separation, which is devastating for campesino communities who often reside intergenerationally. For instance, Paula shares “my daughter used to live in this house next door with her children [pointing to the house], but she had to leave here because every time the bad smell came from the mine, he [her grandson] would vomit. He never got rid of his headache. So she decided that it was best to move to another province, and now I don’t see them much.” Alejandra further this, noting “sometimes my daughter gets mad at me. She says ‘Mami, can I bring the kids there for a week’ and I say ‘my love you know that they can’t spend a week here, they just can’t, they will be too sick’, and that pains me as a grandmother, to not be able to spend that time with my grandchildren.” Fernanda shares a story of a young girl who was sent away due to chronic vaginal infections, noting “her doctor told her that was her reality, that if she stays here she was always going to have it and that she should go away from here. So she went to live with an Auntie in the capital, but her mom lives here… poor thing.” Clara shares that while she has encouraged her children and grandchildren to leave for their health and well-being, it has severe impacts on her own well-being as an elderly woman, explaining “I told them that if they can get out of here they should, so they don’t breathe the poison, but now what for me? This has been my home since birth, I don’t want to leave, but who is there to take care of an old woman like me?”

In addition to ecological destruction and familial relocation, social divisions are intensified through the presence of the mining site, with tension building between those who are employed or paid by the mining site, and those who are in opposition. As Elisa explains “what happens is that here, we have many who are against the mine, but lots
that collect their chelitos\(^5\) from the mine to stay quiet and with that they live well.”

Fernanda illustrates the desperation of community members due to their loss of traditional subsistent livelihoods noting “the economic and agricultural situation brings them misery so they take the money, and I can’t blame them. They are just trying to provide for their family, but they are seeing the material more than the spiritual.”

Women share that some of those who are employed by the mining site are hostile to those who resist the extractive project, explaining “those who get paid by [the company] have changed and they don’t even greet us. They get like that. Even though they are your family they get a complex.” Fernanda further expresses this frustration, stating “we fight for our community and for our environment and even for them to get work. We struggle a lot for our people and then they don’t talk to us. The other day I said to one of them ‘come here, I want to know why it is that you start working in the mine and then don’t greet us’. They said to me ‘Ay don’t say that’, but I told them ‘gold is not worth more than your community.’” Paula explains the connections between corporate control, corruption and community division, noting “it is unfortunate they pass by and don’t even look at us, but that’s what it’s like here with [the company]. [The company] controls and buys everything here. It’s like they even own our people.”

4.5 Deception and Corruption

While the mining company claims corporate social responsibility and community collaboration throughout their business practices, participants share narratives of deception and corruption, with profound impacts on their lives and communities. Paula explains their presence noting “they function like thieves. The thief enters calmly and then takes out their nails, that is how [the company] does it.” Alejandra speaks of the companies public relations in contrast to the lived-experiences of women, explaining, “on their website [the company] publishes that he is a good neighbor, that everything is fine and that we are happy… they say that they provide us with things we’ve never even seen, but this is all lies.” Fernanda provides an example of such deceit, noting “they publish all of these lies, just recently they posted a billboard saying that they made two wells to give water to 75 families in our community, but out of those 75 families, not

\(^5\) Money
one single one has received even a drop of water.” Paula echoes these sentiments, exclaiming “they are not good neighbors, not at all. What kind of a good neighbor puts you in your grave? If they want to say they are good neighbors, we have proof that is a lie. A huge lie.” Through reflections on the ecological destruction, women share their experiences of the corporations deceit, noting “they say that the cyanide and the contaminants that [the company] uses to extract the gold is a very good and safe practice, but the reality is very, very different” (Lucia).

Despite claims of community transparency and collaboration by the corporation, women explain that their communication with the community is largely non-existent, sharing “they have never had a meeting to see if we are in agreement with things, they have never consulted us, they’ve never come to say “look, this is happening” or “that is happening”, so that’s all lies.” Fernanda reiterates this, sharing “I would say that if the mine was responsible and worked with transparency like they say they do, they would come to the community. They would have meetings with the communities, get together with them, see what’s wrong, what they could fix what are the most urgent needs, but they don’t do that. They don’t do that.” Women reflect on their perceived situation to outsiders, noting “I wish that people didn’t just believe them. I wish they said ‘why don’t we go see if the communities have water, we are going to see if the benefits that this company claims to give to the communities are actually happening” (Alejandra). Paula questions the international support for the corporation, stating “they must be bringing them all these lies in Canada too. If they were telling them the realities, they wouldn’t support this.” Lucia illuminates the gravity of her communities sentiments of deception, noting “I hate [the company], I hate the liars they are. When we don’t even have water but they are showing off in the newspapers and social networks saying that we are fine. It is a lie and it makes me very sad. It makes me want to scream.”

Participants build on narratives of deception through conversations of corruption, both by the corporation and their local and national governments, noting “[the company] is giving money to every politician here” (Lucia). Fernanda expands on this, sharing “the first thing that the company did when they got here was bribe the authorities. Without asking the community members whether we wanted it or not.” Alejandra explains the
sentiments of communities when their voices are not heard by the corporation and
government, noting “the company is indifferent, the government is indifferent, they
don’t value us. We don’t have a government, what we have is people who sell us to the
highest bidder.” Fernanda explains that even if they find politicians who do care about
their struggles, they eventually succumb to the power of the corporation, noting “the
Dominican state has never helped us. Because if someone tries to help us, the company
calls them and calls them and eventually fills their wallets so much that they forget we
exist in this community. That is how we are living here.”

Women also note that due to corruption, it is difficult to advocate for themselves and
their communities on a national scale, sharing “some international groups support us, but
here even all of the reporters have been bought. None of them will say anything against
[the company]. We haven’t found one reporter who will come to report on our situation.
We have to do it ourselves through social media, because there aren’t any here”
(Fernanda). Lucia exemplifies this, noting that thousands of fish recently died in a river
that contains run-off from the tailings pond, yet “we called and called news stations and
no one has come.” She further notes the gendered implications of this, stating
“especially for us women, it’s hard, people here don’t listen to women’s voices, they
don’t hear us like they do a man. So when it’s a woman who calls, we are dismissed”
(Lucia). Fernanda explains that such corruption even seeps into the healthcare system,
noting “it’s hard to find a good doctor here, we feel like many of them won’t tell us the
truth, they are also in the pockets of [the company] when it comes to our health.” The
corruption disclosed by women in the impacted communities is illustrative of larger
systems of power which establish and perpetuate oppression and domination in mining
impacted communities.

4.6 Systemic Forces of Power

4.6.1 Power and Control

Women in the mining-impacted community reveal great concern surrounding the power
and control held by the mining corporation within their localities, nationally and
internationally. Paula shares, “they [the company] are like a giant monster. They are
more than a country, they are more than a government, they are more than anything, because they are the ones with the money, with the millions… billions. Because of that they can do what they want.” Fernanda asserts that due to this, the corporation has more control than the government, noting “in this area, it’s like there is no government. Here, those who control our are [the company].” Elisa exemplifies this, noting “you see this tree here [pointing to tree], if [the company] said ‘get rid of that’, the government would send 500 soldiers to remove it. You see what I mean? That is the situation here.”

Women also share the hold that they believe the corporation has over employment opportunities in the area, forcing community members to make difficult choices between their livelihoods and futures or defending their ecologies. Lucia explains, “I tried to get a job at the school but was told that somehow it was controlled by [the company]. I had to choose between [the company] giving me a job to pay for university or to defend my community. You understand? Because here [the company] even determines who works in the school.” She furthers, “If you do not support [the company] you are automatically appointed to sweep and clean the bathrooms at the school. The jobs that people don’t want” (Lucia). Alejandra furthers this, explaining “If you say no to [the company], it is hard to get a job anywhere. For example, there was a politician who went around collecting resumes, but only of the people who supported [the company] and all those people now have good jobs in the school. So the politicians helped them and gave them a throne.” They note the power and control that the company have can sometimes even determine who gets loans in the community, with Paula explaining “many people close their doors on us women who oppose the mine. It’s hard, because for poor people like us, most of the time we can’t even got loans because [the company’s] control is everywhere.. it’s ironic, they have all the money and we can’t even borrow it.”

4.6.2 Capitalist Greed

Women’s narratives reveal recognitions of corporate greed, fueled by a capitalist economic system. Paula explains, “What [the company] does is destroy everything close to them, along with human life. It is unfortunate that they are not interested in us. What they are interested in if their money and their wealth, that’s all that matters in this economy. More and more money every day, even if it means that us poor people die.”
Women identify their understanding of themselves as part of nature, in contrast to a capitalist ideology of nature for exploitation and profit, noting “what these corporations don’t understand is that our government cannot sell the river. The river is not ours. It is part of us, but it is not ours. If I take water from the river and sell it, I am stealing. If I pollute the river, I am killing, it is that simple” (Rosalie). Women also place culpability on Canadian investors, explaining “the corporation just wants money, and the investors just want money. Don’t these Canadian investors know that we don’t want them here? One day God will hold them accountable for their wrongdoings” (Lucia). The connections to exploitation, capitalism and greed illustrate the foundations of a neoliberal development model, which participants resist as ‘progress’ and ‘development’ for their communities.

4.6.3 Neoliberal Development Model

Through ideologies of neoliberal development, progress is understood as individualized, economic growth (Wilson, 2017), which is contrary to traditional campesino values of development as familial, community and ecological well-being. Alejandra notes, “you see the ‘development’ that they post on their page, saying that they are good neighbors and are helping us. That’s a lie.” Fernanda explains this further, stating “what is this development they speak of? Since this development came all the cattle have died. Since this development came we don’t have water. Is this development?” Lucia reiterates this opposition to corporate proposed development explaining “the illnesses, the poison, that is the development they have given us. What is a few pesos when we can no longer even produce on the land, the land which we lived off of?” Women also note that community-based needs and requests are ignored, while other forms of development, ones which benefit the corporation, are approved. For instance, Paula shares “we’ve been fighting for 4 years for them [the company] to fix our electricity. But now they say their focus is to build a new highway.. why? Because their trucks need to use it to get more gold. They will spend millions to do this.. but there is no money for us to fix our electricity”, she notes the significance of this for women, explaining “electricity is what us women need, not a highway.” Lucia explains the irony of their realities, noting “this is the province where they extract the gold. This is where millions of dollars are made.. but where all this
money is made, there is no electricity, there is not water, there is no clean air to breathe, so someone please tell me where is this development?”

### 4.6.4 Neocolonialism

Participants link neoliberal development ideologies of ‘progress’ to histories of colonialism within the Dominican Republic, with Rosalie stating “[the company] is doing to us what Columbus did to our ancestors, killing us for gold.” Lucia echoes this, emphasizing neocolonial practices of land-grabbing, noting “[the company] invaded our lands and destroyed our environment. They have taken full control over our community.. it feels like it is no longer ours.” Ironically, several participants discuss a recent narrative perpetuated by the corporation that without proper documentation of the land, they are invaders. Paula explains, “they have called us invaders, but we are not invaders. I want to that to be made very clear… because we, all of the families that are living here, our ancestors left us what they had. Our families have been on this land for hundreds of years. They [the company] are the invaders.” Fernanda furthers this, drawing on ancestral connections to the land, noting “if my grandfather were alive right now, he would be 150 years old. Is that an invader? I live as an heir to land that my grandfather lived on. We aren’t invaders. Invaders are people who come and steal and destroy land that others have been living on for centuries. So [the company] are the real invaders.” Rosalie echoes these sentiments, explaining “they have said that we are the invaders, but that is not how it is. We’re not invaders. They are the invaders. They are invaders. Not us. That’s it.” Women note that the corporation has asked for documentation proving that they have land-titles, perpetuating neocolonial and capitalist ideologies of private property. Clara explains “I had to pay a lot of money to get this document to show that the house was mine.. my grandfather was born here… but I had to get a paper to prove it because they [the company] think that a document makes a person.” Rosalie notes the gendered implications of such requests, sharing “it is especially difficult for us old women to get these documents, because for so long only the men were property owners.. so for us single women, or widowed women, it is hard to prove that the land is ours.” Fernanda explains that this tactic is used as another form of repression against communities opposing the extractive project, noting “what is happening is that they are
saying this to discredit us and make our lives impossible.. saying that we are invaders because we don’t want the mine on our land. No, this is our land.” Such quotations illuminate the strong resistance of communities, despite government and corporate repression.

4.7 Resistance and Repression

4.7.1 Activism

With the severe mining-induced impacts on their health and well-being, women have been leading activist and resistance movements in the community for over 10 years. Fernanda explains “we have been fighting, fighting, fighting. We have faced [the company], we have faced the police, we have faced the government and we are always at the front. Us women at the front and the men behind us. Because as women, we are willing to die for our families.” While they have found strength in resistance, they note the emotional exhaustion they feel from the constant struggle, as Paula notes “I’m tired of praying. And praying. And marching. And they still don’t take us into account. I’m tired of that.” Fernanda furthers this sentiment, sharing “the struggle continues but years keep passing.. day after day, day after day.. a year passes, another year passes, and we are still here.” They also share their feelings of hopelessness in resisting a powerful multinational corporation, explaining “Sometimes it feels like we can’t do anything, you understand me? What can we do with a monster?” (Clara). Paula reiterates this feeling, further vilifying the corporation, noting “It is so difficult because what happens to one is the impotence that we feel. That we want to do something, but we can’t. Imagine it- killing a monster.”

Despite shared narratives of exhaustion and helplessness, women note that they continue the fight not for themselves, but for their children and future generations. Alejandra explains “it is not for us anymore, it is for the children.. they are our future. We need to work hard for our babies, to give them another life.. a life that we don’t have”. Lucia further this, noting “with all of the rivers damaged.. and the plants not growing.. and the air poisoned.. I ask myself, what will my children’s lives be like?” Fernanda notes the responsibility she feels for their future and the future of her grandchildren, explaining “I
have been a single mother my whole life and I have grandchildren now. I have to keep fighting to open pathways for them, so that they can survive.” Lucia continues “as a woman, as a mother, I will always fight… All that I’m doing, I am doing for my children. Understand? I will fight for my children to have a better place to live.. even if that’s not here.”

4.7.2 Relocation

Throughout their narratives, women emphasized the deep ancestral connection that they have with their land, yet they recognize a clean and safe environment to be imperative for their well-being, shifting the goal of their struggle from ending the mining project to relocation. Fernanda explains “it pains us, but we know that no matter how much we fight it isn’t going to make the situation get better. They can’t fix the environment now… they can’t fix the water now. So to make the situation better for our children, we have to leave this place.. and that’s why we are fighting for relocation.” Elisa explains “I don’t want to leave, I was born in this home, but here we are living in hell. We need to be relocated to a place where we can breathe fresh, pure air and live peacefully.” Rosalie echoes this sentiment, noting “I can’t say that I would never leave. No. Because we need a place where us poor people can live well, live off the land, like we did before [the company].” Alejandra illustrates the financial restraints of relocation, leaving families living in unhealthy environments with no alternative since “we’re too poor to relocate so we have to stay here, forced, even though here we breathe poison. If I had a way to leave, I would have left.” Fernanda notes that despite their continued resistance, the mining corporation refuses to move them and instead, attempts to silence their demands, explaining “they don’t want to relocate us because then they would be admitting to all the harm they’ve done, so what do they do instead? Silence us.”

4.7.3 Violence, Repression and Militarization

Women in the community note that the mining corporation and government utilize several tactics to silence them, since “they see us as the people who take millions and millions of dollars from their hands. All they want is the money and the gold, and we are in the way of that.” Participants share that one tactic that they utilize is intimidation
through militarization, explaining “here, we try to plan a protest, and a small group of us gather and 50 soldiers show up, we don’t have the freedom to do anything.” Alejandra echoes these experiences, stating “it’s almost like we don’t have the right to protest the mine, the authorities will send in 200 officers all at once and disperse us with a gas bomb.” Fernanda identifies the gendered impacts of such intimidation, explaining “for us women, they really try to scare us because they are all men and think they are stronger, but they don’t know the power we hold.”

Women share that the corporation also attempts to supress opposition through bribery and corruption. For example, Fernanda explains that when individuals in the community take videos of the ecological destruction and share them on social media, the corporation often attempts to pay them to take them down, noting “every time that something happens, they go looking for the person who posted it with a pocket full of pesos.” Lucia furthers this, noting “there have been many times that [the company] has tried to bribe me because it is no secret that they try to bribe people who come forward… people who aren’t afraid of them.” They explain that a tactic to avoid this is strength in numbers, with Fernanda explaining “for instance, if a bomb cracks my house and I go to them to tell them and I’m alone, what are they going to do if I’m alone? They will say ‘look, we will give you this money if you don’t say anything again’- that’s how they work, but in groups, they don’t bribe as much.” However, participants share that there are also risks when groups gather to organize resistance movements, with Paula noting “if we get together to plan to confront them, they pay someone to come and infiltrate the meeting and ruin the work that we are doing.” While the suppression of voices through militarization, bribery and infiltration poses challenges for communities, women also share that they have experienced further repression through threats and violence.

Lucia explains that when community members refuse bribery for their silence, they are at risk of more drastic measures, including violence. She exemplifies this through her own experience, noting “once when I was protesting, they shot at me… they were shooting at me from a bus, it was paid people doing it… and now I will never use this arm the same. I can’t lift it, it doesn’t work anymore and I am always in pain.” Fernanda furthers this, noting “I have received word not to go out at night. This is especially
frightening as a woman.” Alejandra explains the risk that those in opposition experience, stating “[the company] sees us as their worst enemy. They see us as the rock in their shoe and because of this we feel there are no limits to what they would do.” Lucia notes that she has had to take several drastic measures for protection, for instance she explains “there were always cars stopping in front of my house looking for me, so out of fear we had to move to a house off the street.” Additionally, she shares “I do feel scared. I fear for my life and for the life of my children. There have been many times where I have had to hide or send my children to my mother to look after to protect us. This is the price we pay for trying to protect our land and community.”

Despite the grave consequences women opposing the mining project have experienced, their narratives illustrate the strength, resiliency, and determination of their struggle, as Fernanda explains “we have the desire to keep fighting. We have to... because if we don’t fight, who will fight for our family? And for our people?” Alejandra furthers this noting “as a woman, I will never stop fighting, as a woman, I have to defend my land and protect my children.” While the violence, repression and militarization is severe, the women-led resistance persists, with their courage powerfully encapsulated by Lucia as she declares “they [the company] want us to greet them with bread, but we greet them with gasoline and fire, because I am willing to die to protect my land and community.”

4.8 Conclusion

Through a critically-informed abductive analysis of narrative data, seven key themes depicting the gendered impacts of open-pit mining in the Dominican Republic were generated. This chapter illustrates the lived experiences of women neighboring the mining project through discussions of ecological destruction; physical health and well-being; emotional health and well-being; sociocultural erosion; deception and corruption; systemic forces of power; and resistance and repression. Each theme is illuminated through direct quotations from participants, demonstrating the impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic as a collective gendered experience shaped by systems of power and oppression. The following chapter will interpret these findings through an in-depth discussion of each theme as well as key methodological and reflexive insights. Through this discussion, the importance and implications of this doctoral research are presented.
Chapter 5

5. Discussion

This chapter provides an interpretation and discussion of the findings regarding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. First, the key findings of the research are reiterated, illustrating the main themes which emerged through the critical narrative inquiry. Then, these thematic findings are linked to existing literature, noting significant contributions and illuminating theoretical understandings and interconnections with larger systemic forces of power. Next, methodological insights and boundaries are examined, outlining quality criteria in relation to the rigor and coherence of the study as well as possible boundaries on study quality. Optimizing the sincerity of this work, reflexive insight are then offered, grounded in the iterative reflexive process and rooted in relationality and critical self-reflexivity. Finally, the dissemination of research findings is considered, maintaining coherence with decolonial research through multiple methods of dissemination, centring community collaboration and scholarly activism.

5.1 Summary of Thematic Findings

This dissertation was guided by three research questions, informed by decolonial ecofeminist theory. The first question facilitated examination of the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic; the second led to a focus on how the gendered impacts of mining deter health and well-being for communities in the Dominican Republic; and the final turned attention to the systemic forces shaping these gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic.

Through a critical narrative inquiry rooted in decolonial ecofeminist theory, seven women participated in interviews, leading to the generation of seven main themes illustrating the gendered impacts of open-pit mining in the Dominican Republic.

The first theme generated through data analysis was ecological destruction, depicting collective community concerns surrounding the contamination and deterioration of their environments due to the presence of an open-pit mining site. This included contamination of local water sources, including rivers, ground water and rainfall, a decline in viable
agricultural production, and significant harm to livestock and fish. Secondly, community members shared substantial impacts to their physical health and well-being, including vaginal and reproductive health, a decline in vision, dizziness and nausea associated with odours released from the mining site, and headaches induced by continuous noise and explosions from the mine. Third, women identified the effects that the physical and ecological impacts have on their emotional health and well-being, discussing feelings of despair and hopelessness, indignity, and fear and anxiety. The fourth main theme addressed was sociocultural erosion, including intensified gendered divisions of labour, increased economic precarity, a loss of traditional subsistent livelihoods, a deteriorating land-based identity and deepened community and familial division. Such narratives were connected the next main theme surrounding community experiences of deception and corruption at communal, municipal, national and international levels. Discussions of deception and corruption revealed the significant systemic forces of power which produce and perpetuate the gendered impacts of open-pit mining in the Dominican Republic, including power and control, capitalist greed, neoliberal development models and neocolonialism. Despite the severity of the disclosed gendered impacts on their health and well-being in concurrence with state and corporate repression, community members demonstrated significant resiliency through narratives of resistance and activism, depicting strength and solidarity in their collective experiences.

5.2 Interpretations and Discussions

The revelations of the thematic analysis illuminated the gendered impacts of open-pit mining in the Dominican Republic, demonstrating both coherence with existing scholarly research, as well as several distinct insights. Through an analysis of each key theme, I will situate the findings of this dissertation within existing scholarly work, illuminating the significance of these contributions to the larger body of research regarding gender and mining. Further, grounded in ecological feminism, I offer an interpretation and discussion that illuminates important considerations, gaps and implications.
5.2.1 Ecological Destruction

The ecological harm perpetuated by open-pit mining practices is a predominant theme in research surrounding extraction, with this dissertation corroborating existing findings. Significant concerns which arose during narrative inquiries included contamination of water, destruction of agriculture and the declining health of livestock and fish. Considerable research has focused on mining-induced deterioration of ecologies in Latin America and the Caribbean, noting significant impacts for campesino communities (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Caxaj et al., 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Li, 2008; Macleod, 2016; Perrault, 2012; Rondon, 2008). The findings of this dissertation are consistent with existing literature discussing the ecological impacts of open-pit mining, further illustrating the severity of communities’ experiences. However, given the absence of scholarly research addressing this topic within the geographical area of the Dominican Republic, these findings provide a meaningful contribution to the body of literature. This is significant as, despite some industry wide standards, mining operations are often seen in isolation of one another, with each corporation claiming distinct procedures for environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility (Mining Association of Canada, 2023). However, the corroboration of findings in the Dominican Republic with research focused in other geographical areas throughout Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrate that the community disclosed ecological impacts of open-pit mining are consistent across borders, projects and corporations. This contribution further substantiates a necessity for comprehensive regulatory standards of environmental risk mitigation for Canadian mining corporations, as opposed to current standards for Corporate Social Responsibility which “give corporations the flexibility to voluntarily engage in different discourses and practices when and how they deem fit, in a way that makes them responsible for their own conduct” (Andrews, 2019, p. 19).

5.2.2 Physical Health and Well-Being

This narrative inquiry conducted with women in mining impacted communities revealed extensive disclosures surrounding physical health and well-being. Women in this study connect the impact on their health and well-being with the severe damage of their
ecologies. Several subthemes which emerged surrounding physical health and well-being are consistent with existing literature regarding the gendered impacts of mining, specifically discussions surrounding reproductive health impacts (Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2017; Isla, 2002; Jenkins, 2014). Interestingly, although there was significant discussion of reproductive health in the literature, there was little discussion surrounding vaginal health, which was a key theme that emerged from the narrative inquiries in the Dominican Republic. Through this, women disclosed shared experiences of chronic vaginal infections for women and girls of all ages, attributing these to exposure to contaminated water. Through the findings of this dissertation, women shared feelings of shame and community silence connected to discussion of vaginal health, which could explicate the gaps in existing research. Nevertheless, revelations of vaginal health throughout the collected narrative inquiries illuminate the gendered health impacts of mining, enhancing current discourse in the growing body of literature and revealing health care needs that require further attention.

5.2.3 Emotional Health and Well-Being

Existing research regarding the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean reveals several concerns surrounding the emotional health and well-being for women in mining impacted communities (Caxaj et al, 2014; Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Jenkins, 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008). Caxaj et al. (2014) thematically summarized such concerns, emphasizing key findings of nerves; depression; panic attacks and somatic experiences; lack of hope; and ongoing grief. Several of these themes reflect the significant findings of this dissertation, notably despair and hopelessness; and fear and anxiety, strengthening the validity of the literature. In addition to the corroboration of existing research, this dissertation advances the field of knowledge through the revelation of a collective feeling of indignity. Through quotations such as “all we can think about is that this company has denied us a dignified life, a life that as human beings, we must live. A life that us women deserve” (Lucia), women demonstrate sentiments of disregard, humiliation and dehumanization from the mining corporation. Further, community members disclosed sentiments connected to death and mortality that were perpetuated by the mining site, such as referring to themselves as “the living dead”
(Clara). Such narratives are connected to decolonial theory through the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2010), which emphasizes the dehumanization of colonized peoples, in an attempt “to turn the colonized into less than human beings” (Lugones, 2010, p. 746). As such, these powerful testimonies reveal the depth of the injustice surrounding women’s lived-experiences, expanding the understanding of mining justice in existing literature.

5.2.4 Sociocultural Erosion

Key themes surrounding social disarticulation in communities neighboring open-pit mining sites in Latin America and the Caribbean were revealed as main findings in the completed scoping review, demonstrating the significant social impacts perpetuated by extractive projects (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Caxaj et al, 2014; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008). While the results of the gathered narrative inquiries support these findings, there are several noteworthy revelations which provide unique contributions to the body of research. First, the discussion surrounding economic precarity that was exposed in the literature is advanced through discourse of the interconnections between economic precarity and women’s individual and collective ecological identities. Women neighboring the open-pit mining site emphasized their traditional roles as land-workers, rooting their livelihoods in subsistent agricultural practices, which have been significantly disturbed through the presence of the open-pit mining site. Through an understanding of a loss of financial independence, this finding expands the discussion of gendered economic precarity, emphasizing the growing economic dependency on men which increases patriarchal power structures in mining impacted communities.

Additionally, through disclosures such as “we are one with the water, we have always been one with the water, my mother and my grandmother swam in that stream, what are we now without it?” (Fernanda), women stressed not only the significance of their ecologies to their sense of self, but also the deterioration of this land-based and cultural identity perpetuated by the mining site. This finding is significant to decolonial research, which centers Indigenous, land-based pedagogies and resists colonial practices of ecological exploitation. Women further disclosed that their deteriorating land-based
identities, perpetuated through the exploitation of their ecologies, has instigated substantial community and familial division through a loss of community gathering space. This is consistent with projects of coloniality, emphasized through decolonial theory, which aim to destroy Indigenous cultures and ways of being (Mignolo, 2010). The shared narratives indicate that this loss has specific gendered implications through the erosion of women-only spaces. For instance, women shared that prior to the presence of the mining site, women would gather by the river to bathe, wash laundry or gather water, and while these may appear to be everyday mundane tasks of gendered social reproduction, the narratives illuminate that this became sacred time for women to share space apart from the confines of patriarchal power. Imposed through historical coloniality, a culture of machismo, a deep patriarchal power over women, is deeply embedded in the societal norms of the Dominican Republic (Auwater, 2023) and the river signified a space of resistance to male-dominance. Therefore the shared narratives demonstrate that the destruction of the river is not only an attack on their ecologies and livelihoods, but also represents the destruction of a female collective of solidarity and support, intensifying patriarchal control in their communities. This finding is a significant contribution to existing literature, as it demonstrates a deep correlation between gender, geographical space and ecological destruction.

The loss of female-only space and the implications this has for solidarity and support is indicative of a substantial discrepancy which arose between the findings of this dissertation and the existing literature. The thematic analysis completed through the scoping review revealed a relationship between an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) and sites of extraction. This escalation was reported to occur at familial, communal and institutional levels and is connected to several mining-induced transformations including increased substance abuse, intensified gendered divisions of labour, an influx of foreign men to communities and increased militarization and criminalization (Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2011; Deonandan et al., 2017; Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Isla, 2002; Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Jenkins, 2015; Rondon, 2008). However, despite discussions of such mining-induced circumstances in the gathered narratives, disclosures of GBV were entirely absent from women’s stories of their lived-experiences. GBV is typically understood as “a consequence of persistent
masculinist traditions exacerbated or circumscribed by socioeconomic and political factors” (Bueno & Henderson, 2021, p. 2209) and the United Nations Global Database on Violence Against Women reports that nearly 1 in 3 women in the Dominican Republic have experienced GBV (2021). However, other studies place this number much higher, reporting up to 60% of women experiencing GBV throughout their lives, with the Dominican Republic having one of the highest femicide rates in the world (Bueno & Henderson, 2021). Such statistics, intensified by the presence of open-pit mining, are indicative that experiences of GBV for community members are probable. However, the inconsistency between disclosures of GBV in existing literature, in contrast with the silence surrounding GBV throughout this research, could be explained through an analysis of larger systems of patriarchy, power and oppression throughout the country. Bueno & Henderson (2021) explain that within the Dominican Republic, machismo mentality is “promoted and reinforced in schools, the workplace, media, religious institutions, the criminal justice system, and government…and through the institution of marriage”, often leading to acceptance or justification of GBV (p. 2213). Further, a recent study found that over 95% of instances of GBV in the Dominican Republic go unreported (CE Noticias Financieras, 2021). The combination of patriarchal machismo culture, in conjunction with justification, internalized victimization and individual, communal and institutional shame, indicate a possible explanation for the lack of disclosures of GBV throughout the shared narratives. This was demonstrated through reflexive discussion with the research assistant, who has family in the Dominican Republic and has resided in the country for several years. While reflecting on the discrepancy in findings after completion of the narrative inquiries she shared her belief that regardless of the depth of relationship I held with community members, it would be “very unlikely for women to disclose experiences of gender based violence”, due to the strength of machismo culture. This is significant for research related to the gendered impacts of mining, as it is indicative that, due to the compounding factors of shame and silence, exacerbated by the ecological, physical, societal and institutional impacts of open-pit mining, women neighboring open-pit mining projects in the Dominican Republic are at an increased risk of gender-based violence.
5.2.5 Deception and Corruption

Discourse of corruption at individual, municipal, institutional and national levels is prevalent in existing literature surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean. Jenkins (2014) shared testimonies from Ecuador indicating concerns of both community members and politicians being “bought off” by mining corporations, with Caxaj et al., (2014) reporting bribes and gifts being offered by corporations to gain support at multiple levels. These findings were consistent with the narratives gathered throughout this dissertation, with women interviewed sharing concerns surrounding corruption within their communities, institutions and governments. Through such disclosures of corruption arose significant sentiments and experiences of deceit for women in mining impacted communities. This is significant as industry produced information of transparency through corporate social responsibility is growing. For instance, the Mining Association of Canada (2023) states that “the Canadian mining industry is a strong supporter of transparency and worked alongside the civil society and government to put Canada in a leadership position in the global transparency movements” (para. 1). However, the shared narratives surrounding deception contradict such claims, disrupting notions of corporate social responsibility which often saturate international discourse of open-pit mining. This is emphasized by women, who share their plea for international transparency, noting sentiments such as “they must be bringing them all these lies in Canada too. If they were telling them the realities, they wouldn’t support this” (Paula). This quotation is indicative that it is not only community members and Dominican citizens experiencing deceit perpetuated by the extractive industries, but everyday Canadian citizens as well. It is unbeknown to most Canadian citizens that 75% of all mining corporations abroad are headquartered in Canada, with even fewer understanding the ecological harm and human rights violations perpetuated by these Canadian corporations (Block, 2017). This is largely due to the philanthropic façade that mining corporations often portray, coupled with deep political ties, supporting the positive image of international extraction (Lama, 2021). The narratives of deceit gathered through this research provide an opportunity to weaken the disconnect which often exists between those residing in mining impacted communities and Canadian citizens, seeing both parties as victims of corporate deception. Such findings are significant in fostering
possibilities for increased global solidarity movements promoting mining justice and therefore provide a unique contribution to the literature regarding the gendered impacts of mining.

5.2.6 Systemic Forces of Power

An analysis of the systemic forces of power is imperative while investigating gendered impacts of open-pit mining, as extraction is established and perpetuated through exploitative geopolitical practices. Gordon and Webber (2016) explain that through transnational globalization, Canadian mining corporations are “operating within a global system of imperialism that continues to systematically benefit capital from the Global North at the expense of the people and ecologies of the Global South” (p. 4). Existing literature demonstrates the connections between mining and systems of power and oppression throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, through structures of colonialism, capitalism and neoliberalism (Caxaj et al., 2013; Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2015; Li, 2008; Perreault, 2012). Such findings were corroborated through the shared narratives in this dissertation, with interesting contributions emerging through themes of neocolonialism and neoliberalism.

The Dominican Republic is significant in discussions of colonialism, as the geographical area was the first landing point for the Spaniards in their colonial genocide. The linkage between the quest for gold and colonialism is irrefutable, both in historical and contemporary contexts. Through quotations such as “[the company] is doing to us what Columbus did to our ancestors, killing us for gold” (Rosalie), women in the Dominican Republic are connecting their experiences with the mining corporation to violent histories of colonial genocide. Such discourse underpins an understanding of resource colonialism, emphasizing the theft and appropriation of Indigenous territories in the pursuit of extraction. Parson & Ray (2018) note that contemporary colonial practices “focus on establishing industry, taking land, eradicating indigenous peoples, and doing so in the name of progress” (p. 69). Caxaj et al., (2013) discuss resource colonialism in the context of gold mining in Guatemala, with participants also connecting current day mining practices to histories of colonialism. Arvin, Tuck and Morrill (2013) further this, explaining that exploitation of land is central to settler colonialism and “in order for
settlers to usurp the land and extract its value, Indigenous peoples must be destroyed, removed, and made into ghosts” (p. 12). Resource colonialism is perpetuated through the process of land-grabbing, a term use to describe the appropriation and theft of land for privatization (Gordillo, 2023) and is a tactic commonly utilized by multinational mining corporations. Interestingly, the gathered narratives reveal that in the Dominican Republic, land-grabbing is executed through the delegitimization of ancestral ties to the land. Through labelling community members as ‘invaders’ or requiring documentation for generational homes, mining corporations are perpetuating neocolonial ideologies of private property and engaging in practices of land-grabbing for capitalist growth. The gendered analysis present in the narratives gathered through this dissertation are noteworthy, as they depict the ways in which neocolonial practices are particularly gendered, unjustly exploiting women. For instance, the narrative shared by Rosalie explains the challenges of her experience as an elderly, single woman having to provide documentation for land that her family has resided on for generations. This is demonstrative of the fact that historically, the patriarchal foundations of colonialism shifted and erased Indigenous peoples complex structures of kinship and controlled gender roles and sexuality, often inferring property rights to men, despite the matrilineal foundations of most Indigenous communities (Arvin, Tuck & Morrill, 2013). The gathered narratives surrounding women’s experiences as stewards of their ancestral lands and the challenges they experience in extractive spaces provide a unique contribution to the literature, depicting the interconnections between neocolonial patriarchy, land-grabbing and mining.

The prevalence of resource colonialism and drive for extraction is situated in larger systems of neoliberal capitalism, which rely on a fallacy of ‘progress’ to sustain their exploitative practices. Neoliberal capitalism proposes that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). This political-economic ideology has direct benefits for mining corporations, which utilize weak regulations and the ‘free’ market to justify transnational exploitation. With the rise of neoliberal capitalism in the 1970s, neoliberal reforms promoted extraction throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and in turn
“countered efforts by Southern countries to obtain greater control over their own resources and the income derived from them” (Brisbois et al., 2021, p.51). The fallacy of economic growth and ‘progress’ permitted through a neoliberal development model is discussed throughout the literature surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean (Caxaj et al., 2013; Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2015; Li, 2008; Perrault, 2012) and is further substantiated through the gathered narratives of this dissertation. Women’s stories demonstrated an understanding of their deep connections to their ecologies as significantly superior to a neoliberal model of economic growth, stating sentiments such as “what is this development they speak of? Since this development came all the cattle have died. Since this development came we don’t have water. Is this development?” (Fernanda). On the contrary, women in the Dominican Republic have witnessed the possibilities of small-scale community led-development as an alternative to extraction through the example of the ‘Federacion de Campesinos Hacia el Progreso’ (Federation of Peasants Towards Progress).

The campesino community of Rio Blanco, home to the Federacion de Campesinos Hacia el Progreso (FCHP) is located in the mountains of the Bonao province in the Dominican Republic. FCHP is an exceptional example of ecological and community health and well-being in resistance to neoliberal development models, as demonstrated by their resistance to large scale extraction in the 1970s. During this time, a Canadian mining corporation began exploration for gold extraction, but understanding the ecological destruction this would bring to their communities, FCHP formed and successfully resisted the extractive project (Hoy, 2010). This resistance came with multiple challenges and sacrifices, including violent attacks on members of FCHP, but through multiple forms of protest and political advocacy, they defeated the corporation (Hoy, 2010). Instead, they cultivated a sustainable co-operative in the mountains which employs hundreds of campesino community members through projects such as coffee production, bamboo and livestock farming and ecotourism (Hoy, 2010). While neoliberal capitalist agendas of development persistently claim extraction as progress, FCHP demonstrates the potential of campesino led development, rooted in ecological and community health and well-being. As such, the leaders of FCHP have been significant supports for the communities neighboring the open-pit mine in the Dominican Republic in their own resistance.
5.2.7 Resistance and Repression

Narratives of gendered resistance and repression to open-pit mining operations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean are prevalent in existing literature, with key themes emerging of women-led activism, criminalization, militarization and political violence and political participation (Caxaj et al., 2013; Caxaj et al., 2014; Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2012; Catalan-Vasquez & Riojas-Rodriguez, 2015; Deonandan et al., 2017; Deonandan et al., 2019; Isla, 2002; Isla, 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Jenkins, 2017; Li, 2008; Rondon, 2008). Such themes were substantiated through the gathered narratives of this dissertation, with women emphasizing both the imperative role of women in the resistance against open-pit mining and the extreme violence, repression and militarization that they experience due to said resistance. A distinct finding of this research in comparison to existing literature of the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean surrounds the extensive discussion of relocation as a primary goal of their struggle. Mining-induced displacement and resettlement is a common practice in the mining industry, yet Allan (2011) explains that forced relocation “disrupts social relationships, community stability and cohesion” (p. 283). While it could be argued that this is not considered forced since communities are advocating for relocation, collected narratives distinctly demonstrate that the gravity of their situations, with no indication of remedy by the corporation, produce an involuntary decision. Quotations such as “it pains us, but we know that no matter how much we fight it isn’t going to make the situation get better. They can’t fix the environment now… they can’t fix the water now” (Fernanda) and “I don’t want to leave, I was born in this home, but here we are living in hell. We need to be relocated to a place where we can breathe fresh, pure air and live peacefully” (Elisa) illustrate that the inclination for some women to leave their ancestral lands, despite deep, generational ties, signifies the severity of the mining-induced impacts they experience. Oware Twerefoo (2021) emphasizes that “relocating and resettling communities makes people confront heightened risks of human rights violations, poverty and social instability” (p. 816), yet despite these risks, women in the mining impacted community explicate relocation as a last resort for the survival for themselves and their families. While it is conventional for multinational mining corporations to financially support the relocation of communities for the land they are
directly exploiting, it is less likely that communities neighboring the site of extraction are relocated, with participants believing this is due to corporate image, as Fernanda explained, “they don’t want to relocate us because then they would be admitting to all the harm they’ve done”. The narratives gathered throughout this dissertation demonstrate that while communities have deep connections to their ancestral lands, the severe impacts of open-pit mining projects on the health and well-being of women directly neighboring the site necessitates financial support for families seeking relocation. The shared discourse of relocation for women impacted by open-pit mining in the Dominican Republic adds a significant contribution to the existing literature surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean, emphasizing the gravity of their experiences and the responsibility of Canadian corporations to adhere to community needs and demands.

5.3 Methodological Insights and Limitations

For decades, researchers have questioned “how can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). This is of particular significance when conducting research through a critical paradigm, which serves to disrupt dominant systems of power and seeks transformation and emancipation rooted in social justice and equity (Ponterotto, 2005). As such, it is imperative that investigations rooted in critical paradigms, such as the decolonial ecofeminist framework upholding this dissertation, demonstrate quality of research which is worthy, rigorous, sincere and coherent (Tracy, 2010). I argue that a key strength of quality criteria for this dissertation is that of a worthy topic, which Tracy (2010) defines as “relevant, timely, significant, interesting or evocative” (p. 840) and notes that contemporary political issues can often instigate worthy research. Given the prevalence of Canadian mining corporations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the geopolitical foundations of transnational extraction, the necessity for investigation is clear. Further, Tracy (2010) notes that a worthy topic should “question taken-for-granted assumptions, or challenge well-accepted ideas” (p. 840). Interestingly, a 2022 poll revealed that 78% of Canadians had positive feelings about Canadian mining companies (Mining Association of Canada, 2023) and
therefore the goal of this research to present counternarratives and disrupt dominant discourse surrounding Canadian mining corporations demonstrates the worthiness of investigation.

To achieve quality of research, worthiness must be paired with a rich rigor (Tracy, 2010). Tracy provides guiding questions to measure rigorous qualitative research, including “are there enough data to support significant claims?” and “did the researcher spend enough time to gather interesting and significant data?” (p. 841). The number of participants (7) of this study could be argued as a limitation, contending that there was not enough data to support significant claims. However, I argue that the sample size was both demonstrative of the intimate community setting, and also illustrated coherence with decolonial methodologies through the centering of deep relationship. Decolonial methodologies require engagement of individuals both in and outside of the colonial difference through intersubjective relationships. These relationships are central to decolonial research as they “rest on the production of deep coalitions among those who are oppressed at various fractures loci within the colonial difference” (Mack & Na’puti, 2019, p. 353). Theorists note that such relationships build community, which is central to decoloniality. While I held pre-existing relationships with participants, built over 10 years of solidarity work, the small sample size allowed me to nurture these relationships throughout data collection in the Dominican Republic, ensuring that each relationship was given adequate time and space, promoting participant engagement in the process and building trust with the community. Additionally, the saturation in findings demonstrate that there was significant data gathered, revealing collective lived-experiences and congruity of the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic.

Tracy’s (2010) question of “did the researcher spend enough time to gather interesting and significant data?” (p. 841) reveals another potential limitation in the data collection process. I had initially planned to spend several months in the Dominican Republic completing data collection, ensuring that I had significant time to nurture relationality and immerse myself in the community, which is imperative to decolonial theories and praxis. However, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed international travel, impacting the time available for data collection within the funding period of my PhD program. Therefore, the
data collection was condensed into a two-week period, and while I was still able to deeply connect with women and understand their lived-experiences through the gathered narrative inquiries, the length of time spent in country was shorter than I had anticipated. Despite this, I believe that the research met this quality criteria due to the pre-existing relationality I held with women in the mining impacted community rooted in trust and solidarity. These established relationships fostered comfortability between myself and women in the community, permitting them to share their lived-experiences more rapidly than would typically occur in decolonial ecofeminist work without equivalent relationality. Therefore, I argue that despite the unforeseen and unavoidable time restraint, the data collection process still demonstrated the rich rigor which is required for quality in qualitative research.

While consistency with decolonial methodologies in regards to data collection substantiates the rich rigor of this dissertation, Tracy (2010) recognizes meaningful coherence as a distinct criteria which demonstrates quality in research. She identifies that coherent studies “use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms” (p. 848), in this instance, a critical narrative inquiry rooted in a decolonial ecofeminist theory. Ensuring methodological coherence specific to critical theories can be further supported through Lincoln and Guba’s (2003) paradigm specific model, which includes requirements of historical situatedness, erosion of ignorance and misapprehensions, stimulus to action and social transformation, equity and social justice (as cited in Ravenek & Laliberte Rudman, 2013). This dissertation has aimed to situate the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic within larger systems of power and oppression, understanding colonial histories throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and the practice of extraction as neocolonial violence rooted in a neoliberal capitalism. Further, the specific gendered analysis throughout this dissertation recognizes the inherent linkage between colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism and exploitation, illustrating the interconnectedness of decolonial and ecofeminist theoretical frameworks, which have been consistently discussed throughout the duration of this work.
Investigations rooted in critical theory require a commitment to emancipation and social transformation (Lincoln & Guba, 1994) and while a decolonial narrative inquiry can certainly reach this goal, it may be argued that a methodology of participatory action research (PAR) could have been considered for this research. By embodying tenets of equitable participation and social transformation, “PAR seeks to dismantle unequal power relations both within research and society to simultaneously enact an emancipatory agenda” (Benjamin-Thomas et al., 2018, p. 2). Further, PAR is informed by a variety of critical theories rooted in social justice, demonstrating a deep compatibility for a decolonial ecofeminist paradigmatic stance. While this research project enacted several key tenets of PAR, including situatedness and identification of the stated research problem, articulating paradigmatic location, theoretical framework and methods and methodology used, types of transformation addressed, and researcher reflexivity (Benjamin-Thomas et al., 2018), the principle of power sharing and participant involvement required in a PAR project was difficult to achieve through this dissertation. Benjamin-Thomas et al., (2018) note that to equitable participation in PAR must actively involve participants at each stage of the process (designing the study, carrying out the study, interpreting the data, disseminating the knowledge and action steps) allowing them to become co-researchers, rather than solely participants. Although community members were involved in some capacity at each stage, ensuring coherence with decolonial methodologies, the level of involvement for a PAR project was not possible due to the COVID-19 induced time-restraints placed on this dissertation, presenting a possible methodological limitation. Despite this, I argue that coherence with decolonial ecofeminism sufficiently supports this research project in its aim for social transformation.

The emancipatory objective of this dissertation is demonstrated through coherence with a critical narrative inquiry rooted in decolonial ecofeminism. Lincoln & Guba (2003) note that meaningful coherence in a critical paradigm requires research to invoke social transformation, equity and social justice and argue that critical theorists “have always advocated varying degrees of social action, from the overturning of specific unjust practices to radical transformation of entire societies” (p. 268). Similarly, Smith (2005) discusses decolonial methodologies as centring Indigenous voices and disrupting
systemic forces of power while promoting social and institutional change. As such, the findings of this dissertation, which centre women’s voices in revealing the gendered exploitative and oppressive impacts of open-pit mining in the Dominican Republic are coherent with a critical narrative inquiry rooted in a decolonial ecofeminism. However, it should be noted that a limitation exists within my own positionality as a settler on Turtle Island, utilizing a decolonial methodologies and theories through research within the Dominican Republic. Wallace (2013) argues, “one of the ways neo-imperialism and internal colonialism are actualized and expanded is through research and knowledge production that negates Indigenous peoples’ knowledges, experiences and self-governance” (p. 34). As such, it is imperative to recognize ways in which this research project, initiated by a non-Dominican settler had potential to reproduce neocolonial structures of power and privilege despite significant aims to mitigate this. Such reflexivity, as integrated throughout the entirety of this dissertation, demonstrates an attempt to reach sincerity (Tracy, 2010) in quality of research, coherent with decolonial critical theories.

5.4 Reflexive Insights and Sincerity

Tracy (2010) defines sincerity in research as “honesty and transparency about the researcher’s biases, goals and foibles as well as about how these played a role in the methods, joys, and mistakes of the research” (p. 841). She notes that the key aspects of sincerity are self-reflexivity and transparency. Further, Finlay (2002) discusses self-reflexivity in research as not only acknowledging research bias, but also “engaging in self-aware meta-analysis throughout the research process” (p. 536) and there has been a significant effort of sincerity throughout the entirety of this research. To maintain both sincerity and coherence with decolonial research, I centred my work on four core principles, adapted from Fortier’s (2017) work on ‘unsettling methodologies’. The first included drawing on multiple ontological realities and worldviews, emphasized through an acute attention to a decolonial ecofeminism and the centering of lived-experiences of women impacted by mining in the Dominican Republic. Secondly, I aimed to situate “contemporary political struggles within the structure of settler, white supremacy,
heteropatriarchy and capitalism” (Fortier, 2017, p. 21), as evident by the emphasis on systemic forces of power throughout this dissertation.

Third involved the creation and sustaining of reciprocal relationships with participants (Fortier, 2017), which I value as fundamental to my research. Abiding by a relational worldview draws from Indigenous ontologies as emphasized by Kovach (2009) and Walsh (2010), contending that relational ontologies can be used to fuel activism that intentionally disrupt the colonial difference through collective practice. Walsh (2010) sees relational ontologies as intercultural relationships at the core of decolonial practice which she refers to as an ‘other’ way of thinking to confront coloniality. The relationality demonstrated throughout this dissertation exceeds the research project itself, through long-standing relationships spanning over a decade. Throughout the duration of this dissertation, I reflected on the shift from engaging with communities through solidarity work, to that of scholarly research within the institution of academia. However, through reflections on scholarly activism and relationality, I have come to understand that academic research rooted in decoloniality not only can, but should be relational, and as such have continued to foster relationships with women which exceed a traditional ‘researcher/researched’ relationship, including sharing meals, supporting in childcare, and attending community and familial activities and celebrations. For me, these relationships are significantly more than solely a research project and I value the reciprocity in our relationships.

Finally, throughout the entirety of this research project, I have attempted to engage in a critical self-reflexivity, considering the ways in which my own positionalities are implicated in and influence the research process and relationality surrounding it (Fortier, 2017). However, Smith (2014) notes that reflexivity of non-Indigenous researchers engaging in critical and decolonial work must move beyond the “confessions of privilege” which “rarely [lead] to political projects to actually dismantle the structures of domination that enable this white/settler privilege. Rather, the confessions become the political project themselves” (p. 215). Therefore, while reflexivity and disclosures of my personal positionality and privilege are central to this research, consistency with decolonial methodologies and theories must exceed this, emphasizing ways in which this
privilege was utilized in an attempt to promote mining justice and gender equity. Carlson (2017) explains that through decolonial research, “the roles of white settler academics are at the periphery, making space, and pushing back against colonial institutions, structures, practices, mentalities and land theft” (p. 500) and I argue that, as a Canadian citizens with white-settler privilege, I have a responsibility to utilize this power in an attempt to hold Canadian corporations accountable for the injustices they are perpetuating in the Dominican Republic. This is further demonstrated through the dissemination of findings of this dissertation, intertwined with scholarly activism and aimed to promote social transformation and mining justice.

5.5 Dissemination and Mobilization of Findings

Lincoln & Guba (1994) note that the aim of a critical inquiry is “the critique and transformation of the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind” (p. 113), and the adequate dissemination of findings of a critical research project is required to reach this goal. While envisioning this dissertation, I recognized that to truly promote justice and emancipation, the results must do more than solely “sit on a shelf”, and as such I designed all phases of the research project through an understanding of scholarly activism. Scholarly activism is defined as “the unity of theory and practice that combines critical thinking with social and political activism designed to uncover and transform systems of domination” (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017, p. 507), which is consistent with a critical positioning that argues advocacy and activism as key tenets (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). While there is value in academic publishing in relation to social transformation such as policy development and transformation, a key component of this dissertation has focused on dissemination of findings in less traditional formats, recognizing the potential for emancipation. As such, I received consent from all participants to utilize their narratives through activist organizing, allowing their lived experiences to be heard and understood by a larger audience, including stakeholders with significant power over their situations. Through collaboration with international organizations including the Mining Injustice Solidarity Network, Mining Watch Canada, Ekō and Earth Works, narratives gathered through this dissertation were utilized at the mining corporations annual general meeting in 2023.
Highlights of the findings were disseminated through a flyer distributed to the public, corporate shareholders and company employees, as well as through testimonies shared inside the meeting. Further, I plan to publish the findings of this dissertation of the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic in an open-access journal to enhance accessibility for community members, policy makers and corporate shareholders. Potts and Brown (2015) note that engaging in critical methodologies involves a dedication to anti-oppressive work, which “means committing to social change and taking an active role in that change” (p. 255) and engaging in the dissemination of findings through multiple formats, designed in collaboration with community members, supports the goals of social justice and equity required within a decolonial ecofeminist narrative inquiry.

5.6 Conclusion

Through a discussion of the key insights and findings of the narrative inquiries, this chapter illuminated the unique contributions of this dissertation to the existing body of literature while situating the findings within critical, ecofeminist and decolonial perspectives. Further, methodological insights and limitations explicate several challenges of this study, while defending the rigor and coherence of the work through conceptualizations of quality criteria (Benjamin-Thomas et al., 2018; Tracy, 2010). Reflexive insights provided opportunity to contemplate the sincerity of the research process, through discussions rooted in relationality and tenets of critical self-reflexivity. Finally, an examination of the dissemination of research findings illustrates deeper coherence with a critical decolonial narrative inquiry, emphasizing scholarly activism, emancipation and social transformation. The following chapter will conclude this dissertation, summarizing the significant contributions to existing literature surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean, the meaningful implications for health promotion, decolonial ecofeminist theory and policy, and an examination of potentials and possibilities for future research.
Chapter 6

6. Conclusion

This concluding chapter of this doctoral dissertation titled “We are the Living Dead’: The Gendered Impacts of Open-Pit Mining in the Dominican Republic” provides an overview of the key insights of each chapter, highlighting the main discussions and findings of the work. Next, the implications of this research are discussed, including implications for health promotion, implications for decolonial ecofeminist theory and implications for policy. Finally, the future directions are discussed, revealing an emerging research agenda surrounding gender and resistance to extraction, community-led alternatives to neoliberal development and methodological recommendations highlighting the emancipatory possibilities of a photovoice project.

6.1 Chapter Insights

This doctoral dissertation was composed of six chapters, each building on the previous to provide a comprehensive analysis of contemporary knowledge surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean. Further, this dissertation sought to advance understandings of the intersections of gender and mining in the geographical area of the Dominican Republic. Through narrative inquiries and analytical debates framed by a decolonial ecofeminist paradigmatic stance, this research was situated within contemporary and historical systemic forces of power, illuminating the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic within social, cultural, political and economic contexts.

Chapter 1: Introduction served as a foundation to frame and situate this dissertation. First, the rationale and relevance of the thesis were presented, noting that despite the Canadian mining corporation being the most prominent in the world (Global Affairs Canada, 2019), scholarly literature surrounding the gendered impacts of mining throughout the Dominican Republic, specifically through a decolonial ecofeminist paradigmatic stance, is non-existent, explicating the significance of this dissertation. Next, the guiding research questions were presented, including 1) What are the gendered
impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic? 2) How do the gendered impacts of mining deter health and well-being? And 3) What are the systemic forces that shape the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic? Key terminology was presented, conceptualizing and explicating significant theories, terms and tenets of the research. Finally, I presented an in-depth discussion of researcher positionality, emphasizing the importance of critical reflexivity throughout the entirety of the research process, as coherent with critical, decolonial research.

Chapter 2: Mapping the Literature Regarding Gender and Mining in Latin America and the Caribbean consisted of a scoping review which synthesized the extent and nature of the peer-reviewed empirical literature regarding the health and well-being of women in mining impacted communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Through a thematic analysis of 16 studies, five key themes emerged, including environmental impacts; health and well-being; social impacts; womanhood; and resistance and activism. Such findings demonstrated the breadth and depth of existing literature, providing a deep understanding to situate this research. However, the scoping review also revealed gaps in the field of knowledge in relation to geographical location and theoretical stance, which I aimed to address throughout this dissertation. First, while several articles focused on mining throughout LAC mention gender throughout, the lack of research with a specific gendered focus was apparent. This demonstrated the need for further research centring a gendered analysis of health, well-being and extraction situated in a historical awareness of power and oppression, leading to the decolonial ecofeminist perspective enacted throughout this dissertation. Further, despite being home to one of the largest open-pit gold mines in the world, the geographical area of the Dominican Republic was absent from the literature. Therefore this chapter provided a clear rationale for the proposal of this dissertation, a decolonial ecofeminist investigation regarding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. Enacting theoretical understandings of decolonial ecofeminism through a specific gendered analysis in the under-researched area of the Dominican Republic situated this work within historical, sociocultural and geopolitical contexts, filling the significant gap illustrated throughout this chapter.
Chapter 3: Methods and Methodology provided an in-depth discussion of the methods, methodologies, paradigmatic understandings and reflexive insights of the research process. First, the theoretical foundations of the research are discussed, emphasizing the suitability of a decolonial ecofeminist theory to frame this dissertation. Next, the methods and methodology of the research were presented, explicating the decision to enact a critical narrative inquiry, as well as a description of the data collection phase including participants, study sites, translation and transcription, and data analysis. Finally, the iterative process of critical reflexivity and tensions throughout the research were discussed, including tensions of power and privilege, tensions of relationality and tensions of bilingual research. Chapter 3 is imperative as it offered an in-depth examination of the research process, positioned within theoretical understandings of power, which are foundational throughout the entirety of this dissertation.

Chapter 4: Findings presented an in-depth thematic analysis which revealed the seven main themes that arose from the critical narrative inquiry surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. These themes included ecological destruction; physical health and well-being; emotional health and well-being; sociocultural erosion; deception and corruption; systemic forces of power; and resistance and repression. The themes were illustrated through the inclusion of direct quotations gathered during the narrative inquiries and demonstrate the gravity of the gendered impacts of mining on the health and well-being of women. Further, the shared narratives were rooted in understandings and experiences of systemic forces, illuminating the connections between gender, extraction and power within a neoliberal capitalist patriarchy.

Chapter 5: Discussion consisted of a critical analysis of the findings which emerged through the narrative inquiries surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. An in-depth discussion of each theme revealed corroboration with existing literature, strengthening the validity of the current research. Further, the significant contributions of each theme were discussed, explicating how the insights from this dissertation have expanded the field of knowledge and filled gaps which were revealed throughout the scoping review. To contextualize the unique findings of this
dissertation, the discussion of each theme was enhanced through the incorporation of the larger body of knowledge, situating the research within theoretical understandings and significant information surrounding the gendered impacts of mining in Latin America and the Caribbean. The discussion then presented methodological insights and limitations, which employ quality criteria (Benjamin-Thomas et al., 2018; Tracy, 2010) to appraise the rigor and coherence of the study, through an analysis of strengths and limitations. To further demonstrate quality of research, reflexive insights and sincerity reveal the attention to critical reflexivity throughout the research process, particularly in relation to researcher positionality and community relationality. Finally, the dissemination of research findings were discussed, illuminating the commitment to scholarly activism and transformation through community collaboration. The entirety of the discussion was situated within a decolonial ecofeminism, illustrating the interconnections with theoretical understandings and contemporary systemic forces of power at each phase.

6.2 Implications

In situating the contributions of this dissertation, it is imperative to recognize the potential implications of this research for gender and mining justice within broader areas of pedagogies, policies, theories and practices. The significant findings of the critical narrative inquiry indicate required transformation in multiple facets to promote the health and well-being for women in mining impacts communities. These include educational implications for the discipline of health promotion, theoretical implications of decolonial ecofeminist research and political implications for Canadian foreign policy, further promoting international mining justice.

6.2.1 Implications for Health Promotion

This doctoral research has been completed within the Faculty of Health Sciences at Western University, specifically in field of Health Promotion. As such, it is significant to recognize the objectives of health promotion and implications of this research to pedagogies and epistemologies within the field. Health promotion is “the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health” (Western University, 2023, para. 1), and within this definition, I argue that these findings can act as
a catalyst for health promotion at national and international levels. Further, this dissertation emphasized the importance of siting conceptualizations of health promotion within historical, sociocultural and political forces of power. The World Health Organization (2023) explains that social determinants are more influential on overall health outcomes than health care or individual lifestyle choices, which is demonstrated through the findings of this dissertation, illuminating the lack of control and autonomy that women have on their own health and well-being due to the presence of extraction. As such, this dissertation reinforced the need for a deep understanding of historical situatedness and systemic forces of power within the health sciences. This can be supported through decolonial theories and methodologies, emphasizing the centering of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies for health research.

Further, this dissertation illustrated the importance of research surrounding the impacts of neoliberal capitalism on the health and well-being of diverse communities, specifically in regards to corporate ecological destruction. This is particularly important as Canadian mining corporations invest significant amounts of money to public education which often portrays the extractive industry as a promotor of health and well-being. For instance, the charitable organization ‘Mining Matters’ functions to bring “knowledge and awareness about Canada’s geology and mineral resources to students, educators and the general public” (Mining Matters, 2023, para. 2) and receives hundreds of thousands of dollars in private donations from the Prospectors and Development Association of Canada and individual mining corporations, including the corporation that is the focus of this dissertation. This demonstrates the influence that extractive industries have within the education sector, promoting a false understanding of the impacts of mining on the health and well-being of communities. The findings of this dissertation can be practically applied within health promotion education to counteract this dominant discourse, highlight the realities of the gendered implications of a neocolonial capitalist patriarchy which is perpetuated through the mining industry. As such, this research contributes important knowledge to inform progressive scholarship, fostering a critical education of Canadian mining corporations and the gendered impacts of mining on a global scale.
6.2.2 Implications for Decolonial Ecofeminist Theoretical Understandings

This dissertation employed the merging of theoretical understandings of ecofeminism (d’Eaubonne, 1989; Federrici, 2004; Lahar, 1991; Mies, 2014; Salleh, 1996; Shiva, 2005; Warren, 2010) and decolonial theory (Escobar, 2010; Lugones, 2010; Maldonado-Torres, 2010; Mignolo, 2017; Quijano, 2010; Santos, 2007; Smith, 1999; Walsh, 2010) to employ a decolonial ecofeminist theory to frame the research. Ecological destruction, perpetuated through Canadian mining corporations, is rooted in a colonial matrix of power, with ecofeminist theory illuminating the implications of a capitalist patriarchy on the exploitation and destruction of women and the environment (Federici, 2004; Gomez-Barris, 2017). Therefore, a decolonial ecofeminist theory links coloniality, gender and ecology and exposes the exploitation of nature and women as nature as neocolonial, capitalist violence (Federici, 2004; Lugones, 2010; Mignolo, 2010). A decolonial ecofeminism has only recently emerged in theoretical discourse (Dias, 2018; Serafini, 2021) and this dissertation contributes important theoretical understandings and implications for transformative scholarship. First, this dissertation signifies the value of a decolonial ecofeminist theory to conceptualize and situate research regarding gender, ecology and colonial violence. Through the centering of women’s narratives, the decolonial ecofeminist theory utilized within this dissertation illuminates the interconnections between systemic forces of power such as capitalism, neocolonialism and patriarchy, and ecological exploitation. The implications of this theoretical contribution inform a growing conceptualization of a decolonial ecofeminism as a rich paradigmatic framework for critical scholarship.

Second, this dissertation illustrated the possibilities of social transformation within a decolonial ecofeminism. In conceptualizing ecofeminism, theorist Mies (2014) explains “we did not learn our lessons by sitting in a library and reading books about ecology and feminism, but by participating in the struggles against global capitalist patriarchy and its neoliberal strategy to get control over nature and people for the sake of profit” (p. 1). Similarly, Mignolo (2010) maintains that the decolonial option exists within academia, but is also manifested through political theory and most importantly, social practice. He
explains that beyond the academy decolonial options are being undertaken by Indigenous groups and activists through “not just being anti-imperial, but of undoing the logic of coloniality and imagining de-colonial societies” (p. 18). As such, through the community collaborated dissemination of research findings rooted in scholarly activism, this research validates a decolonial ecofeminism as not solely a theoretical understanding, but as a tool for social transformation, promoting the application of a decolonial ecofeminist theory within critical studies.

6.2.3 Implications for Policy

For decades, Canadian foreign policy has provided significant support for the extractive industries (Gordon & Webber, 2018). Through neoliberal policies such as free-trade agreements and structural adjustment programs, the autonomy and self-determination of communities is minimized and mining corporations have immense international control. Attempts to regulate the mining industry and promote legislation for human rights and ecological protection have fallen short, as can be see with the examples of the failure of Bill C-300 and the ineffective implementation of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (Coumans, 2019; Engler, 2012). The findings of this dissertation are significant as they situate the mining industry within the larger geopolitical sphere and disrupt the political narrative which maintains the extractive industry as corporations which “promote Canadian values and operate abroad with the highest ethical standards” (Global Affairs Canada, 2021, para. 2). As such, this research emphasizes the need for a substantial political shift, promoting stronger regulations and requirements for the protection of ecological justice and human rights. The Canadian government maintains that they are committed to both gender equity and the reduction of health inequities on both national and global scales (Government of Canada, 2023). If this is to be true, the evidence of gendered health inequities produced by Canadian mining corporations presented through this dissertation demands corporate accountability and compensation for mining impacted communities. The findings of this work are a powerful contribution to the growing body of literature surrounding the gendered impacts of mining which can be utilized to promote political change.
6.3 Future Directions

While this dissertation fills significant gaps in the literature regarding the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic through a decolonial ecofeminist theoretical framework, it also highlights several key areas of research which require further investigation. Building on this critical dissertation, I suggest additional areas for inquiry, particularly surrounding gender and resistance to extraction and community-led alternatives to neoliberal development models. Further, within critical scholarship regarding gender and mining, I see significant potential for further participatory methodologies through the application of photovoice.

6.3.1 Gender and Resistance to Extraction in the Dominican Republic

As illustrated through the findings of this dissertation, women are often on the front lines of organizing, mobilizing and resisting transnational mining corporations to defend their rights to autonomy, land determination and community health and well-being. While gender and extractive resistance within Latin America and the Caribbean has been thoroughly investigated (Deonandan & Bell, 2019; Deonandan et al., 2017; Isla, 2002; Isla, 2017, Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins, 2017; Macleod, 2016; Rondon, 2008), there has not been a particular focus on the Dominican Republic, which is a favored geography for the extractive industries. Despite note being an area of focus in the guiding research questions, testimonies of women-led resistance and activism consistently emerged throughout this critical narrative inquiry, demonstrating a need for further examination due to collective community significance. Further, while not investigated within this research due to scope of the project, there is a contemporary resistance movement to a proposed nickel mine in the area of the Loma Miranda mountain range in the Dominican Republic. Loma Miranda is a biodiverse ecological reserve which is home to significant water sources that “are essential to rural and urban settlements… for human consumption and production activities in one of the most important agricultural regions of the country” (Gómez-Valenzuela et al., 2020, p. 1). As such, there has been strong resistance to the project, which has been notably organized and led by women. An investigation of this resistance through community-led approaches would contribute contemporary knowledge surrounding gender and resistance.
to extraction, strengthening understandings of international women-led opposition to corporate neocolonialism.

6.3.2 Community-Led Alternatives to Neoliberal Development Models

Investigations of gender and resistance to neocolonial extraction revealed an additional area of inquiry focusing on community-led alternatives to neoliberal development models. Decolonial and ecofeminist theory values Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, recognizing the complex community structures which have contributed to ecological and human flourishing, independent from a neoliberal capitalism. Such knowledges contend that “a society based on cooperation and balance rather than dominance and hierarchy is necessary for continued survival on this planet” (Bennet, 2005, p. 64). However, the imposition of a capitalist economy, rooted in colonial patriarchy, has destroyed subsistence economies, leading to ecological and community destruction (Federici, 2004). As such, investigations of successful alternatives to neoliberal models of development are significant in demonstrating the possibilities of community-led development rooted in subsistence. As briefly discussed in Chapter 5, an exceptional example of such development exists within the Dominican Republic with the case of the Federacion de Campesinos Hacia el Progreso (FCHP). Despite an incredible story of mobilization against corporate globalization, the case of FCHP has not been explored in the scholarly literature. Inquiry into FCHP would contribute significant testimonies of alternatives to neoliberal development models, strengthening the scholarship and disrupting dominant narratives of capitalist development.

6.3.3. Methodological Recommendations: Participatory Photo Voice

The emerging research agenda surrounding extraction in the Dominican Republic is informed by theoretical understandings of systemic forces which create and perpetuate the exploitation of women and ecology for capitalist profit. These understandings are rooted in critical theories which centre community voices and power sharing within the research process. As such, it is recommended that future research is completed through methodologies which are coherent with decolonial theories, particularly the participatory
method of photovoice. Fred Bernard famously quoted, ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’, a notion which is accurately portrayed through photovoice. Photovoice strives to illuminate and challenge ways in which “the dominant forms of power act in tandem to silence and oppress marginalized voices” (Trepal, Cannon, Wachter & Wester, 2018, p. 157). While photovoice was first conceptualized in public health literature, it has been utilized to examine a wide variety of social issues surrounding gender (Bell, 2005; Desyllass, 2014; Sewell & Harris, 2015; Streng, 2004), demonstrating the pertinence of employing this methodology to further investigate gender and extraction. Cancian (1993) argues that participatory research such as photovoice creates social change on three levels. First, it fosters confidence, knowledge production and critical consciousness for individuals. Second, it strengthens activist organizations and community cohesiveness and third, it challenges and transforms power structures. As such, a photovoice participatory project to further the field of research surrounding gender and mining in the Dominican Republic presents exciting possibilities for transformative critical scholarship.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

This critical dissertation titled: “We are the Living Dead: The Gendered Impacts of Open-Pit Mining in the Dominican Republic” sought to bridge the gap in existing literature of the gendered experiences of mining in the geographical context of the Dominican Republic. Through the completion of a critical narrative inquiry with 7 women, rooted in decolonial ecofeminist theory, this dissertation aimed to answer the questions 1) What are the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for communities in the Dominican Republic? 2) How do the gendered impacts of mining deter health and well-being? And 3) What are the systemic forces that shape the gendered impacts of open-pit mining for women in the Dominican Republic? Through these inquiries, seven key themes emerged including ecological destruction; physical health and well-being; emotional health and well-being; sociocultural erosion; deception and corruption; systemic forces of power; and resistance and repression. Through situating women’s narratives within larger social, cultural, political and economic structures, this dissertation illustrated the severity of gendered experiences caused and perpetuated by open-pit mining projects. While emancipation for impacted communities is contextually complex and will not be achieved through a
doctoral dissertation alone, a key aim of critical research involves social transformation which “occurs when ignorance and misapprehensions give way to more informed insights by means of a dialectical interaction” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 113). It is my hope that the findings of this critical dissertation serve to disrupt dominant narratives of transnational extraction which permeate social, political and economic structures, promoting health and well-being for mining impacts communities.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Approval

Date: 20 September 2022  
To: Dr. Angela Mandich  
Project ID: 121161  
Study Title: The Gendered Impacts of Mining in the Dominican Republic  
Short Title: The Gendered Impacts of Mining in the Dominican Republic  
Application Type: NMREB Initial Application  
Review Type: Delegated  
Full Board Reporting Date: 07/Oct/2022  
Date Approval Issued: 20/Sep/2022 10:44  
REB Approval Expiry Date: 20/Sep/2023

Dear Dr. Angela Mandich

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals and mandated training must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

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<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Document Date</th>
<th>Document Version</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics Proposal</td>
<td>Protocol</td>
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<td>Ethics-Debriefing Letter</td>
<td>Debriefing document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clean-Ethics-Interview Guide</td>
<td>Interview Guide</td>
<td>26/Aug/2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics-Follow Up Interview Guide</td>
<td>Interview Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLEAN-Ethics-Telephone Script</td>
<td>Recruitment Materials</td>
<td>26/Aug/2022</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLEAN-Ethics-Informed Consent</td>
<td>Written Consent/Assent</td>
<td>15/Sep/2022</td>
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No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ms. Zoë Levi, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).
Appendix B: Letter of Information and Informed Consent

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Western University
1151 Richmond St.
London, ON
N6A 3K7

Title of Research Project: The Gendered Impacts of Mining in the Dominican Republic

Name of Principal Investigator: Dr. Angela Mandich
Name of Secondary Investigator: Klaire Gain

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Klaire Gain is conducting research on the gendered impacts of mining in the Dominican Republic. This is a student project required for a Doctorate of Philosophy in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. Participants are being recruited from the area of Cotui, Dominican Republic. The purpose of your participation in this research is to help the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the gendered impacts of mining from your own experience.

B. INCLUSION CRITERIA

You are eligible to participate in this study if you meet the following inclusion criteria: self-identified woman, between the ages of 18-80, living in the province of Cotui, Dominican Republic, in proximity to the open-pit mining sites.

C. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:
You will participate in one or two semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour. The first interview will be conducted in person, in a location of your choice and will be recorded with a handheld audio recording device. The interviewer will begin the interview by asking a guiding question regarding your experience as a woman living next to an open-pit mining site. The interview data will be shared with you to review, and if felt necessary by the researcher and yourself, there is an opportunity for a virtual follow up interview to further expand upon your experiences or clarify any misconceptions in the first. This secondary interview will be optional and decided upon only with your consent. The second interview will either be conducted in person, or on Zoom depending on whether the interviewer is still in the Dominican Republic at the time of the follow up interview. It is mandatory that all interviews will be recorded with an audio recorder (in person) or via zoom with both audio and video recording and transcripts will be transcribed by the researcher through the use of Nvivo software for qualitative research. A pseudonym will be given to you to protect your identity in future publications of this research. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher will begin the data analysis process, an aspect of which, is member-checking. If you consent, the research will connect with you via telephone to review the data analysis of your narrative and ensure that all information is accurate and correct.

D. RISKS

There are three potential risk of participating in this study.

1. There is a possibility that some participants may experience anxiety and/or distress during the interview while discussing health impacts. Participants will be informed that they can end the interview at any time.

2. Personal identifiers are being collected for this study and held for the duration of the study on your informed consent form. Personal identifiers such as your name, phone number, email address, and age. Also given that we are communicating through telephone a breech of privacy is possible. Steps are being taken to ensure this does not happen and all information will be stored on an encrypted computer.
to enhance security of your personal identifiers. Also please note that all participants will be given a pseudonym for any future publications of this study.

3. If a follow up interview is conducted via zoom, there are some potential risks that exist surrounding privacy and security. While the research team will take all steps to mitigate these risks, it is possible that information could be intercepted by unauthorized people or otherwise shared by accident. This risk cannot be completely eliminated and therefore we want to make you aware of this.

E. CONFIDENTIALITY

The records from this study will be kept confidential. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All transcripts will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Research information will be kept in a locked and encrypted computer at all times. Only research personnel will have access to the files and transcripts and only those with an essential need to see names or other identifying information will have access to that particular file. The transcripts, master list, which will contain the full names and contact information of participants (phone numbers and/or emails), and study data must be retained for 7 years as per Western's data retention policy. It will be destroyed after this time period. Despite all these security measures being taken please note breach may be possible. Delegated institutional representatives of Western University and its NonMedical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research in accordance with regulatory requirements.

It should also be noted that Zoom is a third party platform. The privacy policy for Zoom can be found at this link: https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/. The data for the third party will be stored in Canada in password protected and encrypted storage and will be destroyed after 7 years as per Western’s data retention policy.

F. BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION
It is the aim that this research will contribute important knowledge to the under researched areas of mining, health and gender by generating a new understanding of the intersections between social determinants of health and mining. It is the goal that this research can be used as an advocacy tool for communities impacted by mining through accessible distribution of findings, allowing for increased support for women’s health and well-being. By participating in this research, you will be compensated at a rate of $25CDN per hour of interview. This will be paid in Dominican Pesos, in cash, at $1100DOP per hour.

G. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your decision whether or not to participate in this study is voluntary and will not affect your relationship with Western University or the research team. There will be between 6-10 participants in this study. If you choose to participate in this study, you can withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. Please note that you can request withdrawal of your study data at any time before data analysis. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. While you are able to withdraw your data from the study at any time, there is one limitation that pertains, which is if the data has already been published, in which case, it is public information and can no longer be withdrawn.

You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study.

H. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Klaire Gain. However please note that phone calls and messaging is not a secure form of communication.

You can also contact the Western University Research Ethics Board with any questions about the rights of research participants or research related concerns.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.
Appendix C: Letter of Information and Informed Consent Spanish Version

Consentimiento Informado para Participar en un Estudio de Investigación

Western University

1151 Richmond St.

London, ON

N6A 3K7

Título del Proyecto de Investigación: Los impactos de género de la minería en la República Dominicana

Nombre del Investigador Principal: Dra. Angela Mandich

Correo electrónico:

Nombre del investigador secundario: Klaire Gain

Correo electrónico:

A. OBJETIVO Y ANTECEDENTES


B. CRITERIOS DE INCLUSIÓN

Usted es elegible para participar en este estudio si cumple con los siguientes criterios de inclusión: mujer autoidentificada, entre las edades de 18 a 80 años, que vive en la
provincia de Cotuí, República Dominicana, en las proximidades de los sitios mineros a cielo abierto.

C. PROCEDIMIENTOS

Si acepta participar en este estudio de investigación, ocurrirá lo siguiente:

Participarás en una o dos entrevistas semiestructuradas con una duración aproximada de una hora. La primera entrevista se realizará en persona, en un lugar de su elección y se grabará con un dispositivo portátil de grabación de audio. El entrevistador comenzará la entrevista con una pregunta guía sobre su experiencia como mujer que vive al lado de un sitio minero a cielo abierto. Los datos de la entrevista se compartirán con usted para que los revise, y si el investigador y usted lo consideran necesario, existe la oportunidad de una entrevista de seguimiento virtual para ampliar aún más sus experiencias o aclarar cualquier concepto erróneo en la primera. Esta entrevista secundaria será opcional y se decidirá solo con su consentimiento. La segunda entrevista se realizará en persona o en Zoom, dependiendo de si el entrevistador todavía se encuentra en la República Dominicana en el momento de la entrevista de seguimiento. Es obligatorio que todas las entrevistas se graven con una grabadora de audio (en persona) o mediante zoom con grabación de audio y video y las transcripciones serán transcritas por el investigador mediante el uso del software Nvivo para investigación cualitativa. Se le otorgará un seudónimo para proteger su identidad en futuras publicaciones de esta investigación. Al finalizar las entrevistas, el investigador comenzará el proceso de análisis de datos, un aspecto del cual es la verificación de miembros. Si da su consentimiento, la investigación se comunicará con usted por teléfono para revisar el análisis de datos de su narración y garantizar que toda la información sea precisa y correcta.

D. RIESGOS

Hay tres riesgos potenciales de participar en este estudio.

1. Existe la posibilidad de que algunos participantes experimenten ansiedad y/o angustia durante la entrevista mientras se discuten los impactos en la salud. Se informará a los participantes que pueden finalizar la entrevista en cualquier momento.
2. Los identificadores personales se recopilan para este estudio y se conservan durante la duración del estudio en su formulario de consentimiento informado. Identificadores personales como su nombre, número de teléfono, dirección de correo electrónico y edad. Además, dado que nos comunicamos por teléfono, es posible que se produzca una violación de la privacidad. Se están tomando medidas para garantizar que esto no suceda y toda la información se almacenará en una computadora encriptada para mejorar la seguridad de sus identificadores personales. También tenga en cuenta que todos los participantes recibirán un seudónimo para futuras publicaciones de este estudio.

3. Si se realiza una entrevista de seguimiento a través de Zoom, existen algunos riesgos potenciales relacionados con la privacidad y la seguridad. Si bien el equipo de investigación tomará todas las medidas para mitigar estos riesgos, es posible que la información sea interceptada por personas no autorizadas o compartida por accidente. Este riesgo no se puede eliminar por completo y, por lo tanto, queremos informarle.

E. CONFIDENCIALIDAD

Los registros de este estudio se mantendrán confidenciales. No se utilizarán identidades individuales en ningún informe o publicación que resulte del estudio. Todas las transcripciones recibirán códigos y se almacenarán por separado de cualquier nombre u otra identificación directa de los participantes. La información de la investigación se mantendrá en una computadora bloqueada y encriptada en todo momento. Solo el personal de investigación tendrá acceso a los archivos y transcripciones y solo aquellos que tengan una necesidad esencial de ver nombres u otra información de identificación tendrán acceso a ese archivo en particular. Las transcripciones, la lista maestra, que contendrá los nombres completos y la información de contacto de los participantes (números de teléfono y/o correos electrónicos), y los datos del estudio deben conservarse durante 7 años según la política de conservación de datos de Western. Será destruido después de este periodo de tiempo. A pesar de que se toman todas estas medidas de seguridad, tenga en cuenta que es posible que se produzca una infracción. Los representantes institucionales delegados de Western University y su Junta de ética de investigación no médica pueden requerir acceso a sus registros relacionados con el
estudio para monitorear la realización de la investigación de acuerdo con los requisitos reglamentarios.

También se debe tener en cuenta que Zoom es una plataforma de terceros. La política de privacidad de Zoom se puede encontrar en este enlace: https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/. Los datos del tercero se almacenarán en Canadá en un almacenamiento encriptado y protegido con contraseña y se destruirán después de 7 años según la política de retención de datos de Western.

F. BENEFICIOS DE LA PARTICIPACIÓN

El objetivo es que esta investigación aporte conocimiento importante a las áreas poco investigadas de minería, salud y género al generar una nueva comprensión de las intersecciones entre los determinantes sociales de la salud y la minería. El objetivo es que esta investigación se pueda utilizar como una herramienta de promoción para las comunidades afectadas por la minería a través de la distribución accesible de los hallazgos, lo que permite un mayor apoyo para la salud y el bienestar de las mujeres. Al participar en esta investigación, recibirá una compensación de $25 dólares canadienses por hora de entrevista. Esto se pagará en pesos dominicanos, en efectivo, a $1100DOP por hora.

G. PARTICIPACIÓN VOLUNTARIA

Su decisión de participar o no en este estudio es voluntaria y no afectará su relación con Western University o el equipo de investigación. Habrá entre 6 y 10 participantes en este estudio. Si elige participar en este estudio, puede retirar su consentimiento y suspender la participación en cualquier momento sin perjuicio. Tenga en cuenta que puede solicitar la retirada de los datos de su estudio en cualquier momento antes del análisis de datos. Tu participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Incluso si acepta participar, tiene derecho a no responder preguntas individuales o a retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento. Si bien puede retirar sus datos del estudio en cualquier momento, existe una limitación pertinente, que es si los datos ya se han publicado, en cuyo caso, es información pública y ya no se puede retirar.
Usted no renuncia a ningún derecho legal al dar su consentimiento para este estudio.

H. PREGUNTAS

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio, comuníquese con Klaire Gain. Sin embargo, tenga en cuenta que las llamadas telefónicas y los mensajes no son una forma segura de comunicación.

También puede comunicarse con la Junta de Ética de Investigación de Western University si tiene alguna pregunta sobre los derechos de los participantes de la investigación o inquietudes relacionadas con la investigación.

Esta carta es suya para que la conserve para referencia futura.

CONSENTIR

USTED ESTÁ TOMANDO UNA DECISIÓN DE PARTICIPAR O NO EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN. SU FIRMA A CONTINUACIÓN INDICA QUE USTED HA DECIDIDO PARTICIPAR EN EL ESTUDIO DESPUÉS DE LEER TODA LA INFORMACIÓN ANTERIOR Y COMPRENDE LA INFORMACIÓN EN ESTE FORMULARIO, HA TENIDO RESPUESTAS A CUALQUIER PREGUNTA Y HA RECIBIDO UNA COPIA DE ESTE FORMULARIO PARA QUE LA CONserve. POR FAVOR FIRME Y DEVUELVA AL INVESTIGADOR.

Participante de la investigación

Firma __________________________________________ Fecha __________________________

Mi firma significa que he explicado el estudio al participante mencionado anteriormente. he respondido todas las preguntas.

Investigador de Investigación
¿Se ayudó al participante durante el proceso de consentimiento?

La persona que firma a continuación actuó como lector del participante durante el proceso de consentimiento y da fe de que el estudio, tal como se establece en este formulario, se leyó con precisión y se respondieron todas las preguntas.

Firma ___________________________ Fecha ________________

Firma ___________________________ Fecha ________________
Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

Project Title: The Gendered Impacts of Mining in Latin America and the Caribbean

Principal Investigator: Klaire Gain

I understand confidential information will be made known to me as (please check all that apply):

[ ] an interpreter

[ ] a transcriber

[ ] other (please specify) ___________________________________________

for a study being conducted by doctoral student Klaire Gain, and Dr. Angela Mandich of Western University. I agree to keep all information collected during this study confidential, and will not reveal by speaking, communicating or transmitting this information in written, electronic (disks, tapes, transcripts, email) or any other manner to anyone outside the research team.

Name of Assistant: _______________________ (please print)

Signature of Assistant: ______________________

Date: ______________________

Name of Principal Investigator: _______________________ (please print)

Signature of Principal Investigator: ______________________
Curriculum Vitae

Klaire Gain, M.A, PhD Candidate

Skills Summary
♦ Superior academic achievements providing a solid foundation for understanding and teaching in areas of health, gender, ecology, anti-oppression, equity and social justice with a desire for continued learning.
♦ Exceptional research and presentation skills permitting positive publication and conference outcomes.
♦ Outstanding teaching abilities fostering critical discussion and meaningful knowledge creation for students.
♦ Strong community relationships and innate capacity to connect and build relationships with individuals who have diverse lived experiences by demonstrating respect and empathy while maintaining professional boundaries.
♦ Superior conflict resolution skills acquired through formal training and work experience, with the ability to ensure physical and psychological safe spaces in a research setting.
♦ Proficiency in the Spanish language obtained through structured university courses and world experience.

Education

PhD Candidate: Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Western University 2019-Present
♦ Field of Health Promotion: Research focusing on the social determinants of health and the gendered impacts of Canadian Mining in Latin America and the Caribbean.
♦ Cumulative average of 90.5%

MA in Social Justice and Equity Studies, Brock University 2018
♦ Cumulative average of 86%
♦ Extensive research entitled “An Ecofeminist Analysis of Canadian Mining”

Graduated with an Honours Specialization in Social Justice and Peace Studies 2014
King’s University College, Western University, London, ON

Publications and Awards
♦ Excellence in Teaching Award: Nominee, King’s University College 2022
♦ Ontario Graduate Scholarship Recipient. Western University, London, ON.

Teaching Experience
Sessional Instructor, King’s University College 2019-Present
♦ Instructor for Religious Studies 383: Justice, Development and Peace; Social Justice

♦ Planning and facilitating lectures and seminars surrounding issues of social justice, gender and politics.
♦ Assessing and marking course work and holding one on one meetings with students to discuss academic growth.
♦ Utilizing multidisciplinary and intersectional teaching approaches to ensure positive learning experiences.

**Teaching Assistant**, King’s University College (UWO), Brock University and Western University 2013-Present

♦ Responsible for preparing and teaching multiple tutorials and lectures regarding issues of social justice, environmentalism, privilege and intersectionality at undergrad, masters and PhD levels.
♦ Creating community oriented students by encouraging engagement in local initiatives regarding justice and peace through activist networks.

**Public and Conference Presentations**

“**Climate in Crisis: The End of International Experiential Learning?”** 2022

♦ Toronto International Festival of Authors Interdisciplinary Academic Conference, Humber College, Toronto, ON

“**Canadian Mining in the Dominican Republic**”

♦ Brock University, St. Catharines, ON 2017, 2018, 2021
♦ School of America’s Peace Conference, Columbus, Georgia 2015

“**Ecofeminism and Mining**”

♦ Women’s Rural Resource Centre, Strathroy, ON 2018, 2019
♦ ‘Mapping New Knowledges’ Brock University, St. Catharines, ON 2017

“**Indigenous Land Rights and Canadian Mining**”

♦ Six Nations Right to Hunt, St. Catharines, ON 2018

**Relevant Experience**

“**Mining Morality Canada”**, Co-Founder 2014-2019

♦ Co-Founded the Not-For-Profit organization ‘Mining Morality Canada’ which focused on investigating the actions of mining corporations in international communities.
♦ Fostered the development of strong relationships with established organizations such as Mining Watch Canada, Rights Action and The Council of Canadians to unite our global struggle for mining justice.
♦ Strengthened local mobilization by co-coordinating and financially assisting the connection of local groups from rural areas of the Dominican Republic.
♦ Sharing the narratives of impacted community members to CEO’s, Board of Directors and Shareholders at Mining Corporations ‘Annual General Meetings’.

**Dominican Republic Solidarity Delegation**, Facilitator, 2015-Present
King’s University College and St. Michaels Catholic Secondary School, London & Stratford, ON

♦ Improving awareness of global issues through organizing, planning and facilitating a week long delegation to the Dominican Republic for social justice and peace studies at King’s University College, UWO and high school students at St. Michaels Catholic Secondary School.
♦ Facilitating visits to small communities resisting the impacts of large scale mining and transnational capitalism, arranged presentations by several organizations and coordinated solidarity work with social justice activist groups.
♦ Ensuring a positive and safe learning experience for students through supervision and guidance.

**Women's Rural Resource Centre**, Community Advocate, Strathroy, ON 2017-2019

♦ Using an anti-oppressive, intersectional feminist framework to provide extensive support for women impacted by violence in one on one and group settings.
♦ Assistance in navigating systems, safety planning, court support, advocacy and journeys to healing.
♦ Advocating for women and families with other agencies and government bodies to eliminate systemic barriers.
♦ Recognizing intersections of oppressions within violence against women and trauma and supporting women with further lived-experiences including addictions, mental health and homelessness.

**Extracurricular Involvement**

**Mining Injustice Solidarity Network**, Member, Toronto, ON 2021-Present

♦ Promoting international mining justice through solidarity with mining impacted communities
♦ Organizing and facilitating workshops, rallies and events to educate and inform the community of mining injustice
♦ Advocating for self-determination and autonomy for mining impacted communities, particularly self-governance and sovereignty for Indigenous communities impacted by mining.

**Centre of Social Concern**, Board Member, King’s University College 2020-Present

♦ Collaborating with fellow faculty, community members and organizations to advocate for issues of social concern
♦ Organizing and planning large scale events promoting social justice and equity, most recently: ‘Come in from the Cold: Community Voices in the Time of Covid’

**Social Justice Camp Facilitator**, Camp Micah: Bancroft, ON 2016-Present
♦ Volunteer facilitator organizing, planning and running a weeklong social justice camp for youth.
♦ Providing support for recent refugee youth with varied lived experiences, ensuring a safe and positive environment while fostering relationship building and personal growth.
♦ Assisting the newcomers in facilitating several discussions regarding issues faced by high school aged refugees.

**Indigenous Solidarity Coalition**, Brock University, St Catharines, ON 2016-2018

♦ Creating solidarity between Indigenous peoples and settler-allies within the St. Catharines region by organizing events that raise awareness and foster activism surrounding Indigenous issues.
♦ Working to eradicate systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples through rallies, legislation and engagement with political assemblies.

**Brock 4 Refugees**, Brock University, St Catharines, ON 2016-2018

♦ Facilitating a speaker series and workshops regarding issues of refugees, migrants and displaced people including a collaboration with the Muslim Student Association to organize a panel event surrounding the topic of ‘Islamophobia’.
♦ Working in collaboration with the ‘Crossing Borders’ program to create a space for dialogue surrounding the experiences of high school aged refugees in Ontario.

**ESL Tutor and Assistant**, Cross Cultural Learners Centre London, ON 2012-2016

♦ Worked with female immigrants and refugees to improve communication skills, overcome language barriers and gain an understanding of North American culture as an English as a Second Language (ESL) tutor.
♦ Provided support to women experiencing trauma through active listening, respect and validation of feelings.
♦ Assisted newcomers in securing housing and meaningful employment, fostering independence, security and growth.