

# Gendering Environmental Assessment: Women's Participation and Employment Outcomes at Voisey's Bay

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper examines the effect of Inuit and Innu women's participation in environmental assessment (EA) processes on EA recommendations, impact benefit agreement (IBA) negotiations, and women's employment experiences at Voisey's Bay Mine, Labrador. The literature on Indigenous participation in EAs has been critiqued for being overly process oriented and for neglecting to examine how power influences EA decision making. In this regard, two issues have emerged as critical to participation in EAs: how EA processes are influenced by other institutions that may help or hinder participation and whether EAs enable marginalized groups within Indigenous communities to influence development outcomes. To address these issues we examine the case of the Voisey's Bay Nickel Mine in Labrador, in which Indigenous women's groups made several collective submissions pertaining to employment throughout the EA process. We compare the submissions that Inuit and Innu women's groups made to the EA panel in the late 1990s to the final EA recommendations and then compare these recommendations to employment-related provisions in the IBA. Finally we compare IBA provisions to workers' perceptions of gender relations at the mine in 2010. Semi-structured interviews revealed that, notwithstanding the recommendations by women's groups concerning employment throughout the EA process, women working at the site experienced gendered employment barriers similar to those experienced by women in mining elsewhere. We suggest that the ineffective translation of EA submissions into EA regulations and the IBA, coupled with persistent masculinity within the mining industry, weakened the effect of women's requests for a comprehensive program to hire and train Indigenous women.

**Key words:** EA; IBA; impact benefit agreement; resource development; women; Aboriginal; environmental assessment; employment

**RÉSUMÉ.** Dans cet article, nous nous penchons sur la participation des femmes inuites et innues aux processus d'évaluations environnementales (EE) et sur l'effet de cette participation sur les recommandations des EE, les négociations relatives à l'entente sur les répercussions et les avantages (ERA) et les expériences de travail à la mine de la baie Voisey, au Labrador. La documentation portant sur la participation indigène aux EE fait l'objet de critiques, en ce sens qu'elle accorderait trop d'importance aux processus et pas suffisamment à l'examen de la manière dont le pouvoir influence les décisions prises dans le cadre des EE. Dans cette optique, deux questions critiques se posent par rapport à la participation aux EE : la manière dont les processus des EE sont influencés par d'autres institutions susceptibles de favoriser la participation ou de lui nuire, et à savoir si les EE permettent aux groupes marginalisés à l'intérieur des communautés indigènes d'influencer les résultats des projets d'exploitation. Pour approfondir ces questions, nous avons examiné le cas de la mine d'exploitation du nickel de la baie Voisey au Labrador, pour lequel des groupes de femmes indigènes ont présenté plusieurs mémoires collectifs se rapportant à l'emploi pendant l'EE. Nous comparons les mémoires présentés par les groupes de femmes inuites et innues à la commission de l'évaluation environnementale vers la fin des années 1990 aux recommandations finales de l'EE, puis nous comparons ces recommandations aux dispositions relatives à l'emploi de l'ERA. Et enfin, nous comparons les dispositions de l'ERA aux perceptions des travailleurs en ce qui a trait aux relations entre les deux sexes à la mine en 2010. Des entrevues semi-structurées ont révélé que, nonobstant les recommandations des groupes de femmes en matière d'emploi dans le cadre du processus de l'EE, les femmes qui travaillent à la mine ont connu des obstacles en raison de leur sexe, à l'instar des obstacles que doivent surmonter les autres femmes du domaine de l'exploitation minière. Nous suggérons que la traduction inefficace des mémoires de l'EE en règlements de l'EE et de l'ERA, jumelée à la masculinité qui prévaut au sein de l'industrie minière, ont eu pour effet d'affaiblir les demandes des femmes préconisant un programme exhaustif d'embauche et de formation de femmes indigènes.

**Mots clés :** EE; ERA; entente sur les répercussions et les avantages; mise en valeur des ressources; femmes; autochtone; évaluation environnementale, emploi

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## INTRODUCTION

Improving the participation of Indigenous communities in environmental assessments (EAs) is considered imperative to achieving socially just and sustainable development (Baker and McLelland, 2003; O'Faircheallaigh, 2010). The past two decades have witnessed many process-oriented studies charting best practices for Indigenous participation in EAs (Bishop and Davis, 2002; Fitzpatrick and Sinclair, 2003). In response, several authors have suggested that researchers pay greater attention to how the definition and implementation of participation in EAs is related to control over environmental decision making (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Cashmore et al., 2004; O'Faircheallaigh, 2007, 2010). Examining the level of influence an Indigenous group has over substantive policy outcomes after assessments are completed, however, raises two critical issues. First, EAs are not stand-alone decision-making tools, but rather are embedded in political and institutional environments that influence the ability of participants to affect project development decisions (O'Faircheallaigh, 2007, 2010). Second, Indigenous communities are not undifferentiated wholes: marginalized groups within communities often experience greater negative impacts from development. Feminist scholars have noted that women in particular are differentially negatively affected by resource development (Kurian, 2000; Mayes and Pini, 2010; Lahiri-Dutt, 2011). Few studies to date have adopted a gendered analysis of Indigenous participation in EAs (Stevenson, 1996; O'Faircheallaigh, 2011).

Across northern Canada, impact benefit agreements (IBAs) have emerged as a key institution with a regulatory function that overlaps with EA processes (Fidler and Hitch, 2007). Since the processes are mutually influential, it is necessary to examine IBAs in order to understand the influence of public participation in EAs on policy outcomes. Although IBAs and EAs have different legal bases (IBAs are private contracts between communities and corporations while EAs are state-run and regulated through EA legislation), their processes often overlap since both frequently contain commitments from the proponent about environmental mitigation, business opportunities, and employment. The relationship between EAs and IBAs, however, is not well defined in the literature and is often case-specific. While some scholars have applauded IBAs as a mechanism to address weaknesses in the EA processes (Galbraith et al., 2007; O'Faircheallaigh, 2007; Noble and Fidler, 2011), others have problematized the use of IBAs as a regulatory mechanism arguing that IBA negotiations can lessen the effectiveness of EA processes and that power differences constrain the ability of communities to ensure that companies follow through on their IBA commitments (Fidler and Hitch, 2007; Caine and Krogman, 2010).

Employment often figures prominently in both EA processes and IBA negotiations since it is often the most tangible way that individuals are able to benefit from resource development (Shanks, 2006). Yet the employment commitments that result from these processes benefit men

disproportionately. Resource extraction is associated with white Western masculinity, and women continue to be underrepresented in mining work despite their advancement in other sectors (Tallichet, 2000; Wicks, 2002; Mercier, 2011). Moreover, when women are employed in resource industries, they are often relegated to feminized occupations, which are fewer in number, lower paid, and less stable (Mills, 2006). This pattern is intensified for Indigenous women, who (unlike non-Indigenous women) are underrepresented in clerical work, almost entirely absent from managerial work, and overrepresented in housekeeping and kitchen staff jobs, which often have the lowest pay and status on resource job sites (Mills, 2006; Czyzewski et al., 2014). The negative social implications and income disparities that result from women's underrepresentation in mining work have prompted some Indigenous women's groups to advocate for employment provisions for women in their submissions to EA processes (Brockman and Argue, 1995).

To address the need for a broad, gendered analysis of Indigenous participation in EAs and examine the institutional embeddedness of EA processes, this study asks how participation by Indigenous women's groups throughout the EA for Voisey's Bay Mine and Mill affected EA recommendations, how the EA recommendations influenced IBA provisions, and how these in turn influenced women's employment years later. We chose the case of Voisey's Bay because the EA process has been described in the literature as progressive, with sustainability as a core ideal and with women involved in both formal and informal processes (Gibson, 2002, 2006; Clausen, 2007; O'Faircheallaigh, 2011). O'Faircheallaigh (2011, 2013) specifically describes Voisey's Bay as a case in which women were involved not only in the process, but also in formulating the agenda for development. Employment was an area of focus for Indigenous women in Labrador and therefore became the focus of this study.

*Indigenous Participation in EAs*

In Western industrialized countries, sex segregation in natural resource-based employment has persisted, despite an overall convergence in men's and women's employment since the 1970s (England, 2010). Women's underrepresentation is particularly acute in the mining sector, where women comprised only 14.4% of all employees in Canada in 2006 (Women in Mining Canada, 2010). Since the above statistics include feminized jobs such as catering and housekeeping, the underrepresentation of women is almost certainly more pronounced in male-typed occupations. This distinction is significant because wages in feminized jobs are frequently well below the lowest paid male-typed position. The underrepresentation of women in high-paying occupations in mining therefore has significant economic consequences for Indigenous and non-Indigenous women living in resource-dependent regions.

Mayes and Pini (2010) attribute the persistent underrepresentation of women in mining to gendered discourses

that shape mining representations, institutions, and subjectivities. They suggest that the strong association of mining with masculinity is achieved through the use of images that portray mining as occurring “in spaces that are harsh, barren and often inhospitable” (Mayes and Pini, 2010:237). Masculinity is also institutionalized in mining through repeated gendered behaviour among supervisors and workers and through traditional narratives in mining communities. In a study of coal miners in Nova Scotia, Wicks (2002) found that miners had internalized masculine identities in response to patriarchal management-worker relations, male breadwinner ideology, and a strong community mining tradition. In a study of women’s experiences in a Virginia coal mine, Tallichet (2000:245) found that informal practices such as harassment, sexualization, and gendered job assignments “set the stage for formal processes, such as on-the-job task training, seniority, procedures for posting and bidding, temporary assignments, and realignments [which were] used to ‘officially’ match women with certain types of mining jobs.” It is because mining masculinities are pervasive and institutionally embedded, the above studies suggest, that the entry of women into mining employment continues to be impeded.

Since both EAs and IBA negotiations are used by communities to assert their concerns about potential development and provide suggestions for mitigation of or compensation for impacts, they have the potential to introduce policies or programs to promote the entry of Indigenous women into mining employment. Furthermore, O’Faircheallaigh (2013) and Parmenter (2011) have suggested that the participation of women during EAs and the negotiation of IBAs had the potential to increase women’s employment. Despite its breadth, the literature on EA participation has largely overlooked women’s groups, let alone those of Indigenous women. The literature has charted best practices in Indigenous participation and critiqued past EA processes for not including many of these elements (Fitzpatrick and Sinclair, 2003). Despite the failures of many EA processes to engage in appropriate consultation with Indigenous communities, researchers and practitioners continue to point to them as a way for Indigenous communities to influence resource development (Stevenson, 1997; Gibson, 2006; Galbraith et al., 2007; Fidler, 2008; Gibson, 2008).

Many evaluations of the effectiveness of participation in environmental decision making are process oriented and therefore limited in their ability to assess the influence of particular groups over decision making and project outcomes (Bishop and Davis, 2002). Although many studies assess the effectiveness of public participation, not all examine participants’ ability to have some control over development decisions (Chess and Purcell, 1999; Sinclair and Diduck, 2001; Fitzpatrick and Sinclair, 2003; Petts, 2003; Stewart and Sinclair, 2007). The influence that participation has on project development is complicated, moreover, by processes that take place outside of EAs. In their meta-analysis of the effectiveness of EAs as a whole, Cashmore et al. (2004:303) found that EA processes had

moderate influence on project design. They also suggested that researchers pay more attention to the “broader institutional, political and socio-cultural context in which decision-making occurs.” Similarly, O’Faircheallaigh (2010) calls for more research into the political embeddedness of EA processes. A critical issue in the participation of Indigenous peoples in EAs is therefore the influence of processes external to the EA on recommendations and the translation of recommendations into policy.

### *IBAs and Employment*

In northern Canada, one such process is IBA negotiations. IBAs influence EA processes and outcomes, particularly in regard to socioeconomic benefits. Based in contract law, IBAs have been termed a supraregulatory process since they have a regulatory function (often being used in conjunction with EAs) yet do not fall under legislation concerning environmental regulation (Galbraith et al., 2007). There is often a mutually influential relationship between IBA negotiations and EA processes since their content overlaps and since IBA negotiations may occur before, after, or concurrently with EA processes. Several authors have suggested that IBAs supplement EAs, since they address many of the areas where EAs have failed Indigenous peoples, such as securing socioeconomic benefits, ensuring adequate follow-up, and treating Indigenous peoples as partners in development rather than as an interest group (Galbraith et al., 2007; O’Faircheallaigh, 2007). The notion of IBA-EA complementarity is extended further by Noble and Fidler (2011) who suggest that IBAs emerged as a result of the failings of EAs. Other studies, however, have been more tentative about the positive effects of the close relationship between IBAs and EAs, noting that when an IBA is applied alongside an EA process, the two “can add value and enhance Indigenous participation [but also] have a tendency to overlap and can therefore fail to fulfill particular elements of their respective mandates” (Fidler, 2008:65).

The negotiation of IBAs often also involves an element of public consultation since IBAs require community support to be successful. Encouraging community participation is often more selective for IBA negotiations than for EAs, however. For example, the IBA Community Toolkit, a book written to support Indigenous groups readying for IBA negotiations, warns that sharing information should be strategic in order to not derail the negotiation process, but recommends consultation with vulnerable groups such as youth, elders, and women (Gibson and O’Faircheallaigh, 2011). A report by Weitzner (2006) about the experience of the Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation with mining companies also highlights the importance of community consultation prior to negotiations. In this case, having greater time to negotiate allowed for more community consultation and involvement of women, and according to Weitzner (2006), Lutsel K’e Dene women felt that they were well represented. Since there is no standardization across IBAs, however, the level of participation solicited varies.

In several countries, IBAs have increasingly become the place where Aboriginal groups negotiate socioeconomic outcomes and are therefore now the main place where employment commitments are solidified (Galbraith et al., 2007; Mills and Sweeney, 2013). The IBA Community Toolkit provides examples of mechanisms used to ensure that employment goals result in tangible outcomes (Gibson and O'Faircheallaigh, 2011). These include setting hiring preferences, hard or rolling targets, and financial penalties if targets are not met. Parmenter (2011) suggested that the employment of women at a mine in Australia was aided by IBAs that promoted and guaranteed the employment of local Aboriginal people through hiring provisions. In a study of the effects of diamond mining on communities in northwestern Canada, Gibson (2008) found that employment of women in communities that had signed IBAs with diamond companies grew more quickly than the territorial average in the years following mine development. Significantly, Gibson did not attribute the growth in women's employment to work in the mines, but rather to greater opportunities for post-secondary education and participation in new or newly vacant administrative positions. Though these examples suggest that IBA agreements can positively affect women's employment, the link between women's participation in EA processes and employment outcomes remains unclear.

#### *The Voisey's Bay EA and the Inuit IBA*

Voisey's Bay has been used in several studies about EA and IBA processes in Canada (Archibald and Crnkovich, 1999; Gibson, 2002, 2006; O'Faircheallaigh, 2010, 2011). Archibald and Crnkovich wrote an early report on gender and the Voisey's Bay Mine. Their report notes that women were very active throughout the public process of the Voisey's Bay EA, but that they were not included in the early stages of IBA negotiations and felt that gender issues were being ignored in this process. Since the report was written before the IBA process was finished, it could not assess outcomes. O'Faircheallaigh (2011, 2013) describes women's participation in both the EA and IBA processes of Voisey's Bay and argues that often Indigenous women play a greater role in IBA agreements than is acknowledged in the literature. In particular, he suggests that Indigenous women often have substantial influence over processes in an informal capacity. Despite these authors' focus on the EA process and IBA negotiations at Voisey's Bay, we still know little about how these processes have influenced employment experiences, in particular those of Indigenous women.

## METHODS

To examine how the participation of women in EA processes and IBA negotiations influenced the employment experiences of Inuit and Innu women, we used data from an

in-depth case study of employment at Voisey's Bay Nickel Mine. This analysis therefore constitutes one component of a larger project on the changing institutions of employment in the North (see Mills and Sweeney, 2012 for the methods used in the larger project). The Voisey's Bay mine is a fly-in, fly-out mine located on the traditional territories of the Labrador Innu, a First Nations group who historically occupied the interior of Labrador and whose present settlements include Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, and the Labrador Inuit, whose lands and communities are located along the northern Labrador coast. Although both Innu and Inuit were interviewed, the researchers focused on the Inuit IBA since working with two Indigenous groups was beyond the scope of the research project.

From 2009 to 2011, interviews were conducted with workers and key informants in Nain, the closest coastal Inuit community to Voisey's Bay; Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the largest community in Labrador and the site of the airstrip serving the mine; and St. John's, Newfoundland, home to the Building and Construction Trade Union (BCTU) halls and the majority of their members. One Inuit research assistant and three community advisors helped design the questionnaires and select key informants. Workers were recruited using posters and snowball sampling. We conducted a total of 36 semi-structured interviews with workers and 39 open-ended interviews with key informants. All but three of the interviews were conducted in person and all interviews were transcribed verbatim. Although all of the worker interviews were used for the gender analysis, only 20 of the key informant interviews provided information relevant to women's employment. These informants included Nunatsiavut Government representatives who had been involved with the EA process and with the IBA negotiations, some union representatives, one member of the Environmental Impact Assessment Panel, and personnel for Vale, the Brazilian multinational mining company that bought Inco in 2006 and became owners of Voisey's Bay Nickel Company (VBNC). The worker sample of 36 people (12 women and 24 men) was composed of six Innu, 22 Inuit, and eight non-Indigenous people. Of the 12 women interviewed, three were non-Indigenous, three were Innu, and six were Inuit. Our sample overrepresents women and Indigenous people in the workforce population at Voisey's Bay in 2009. Indigenous women represented 13.9% of the workforce and 25% of our sample; Indigenous workers, 53.9% of the workforce and 77.7% of our sample; and non-Aboriginal women, 3.6% of the workforce and 8.3% of our sample. Non-Aboriginal men represent 42.5% of the workforce, but only 16.7% of our sample. Workers resided in Sheshatshiu/Natuashish, Nain, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and various communities on the island of Newfoundland. Workers were asked about their experiences of work and their perceptions of whether the IBA, their company, and their unions represented the interests of women.

Interview data were supplemented with relevant collective agreements, EA submissions, press releases, and news articles. All EA submissions made by women's groups

and those by the Labrador Inuit Association pertaining to women were retrieved. Interviews and EA submissions were coded to identify themes.

## BACKGROUND TO THE CASE

After the discovery of large nickel deposits in Labrador in 1993, the VBNC began separate IBA negotiations with the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA; the precursor of the Nunatsiavut Government) and the Innu Nation. In 1996, VBNC became a wholly owned subsidiary of Inco Limited (INCO) after INCO purchased its parent company, and IBA negotiations continued. The Innu Nation and the LIA began scoping the issues in 1995 and 1996, respectively. In January 1997, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the LIA, the Innu Nation, and the federal and provincial governments to establish a joint EA process. The MOU allowed for a single EA process to take place with provisions for comprehensive public involvement. Draft guidelines for the environmental impact statement (EIS) were released for public review in March 1997, and by December, VBNC released the EIS, which was subject to a 75-day public review process. A 30-day extension was announced in February 1997. Two rounds of public meetings were held. The scoping sessions that took place in the spring of 1997 allowed for an initial response to the draft guidelines. The second round, held from September to November in 1998, allowed for a response to the EIS. The EA process culminated in 1999 with the release of the Panel report to parties of the MOU. The Panel recommended that the project not be issued authorization until VBNC had signed IBAs with both the LIA and the Innu Nation.

In 2002, the LIA signed the IBA, confident that their land claim was secure. The land claim came into effect in December 2005 with the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, which created the Nunatsiavut Government. Construction of the project started before the land claim was signed but directly after the signing of the IBA. The construction phase offered the first possibilities for employment under the IBA. Construction ended in the early 2000s, and the mine processed its first ore in August 2005. In 2006, Vale bought out Inco Limited, and VBNC became a subsidiary of Vale. VBNC was renamed Vale Newfoundland & Labrador Limited in 2007.

## WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VOISEY'S BAY EA PROCESS AND IBA NEGOTIATIONS

Women were active participants in the EA process for the Voisey's Bay Mine. They organized collectively and submitted documents throughout the process and were also present in a leadership capacity. Two women were on the joint EA panel: Lesley Griffiths, the panel's chair, and Lorraine Michael, the nominee for the Innu Nation. Lorraine Michael had a history of feminist social justice activism

and later became the leader of the New Democratic Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. Following its appointment, the panel released the draft guidelines for the EIS for public review and comment.

Lorraine Michael expressed the belief that "right through the very beginning of the EA process, the gender issue was front and center" (L. Michael, pers. comm. 2011). Four groups representing the voices of Innu and Inuit women received funding from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) to participate in the scoping meetings (CEAA, 1997). These included the Postville Women's Group (PWG), a group representing Inuit women from the community of Postville; Tongamiut Inuit Annait (TIA), the Labrador Inuit Women's Association; the Ad Hoc Committee on Aboriginal Women and Mining that represented the five Inuit and Innu coastal communities; and Labrador Legal Services (LLS), a non-profit organization created to assist women in Labrador with issues such as family violence, addictions, healthy living, and mental health awareness and cultural awareness.

The TIA and the Ad Hoc Committee made a joint submission very early in response to the draft guidelines, which Lorraine Michael (pers. comm. 2011) credited with bringing gender into the EA process:

This group of women made a very, very good representation to the Panel and I was delighted ... because that meant we could just really go with the whole issue of employment and training of women, the impact of women in the communities ... every aspect because they presented every aspect which was great.

Inuit women also responded to the Panel as individuals during this stage of the process. An Inuit woman from Rigolet presented her concerns to the Panel and submitted a magazine article entitled "Hard Rock Women" that described issues faced by women working at INCO's Sudbury operations.

Two of the submissions in response to the draft guidelines, one authored by the PWG and the other by both the TIA and the Ad Hoc Committee, contained suggestions across 13 categories. Both submissions were concerned about the methods used by VBNC. They demanded that the company consult the literature on feminist research and use methods that address the concerns of Indigenous women. Each of the submissions critiqued the EIS for not including a gendered analysis. While the submissions addressed broad concerns, they each also paid detailed attention to employment opportunities for women at the mine.

The joint submission by the TIA and the Ad Hoc Committee made several requests pertaining to employment, asking the EIS to "go beyond the stereotyped view of women as homemakers, excess labour, or consumers" (Tongamiut Inuit Annait, 1997:3). The submission asked the proponent to provide detailed information on the projected number of female employees, the qualifications of the local labour pool, and the specific training needs of

women, as well as the training, targeted hiring, and targeted recruitment policies and programs that would be necessary to integrate women into non-traditional positions. The TIA and the Ad Hoc Committee wanted the EIS to demonstrate how VBNC would address the barriers faced by women seeking non-traditional employment by outlining how “programs [would] encourage women to train for jobs, ... seek and retain them, and demonstrate how women are being consulted in the development and implementation of these programs” (Tongamiut Inuit Annait, 1997:9). The PWG submission was similarly concerned with eliminating barriers to employment experienced by women, asking that VBNC “provide the training needs in local communities instead of always having to leave the community” (Postville Women’s Group, 1997:5). The LLS submission stated that the “jobs, to date, held by women in the exploration phase have not encouraged the belief that women will be accessing non-traditional jobs or managerial level jobs to any great degree” (Labrador Legal Services, 1997:17). LLS asked VBNC to remedy this in their EIS.

When the EIS was released, it did not provide the detailed information women had requested in the scoping sessions. The EIS contained vague commitments to “encourage the participation of women in the Project workforce” and that “women seeking employment with VBNC will be given equal opportunity” (VBNC, 1997:21.2.1.4). The EIS did provide an estimate of the annual average direct employment for women in Labrador: 38 to 115 person-years in the open-pit phase, or 4.4% to 13.5% of total direct employment in Labrador. The EIS noted that these numbers were too small to provide a breakdown according to specific community but that an employment-monitoring program would assist VBNC in their corporate hiring strategies.

The EIS contained no detailed information on training for women, or on targeting the employment of women in coastal communities. Furthermore, the numbers provided in the EIS did not differentiate between traditional and non-traditional jobs. Although the PWG had requested that the EIS “outline policies and programs for affirmative action in hiring and training programs to ensure that women (and specifically Aboriginal women) obtain training and work in the better paying non-traditional work sectors” (Postville Women’s Group, 1997:4), the EIS did not contain any plans to initiate specific training or affirmative action for women. Instead, the EIS stated that “the decision to be involved in this type of operation is very much an individual one and numbers are highly unpredictable at the community level” (VBNC, 1997:21.2.3.6). With regards to child care, a major barrier to employment identified by women in the scoping sessions, the EIS claimed that “extended families and higher incomes should enable most mine workers to cope with this” (VBNC, 1997:24.2.5).

The TIA was the only women’s group that received funding from the CEAA to respond to the EIS. They received \$14,000 and drafted a submission that was highly critical of the EIS. A central concern of the TIA was that

other negotiations critical to the LIA had not been finalized. They claimed that the EIS was peppered with claims that negative impacts will be addressed by IBAs. The TIA submission claimed that the decision to start IBA negotiations without a land claim in place provided a “clear advantage [for] the company with little gains for Inuit” (Tongamiut Inuit Annait, 1998:3). The submission stated that an IBA negotiated after a land-claim agreement would have more direction from the government and would take some control out of the hands of VBNC. The TIA was also very critical of the confidentiality rules, which they saw as protecting the company and disadvantaging Inuit. Inuit women were concerned that VBNC was using the confidentiality clause in the IBA to avoid detailing the mitigation of negative impacts on communities. Another concern was that there were no women at the negotiation table for the IBA and that women’s concerns were therefore not being heard.

While the TIA called on VBNC to address barriers to employment for women created by the rotation schedule of two weeks on/two weeks off, it did not view employment as the solution to the effects that development would have on families and communities. Instead it critiqued VBNC’s assumption that the jobs provided by the development would reduce social problems in communities. They remarked that “social problems will not go away because not everyone will have jobs” (Tongamiut Inuit Annait, 1998:10). The submission further described women’s objection to the view that full-time employment was, in itself, good, based on the disruptions to lifestyles and time spent on the land. It stated that Inuit women assumed the jobs would go to men rather than women and that this assumption reflected the degree to which women had already been excluded from the process.

Near the end of the EA process, VBNC submitted a draft women’s employment plan. While the plan contained some of the information women requested throughout the EA process, such as a commitment to a gender-based analysis and to the retention, training, and promotion of women, it did not contain details of how VBNC would implement its objectives. VBNC committed to working with other agencies and groups, consulting with local women, designing fair hiring practices, and training and hiring women.

The first sentence of the draft plan reflected VBNC’s view of its responsibility: “this plan seeks to achieve gender diversity in the VBNC workplace in all occupations and at all levels of the organization based upon interest and capacity” (VBNC, 1998:1). Women in Resource Development Corporation (WRDC), a group that was established in the late 1990s to promote the involvement of women in resource development projects, sent a letter to the panel in response to the draft plan. WRDC took exception to the wording “based on interest and capacity,” which implies that in some occupations there would be no capacity for women and no interest from them. The letter stated that “the company should set targets for the hiring of women and strive to do everything in its power to ensure women are included in all occupations throughout its workforce”

(WRDC, 1998:2). The WRDC response specifically called for more “how to’s” rather than broad commitments.

After the public consultation process, the panel released its final report. It was satisfied with statements made by VBNC that a combination of the fly-in/fly-out operation and the settlement of IBAs and land claims would mitigate negative impacts on communities and families. Despite the many concerns that women had about the impact of increased employment on drug and alcohol consumption and violence against women, the panel agreed with the core VBNC assumption that more employment would only serve to better communities. Only three of the 107 recommendations made by the panel mentioned women, but all three of those recommendations pertained to employment. The recommendations included working with the LIA and the TIA to establish search and recognition workshops to effectively respond to the concerns of women, revising the women’s employment plan, and including a harassment policy (CEAA, 1997). The recommendations also contained language about child care during both training and full employment.

With the Panel report recommending approval of the project, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador passed the Voisey’s Bay Nickel Company Limited Mine and Mill Undertaking Order. The undertaking order gave permission to proceed with the project, subject to a number of conditions. Of the recommendations above, the only one specified in the undertaking order was that the proponent shall “prepare, in consultation with the government of the province, submit to the appropriate government department for approval, and abide by, a women’s employment plan containing measurable goals” (VBNC Limited Mine and Mill Undertaking Order, 1999: NLR 74/99, s.3(j)).

Another condition for approval was that the IBAs be finalized. The final panel report also encouraged the LIA to include the views of women during IBA negotiations, though it was not an official recommendation. In the recommendation that VBNC develop a policy towards child or elder care, the panel report noted that women expressed concerns that IBA negotiations were not meeting the needs of women. The Panel report also stated that “the Panel would encourage LIA to review the comments and concerns of women who spoke at the hearings and to work with TIA and other Inuit organizations to address outstanding issues” (CEAA, 1997:s.15). The IBA negotiations continued after the EA ended.

One of the concerns raised by women’s groups during the EA process, that women were not involved in IBA negotiations, was addressed by the LIA. Isabella Pain, who was appointed as co-chief negotiator of the land-claim negotiations in 2000, was appointed chief negotiator for the IBA negotiations in 2001. She felt the information gained throughout the EA process helped the negotiation team consider the views of women:

Through the environmental panel’s meetings [we] were able to gather a significant amount of input from

women’s groups. And in response to their feedback, the negotiating team made a concerted effort to take into account women’s voices.... [W]e had representatives of a women’s group review the IBA to make certain that it was ... inclusive of women’s interests and, moreover, that under the IBA provisions women could avail themselves of the opportunities it offered as equally as men.

(quoted in Final Interview Isabella Pain & Theresa Hollet; Nunatsiavut Government Perspective, 2011)

The existence of the WRDC, the PWG, the TIA and the Ad Hoc Committee, and their ability to collect information from Inuit women and present that information to the EA Panel, allowed for Inuit women to influence the negotiation process of the IBA. The IBA also established a joint oversight committee that included two representatives from Vale and two representatives from the Nunatsiavut Government, the IBA Coordinator and a Deputy Minister, one of whom was to be a woman.

IBA negotiations culminated with the acceptance of a finalized IBA by a vote from LIA members in 2002. The IBA contained clauses for training programs but did not contain specific programs for women or accommodation measures. The IBA did, however, outline hiring provisions for women. The hiring process outlined in the IBA, termed the “Order of Preference,” prioritizes the hiring of Inuit and Innu based on residence following the adjacency principle—the principle that those living closest to the mine are more affected by the mine and therefore should be entitled to a greater share of the benefits. Within the IBA, however, Inuit women could in some cases take precedence over the adjacency clause. A Nunatsiavut Government representative explained:

Within our IBA we have an adjacency clause.... The one on the coast [nearer to the development] would get it over the one from the rest of Labrador. However, if you’re an Inuit female regardless of residence, you have first opportunity.

(Nunatsiavut Government representative, P42)

Although the women received prioritization in the IBA, the IBA did not contain specific targets for hiring women, though there were targets for Inuit workers at the site. Moreover, the IBA did not contain commitments to training programs that took into consideration the needs of women, which Inuit and Innu women had requested throughout the EA process.

In the drafting of collective agreements, any attention to women’s employment, even the prioritization specified in the IBA, was neglected. VBNC did not involve the LIA formally in collective bargaining, but provided assurance that the collective agreements would fulfill IBA provisions. The prioritization of Inuit and Innu and the adjacency principle were written into the collective agreements that VBNC signed with the United Steel Workers (USW), and the

prioritization of Inuit and Innu was included in the Special Project Agreement; however, the prioritization of women is not codified in either (Voisey's Bay Employer's Association and Resource Development Trades Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2002; VBNC Limited and Local 9508 of the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union, 2006). According to one BCTU representative, if the prioritization of women was not encoded in collective agreements, it could not be followed in the union halls:

Hiring women, outside of the IBAs, I would say there was nothing in place, nothing by the government, nothing in the collective agreements, so whatever happened, happened ... and they could have the best intentions but if you don't put it into the collective agreement, it's not going nowhere. ... we are all bound by our collective agreements and hiring procedures.

(BCTU representative, P38)

Though women are prioritized in the IBA, most union staff and contractors were unaware of this prioritization. When a member of the bargaining team for the USW during the operations phase was asked about the prioritization of women in the IBA, he responded "nobody ever told me that was there" (USW representative, P58). Since the prioritization of women was not translated into a document that was available to all of the parties involved in hiring, the Nunatsiavut Government was the only body overseeing the prioritization of women, through the IBA employment coordinator.

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN AT VOISEY'S BAY MINE, 2009–11

During the summer of 2009, women comprised 17.5% of the workforce at the mine site, which exceeded the national average of 14.4% (Women in Mining Canada, 2010). However, both at Voisey's Bay and nationally, women mine employees were working largely in culinary, housekeeping, administration, and corporate services jobs (Nunatsiavut Government representative, P42). Many respondents also felt that not enough women at the mine site were working in non-traditional occupations, and none of the workers interviewed were aware that women were entitled to receive priority in hiring. Inuit women in non-traditional occupations described barriers to advancement, difficulty gaining acceptance in the workforce, experiences of discrimination, and being treated as token hires. Many Inuit and Innu men and women criticized training practices as being inadequate for the needs of Inuit people and felt that women were overlooked for promotions. While both Inuit and Innu men experienced discrimination in regard to training and promotion, women's experiences were distinct in that they faced additional barriers, as well as those similar to the

ones experienced by men. The same distinction held true for prioritization: women described discrimination situations similar to those recounted by men, but also had unique barriers that Aboriginal men did not face.

#### *Prioritization*

Though according to the IBA guidelines women were to be given priority in hiring decisions, over and above the adjacency principle, many were unaware of this directive. Like the union representatives and contractors, all worker participants were aware of the adjacency principle in the IBA, but none were aware of the one regarding prioritization of women.

When asked if women should be prioritized for employment, eight of the nine Indigenous women interviewed responded positively, while all nine felt that Inuit and Innu should be given priority. In contrast, Indigenous men unanimously agreed that Indigenous people should receive priority, but only 10 of the 24 men felt that women should receive priority. While three of the eight non-Indigenous participants agreed with the adjacency principle, none of them believed women should be prioritized. The most common answer to the question about the prioritization of women was that hiring should be based on qualifications alone, with a reference to either "equality" or "equal opportunity," which meant different things to different participants.

Men's responses to questions about the prioritization of specific groups in hiring clearly distinguished between the inclusion of women, which they saw as unfair, and that of Inuit and Innu, which they felt was legitimate. The most common argument against the preferential hiring of women was that hiring should be based on qualifications and the interview process. When respondents did feel that women should be prioritized in hiring decisions, they referred to employment equity. For example, one worker stated:

They should be given priority top of the list .... I believe in employment equity, ... and it's not up there. It is employment equity for the Aboriginal people but not for women.

(Inuit man, P2)

Male respondents who supported the hiring of women as a group often referred to liberal notions of equality, while most Indigenous women cited a lack of women at the mine site as the reason that women should be preferentially hired. Women's statements "it would be great if it worked out that way" (Inuit woman, P26) and "because we don't have many women working in the mill there" (Inuit woman, P24) were rather founded in their understandings that it would be good for the workplace and their communities.

Indigenous respondents described the prioritization of Innu and Inuit as legitimate because of their collective ownership over the lands that were being mined and their historic relationship to them. The following response from an Inuit male reflects this legitimization:



This is our land, we are from here, we should get the first chance of any job in Labrador and also there is people in Voisey's Bay hired from Ontario, B.C., Alberta ... it don't make sense.

(Inuit man, P9)

While all Indigenous participants agreed with this legitimization, many non-Indigenous participants did not agree with the adjacency principle or the IBA in general.

### *Tokenism*

Prioritization policies can create work atmospheres that isolate the workers prioritized. While the prioritization provided access to employment for interested and qualified Inuit and Innu women, their small numbers on site led to tokenism; these women felt that employers and co-workers were treating them as token hires (Kanter, 1977). Both male and female Indigenous participants described feelings of isolation and recounted stories of supervisors or co-workers commenting that the only reason they were there was because of the IBA. Because it was common knowledge that the IBA played a role in the hiring of Indigenous workers, these workers, both male and female, were at times seen as token hires. Since women comprised a much smaller percentage of the workforce, they were more susceptible to tokenism. One Inuit woman working in a non-traditional occupation spoke of an Inuit female friend who was told that she was only there to fill a quota:

I have a friend who is a mechanic in there and she was told that the only reason she was there, this was from a human resources manager, ... was to fill a special quota. Not for her skills .... She was first hired as a heavy equipment mechanic apprentice, but she switched her trade because they wouldn't let her work on heavy equipment. She was only allowed to work on pickup trucks, so she said, "I might as well just switch my heavy equipment to light duty."

(Inuit woman, P22)

In the above case, being seen as a token hire prevented the Inuit woman from being properly apprenticed and allowed to move into more highly skilled work opportunities. Interviews with Inuit men also contained descriptions of tokenism. One Inuit man stated that "one of the things that between the lines was spelled out to me from the supervisors – it was made clear that I was hired because I had to be hired" (Inuit man, P3). The attitude that Inuit and Innu workers were there only because of the IBA was reflected in some of the interviews with non-Indigenous participants. When asked how the IBA affected his work experience, one non-Indigenous male from St. John's responded, "They are hired because of the Impact Benefit Agreement, and they don't last very long, for one thing, and they hire them just because of that benefit" (non-Indigenous man, P5). While this response did not reflect the attitude of all

non-Indigenous participants, it is an example of how the Order of Preference was used to justify perceptions that Innu and Inuit were not qualified workers.

### *Training and Promotion*

During the EA process, women clearly expressed the need to target women for training opportunities. However, no training programs were specifically designed to address the needs of women. Several Indigenous women respondents described going to a community college or participating in a training program for a skilled trade in order to work at Voisey's Bay. Some respondents obtained training through the Joint Voisey's Bay Employment and Training Authority, whose board was made up of representatives from the Inuit, Innu, Métis, and VBNC. While VBNC was involved in the program, it was funded through the federal government's Innu, Inuit, and Métis Human Resources Development Strategy. Other respondents received their training from the College of the North Atlantic, subsidized by the Nunatsiavut Government's Inuit Pathways program. All other women received on-the-job training from VBNC once accepted for their positions, which were predominantly classified as unskilled. Some respondents already had extensive training and experience in their respective trades.

Women from the mine felt that it was easier for men to receive promotions than women. One woman who worked in a non-traditional occupation during the operations phase described the difficulty obtaining a promotion:

It's hard for us to get promoted. We have to fight really hard. And it's very frustrating because guys are just given opportunities no sweat. It took me three years to get [promoted], since I started I never had a promotion until last year.

(Inuit woman, P22)

After working for years on duties she felt her skills were too high for, she was eventually transferred to duties requiring a higher degree of skill. However, the company would not give her a promotion until she filed a grievance.

While the experience of tokenism was consistent among both Indigenous men and women, their perceptions of access to training and their experiences of training differed. Indigenous men and women answered differently about whether or not training was equally accessible to men and women. Six of the nine Indigenous women interviewed felt that training opportunities were not equally accessible and that it was easier for men to receive them. Only two of the 19 Indigenous men also felt that training opportunities were not equally accessible to women. An Inuit man who worked in the mill during the construction phase saw a friend get constantly overlooked for promotion opportunities and attempted to get her to speak up about it:

She is an electrical apprentice and she is working through her apprenticeship. Her marks ... are excellent; she is top of the class. I've watched her being assigned repeatedly to mopping the floor and working the tool crib ... And ... she's willing to accept that and I've told her numerous times, you're not only doing yourself a disservice, you are doing a disservice to the next Aboriginal woman coming behind you. But she just shrugs and smiles.

(Inuit man, P3)

Although in this case, a male co-worker encouraged a female friend to seek promotion, descriptions of male domination at the work site were widespread in the interviews with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. Many women responded that the best way to deal with harassing behaviour was to respond aggressively, with one Inuit woman saying: "if they'd say something to me, I'd just give it back just as good as I get it" (Inuit woman, P23).

The stories of the women interviewed for this study are not the stories of all women working at the mine. However, they suggest that in some areas, including training and promotion, women did not receive the special consideration requested during the EA process. These interviews also show that few people were even aware of the provision for prioritization of women in the IBA.

## DISCUSSION

Despite the strong participation by women's groups through the EA process, and the inclusion of women in the IBA, the experiences of women working at Voisey's Bay in our sample were not notably different from those reported in other studies of Indigenous women in mining workplaces (Tallichet, 2000; Parmenter and Kemp, 2007; Czyzewski et al., 2014). Women in non-traditional roles at the site continued to face gendered barriers to employment. They felt that they had to work harder than men to prove that they were qualified to do their jobs and faced barriers to promotion and training. The number of women at the mine was higher than the national average, but only marginally so. Moreover, although the Order of Preference governing the employment of Innu and Inuit was common knowledge, very few people were aware that the IBA prioritized the hiring of women. How did such strong representation by women's groups in the EA come to have so little effect on women's employment experiences?

Within their broader concerns about the impact of mining on community life and wellbeing, women made strong recommendations about women's employment. They asked VBNC to set numerical targets for the hiring of women and to address the broad array of barriers that women may face to employment by designing wide-ranging programs that address impediments such as training, work culture, and child care needs. In the 10 years following the EA, the broad concerns articulated by women's groups became

increasingly constrained and were reduced to prioritizing women in the hiring process. Through their participation in the EA process, women had some influence on final EA recommendations. The EA recommendations, however, were contingent on future processes: the revision of the women's employment plan and the LIA's consideration of women's concerns in IBA negotiations. Although women's concerns were discussed in IBA negotiations and the final IBA encouraged the hiring of women, the provisions did not contain measurable goals and therefore none were translated into collective agreements. Women's recommendations were tempered by the absence of a clear process to ensure that EA recommendations were carried forward into binding IBA clauses and further into collective agreements, hiring protocols, and training programs. As a result, the employer was not compelled to adopt measures to challenge the masculine bias that prevailed in hiring practices and in the culture of the mining workplace or to provide separate training for women.

Although the EA process allowed for strong participation by women's groups, ongoing IBA negotiations weakened the influence of their participation on the final EA recommendations. The IBA hampered the effectiveness of participation during the EA since VBNC indicated that the IBA would be the document to legally establish socioeconomic commitments. Throughout the EA process, VBNC continuously referred to the IBA when responding to women's concerns about commitments to social concerns, stating that they would be addressed during IBA negotiations. This tactic displaced the discussion of social concerns from inside the EA process to outside it. The CEAA did not intervene, accepting the IBA as a means to mitigate socioeconomic impacts, and therefore did not include specific requirements in the binding Undertaking Order.

Since the IBA had not been ratified at the time of EA proceedings, the EA process became another part of the IBA negotiation between VBNC and the LIA. Both parties had to carefully select how much information to provide on the progress of the IBA negotiations and on what the IBA was going to contain. During the second round of public hearings, the LIA mentioned their dissatisfaction with how VBNC had been using the IBA:

LIA is concerned about the mixed approach to mitigation of impacts on Inuit .... On the one hand, the Proponent has relied on the Inuit IBA. On the other hand, and because the Inuit IBA does not exist, the Proponent has advanced unilateral commitments that reflect its approach during the Inuit IBA negotiations. These commitments overlap with matters discussed at the Inuit IBA table. LIA has not outlined its approach and arguments on all these topics because it doesn't want to negotiate in public. There is therefore a danger that findings on the Proponent's unilateral commitments may prejudice our Inuit IBA negotiations.

(Labrador Inuit Association, 1998:11)

This quote indicates the inherent conflict in engaging in private negotiations while a public process about similar concerns is ongoing. Since the two processes overlapped in time, the IBA negotiations negatively affected the clear disclosure of information in the EA process. Both the LIA and VBNC closely scrutinized what each organization included in their submissions and how they referenced either the IBA or factors that had been discussed at the IBA negotiating table. Furthermore, the need to not disclose confidential information from incomplete IBA negotiations allowed VBNC to be vague in its responses to women's groups during the EA process. The LIA noted the difficulties resulting from ongoing IBA negotiations in one of their submissions to the EA process:

The absence of a negotiated Inuit IBA also poses difficulties for the Panel in assessing the potential impacts of the Project. First, ... it [makes it] impossible for the Panel to understand how issues affecting Inuit will be addressed and resolved in the proposed Inuit IBA. Second, ... [it] creates uncertainty about whether assurances given by VBNC in the EIS will be fulfilled.

(Labrador Inuit Association, 1998:9)

The absence of the IBA dampened the influence of the EA recommendations because so much of the required information was tied to incomplete negotiations. However, had the IBA negotiations been completed before the EA process started, confidentiality clauses might have prevented crucial information from the IBA from being heard by the Panel and the public.

Since women's concerns regarding employment were to be addressed in IBA negotiations, the EA Panel recommendations were open-ended, asking the proponent to draft the Women's Employment Plan and recommending that IBA negotiations consider the input of women through the EA process. Accordingly, the draft Women's Employment Plan broadly addressed concerns without specifying implementation mechanisms. Since the final version of the Women's Employment Plan was written by VBNC, it was not made publicly available, and only a minority of the key informants interviewed knew of its existence. These results support Fidler and Hitch's (2007) contention that the overlap between IBAs and EAs can hinder effective public participation and perpetuate injustices if benefits are not equally distributed within the community.

The translation of EA recommendations concerning women's employment into IBA negotiations also reduced the impact of women's contributions to EA. While women's concerns were discussed during the IBA negotiations, upon implementation the focus became the prioritization of Inuit women in the Order of Preference. The Indigenous women who provided submissions to the EA did have an indirect influence on IBA negotiations, since the LIA was given direction to consider their interests and was prompted to consult with a group of women during negotiations. This process however, relied on the ability and willingness of

negotiators to prioritize women's concerns at the negotiating table, which the women's groups who participated in the EA were unable to observe or monitor. While communities regularly vote on IBAs, they have less ability to shape individual clauses.

Although IBAs are governed by contract law and not by environmental legislation, they have regulatory characteristics (Sosa and Keenan, 2001). Yet as private contacts, IBAs are not subject to the same requirements for transparency and democratic participation as EAs, which are regulated by provincial or federal environmental assessment legislation. At least one commentator has suggested that the confidentiality clauses might hurt Indigenous groups since Indigenous governments and communities have less power in negotiations than large corporations (Caine and Krogman, 2010). Confidentiality clauses are primarily included to protect financial information; however, they make it difficult to monitor the socioeconomic and environmental provisions that are also in IBAs (Fidler, 2008).

Finally, the focus on hiring women outlined in the IBA did not become codified in collective agreements or other hiring and promotion tools used by the contractors, VBNC/Vale and the unions. Since the LIA was not involved in the bargaining process for the Special Project Agreement and the union did not have access to the IBA, the decisions about which parts of the IBA hiring guidelines and what specific wording to include in the agreement were left to the VBNC. And while some members of the Nunatsiavut Government were involved in bargaining the collective agreement between VBNC and the USW, there was no formal Nunatsiavut Government representation. Additionally, the confidentiality provisions of the IBA limited the inclusion of IBA clauses within the collective agreement. The USW only obtained access to some employment-related portions of the IBA after a long standoff. Furthermore, VBNC argued throughout negotiations that the inclusion of specific IBA provisions within the collective agreement would undermine the IBA and that therefore a blanket statement that the IBA would have priority over the collective agreement would ensure the fulfillment of employment-related provisions in the IBA. After much deliberation, some of the language of the IBA was included in the collective agreement; however, it was minimal and did not include the text regarding the prioritization of women. Accordingly, none of the union representatives interviewed were aware of the IBA mandate to prioritize the hiring of women. Therefore, only Nunatsiavut Government representatives were charged with prioritizing women in hiring.

The inadequate translation of women's participation into hiring procedures and collective agreements certainly played a part in outcomes that did not reflect the initial contributions of women's groups. However, the authors can only conclude that the absence of attention to women's employment was also influenced by the pervasive masculinity within the mining industry and the persistence of a viewpoint that positions Indigenous women workers as less skilled than their white male counterparts. Provisions to

include women represented a large deviation from the status quo. While the company had accepted that priority hiring for Indigenous workers was necessary, priority hiring of women was an even further incursion into usual practices.

While Indigenous men working at the mine also were being treated as token hires and facing barriers to advancement, these challenges were intensified for Indigenous women. Study results therefore conform to those of other studies examining the experiences of Indigenous women in mining, which describe the difficulties faced by Indigenous women entering non-traditional mining work (Parmenter and Kemp, 2007; Czyzewski et al., 2014). Notably, the Order of Preference and targeting training programs did not prevent Inuit men from facing discrimination, but worker and union support for the preferential hiring of Inuit and Innu men was much stronger than was support for the preferential hiring of Inuit or Innu women.

In particular, many of the Indigenous men interviewed did not support the prioritization of women. This may be tied to a perception that provisions to help women are not based in territorial rights or entitlements, but rather in Western feminism. Support for the prioritization of Inuit and Innu in hiring decisions was therefore grounded in claims to Aboriginal title of the territory, whereas the prioritization of Inuit and Innu women within this group was supported or refuted with reference to equality between men and women. The prioritization of women was therefore not located within the same anti-colonial frame as the prioritization of Inuit. The ideological separation of the wellbeing of Indigenous women from questions of Aboriginal rights has been refuted by Indigenous women scholars like St. Denis (2007), who suggests that Indigenous women need to connect the discrimination they face to colonialism and address the inequality while struggling for self-determination.

## CONCLUSION

In examining women's work experiences at Voisey's Bay alongside the contributions of women's groups to the Voisey's Bay EA process, this paper speaks to both the importance of undertaking a gendered analysis of environmental policy and of understanding how participation in EAs is integrated with other institutional processes, such as IBAs. Our findings suggest that ensuring broad participation in EA processes is not sufficient to ensure that the needs of different community constituencies are addressed. Attention needs to be paid to the translation of participation into institutions beyond the EA itself. Our findings also point to the additional difficulties that negotiators face when trying to secure employment benefits for women.

These findings challenge the assumption in the EA literature that increasing the breadth and quality of public participation will result in more desirable social and environmental outcomes. Though we agree that EA processes should facilitate public participation, we also suggest that

the ways in which EA recommendations are translated into IBAs and further into project development outcomes warrant greater attention. Clarifying and facilitating the translation of participation into development outcomes has the potential to provide Indigenous women with greater influence over resource development policy.

While the better translation of policy from participation in EAs through to policy outcomes has the potential to *improve* Indigenous women's access to employment benefits resulting from development, we do not anticipate that it will eliminate gender disparities in employment altogether. At best, gender-sensitive employment and training policies can begin to challenge the masculine culture of the mining industry. The gendered implications of resource extraction, however, extend far beyond unequal access to highly paid employment, influencing traditional harvesting activities, family stability, and community life (Lahiri-Dutt, 2011; Czyzewski et al., 2014). Indigenous women therefore have ample reason to be concerned about resource development in their territories.

EAs are an important space where women can express their concerns about resource development and their suggestions for mitigation of socioeconomic impacts. Although this participation may not have a large impact on the direction of resource projects, it may have positive effects by indirectly influencing other institutions and increasing awareness about women's concerns.

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