












-  Title
-  Positionality
-  Research Question
-  Background
-  Background
-  Methods
-  Findings
-  Findings
-  Meaning
-  Future research
-  Thanks/Questions

Gender and Impact Assessment in the Northern Alberta Oil Sands Region: An Exploratory Review

International Association for Impact Assessments

Session: Gender and Impact Assessment
April 26th, 2024

Kathryn Stone | PhD Student
kathrynstone@uvic.ca

Supervisory Committee: Dr. Heather Castleden, Dr. Jeff Masuda, Dr. Diana Lewis



University
of Victoria












Positionality

- 🏠 Title
- ⊞ Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 Background
- 🔗 Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future research
- 💖 Thanks/Questions

- Settler (non-Indigenous person) from Nova Scotia of Scottish descent
- Interested in how the environment intersects with health in a gendered way since 2019
- PhD (year 1) in the Social Dimensions of Health at University of Victoria
 - Nestled within the Indigenous Environmental Health Risk Assessment (IEHRA) Project - 3 Indigenous communities in Northern Alberta

Research Question

How are impact assessments taking up gender in the Northern Alberta oil sands region?

-  Title
-  Positionality
-  Research Question
-  Background
-  Background
-  Methods
-  Findings
-  Findings
-  Meaning
-  Future research
-  Thanks/Questions

Northern Alberta

- 🏠 Title
- ⊞ Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 **Background**
- ⊞ Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 💖 Thanks/Questions

Treaty 8 Territory

Athapaskan-speaking Dene and Algonquian-speaking Western Woods Cree.

In the late eighteenth century, European fur traders entered the region and a new Indigenous people were established, Métis.



Oil Sands Region

- 🏠 Title
- ⌘ Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📌 **Background**
- ⊞ Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 📍 Thanks/Questions



Resource extraction and Gender

- Consideration of extraction as an extension of colonialism
- Consideration of settler colonialism as gender based violence
- Consideration of extraction as gender based violence
- Male dominated economy

- 🏠 Title
- = Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 **Background**
- 🔗 Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 💖 Thanks/Questions

Resource Extraction and Development Projects: Gendered implications in the Canadian Context (2-4)

07

- 🏠 Title
- ⊞ Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 Background
- 🔗 **Background**
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 💖 Thanks/Questions

01 Gender based violence

- Influx of male workers:
- Man camps
- Substance use
- Shift work

02 Economic inequity

- Childcare
- Lack of job opportunities
- Increase in housing costs



03 Loss of land

- Loss of land and parts of traditional territory can have profound impacts for Indigenous peoples, including women
- Cultural
 - Spiritual
 - Communal

Federally Mandated GBA + (5-7) 08

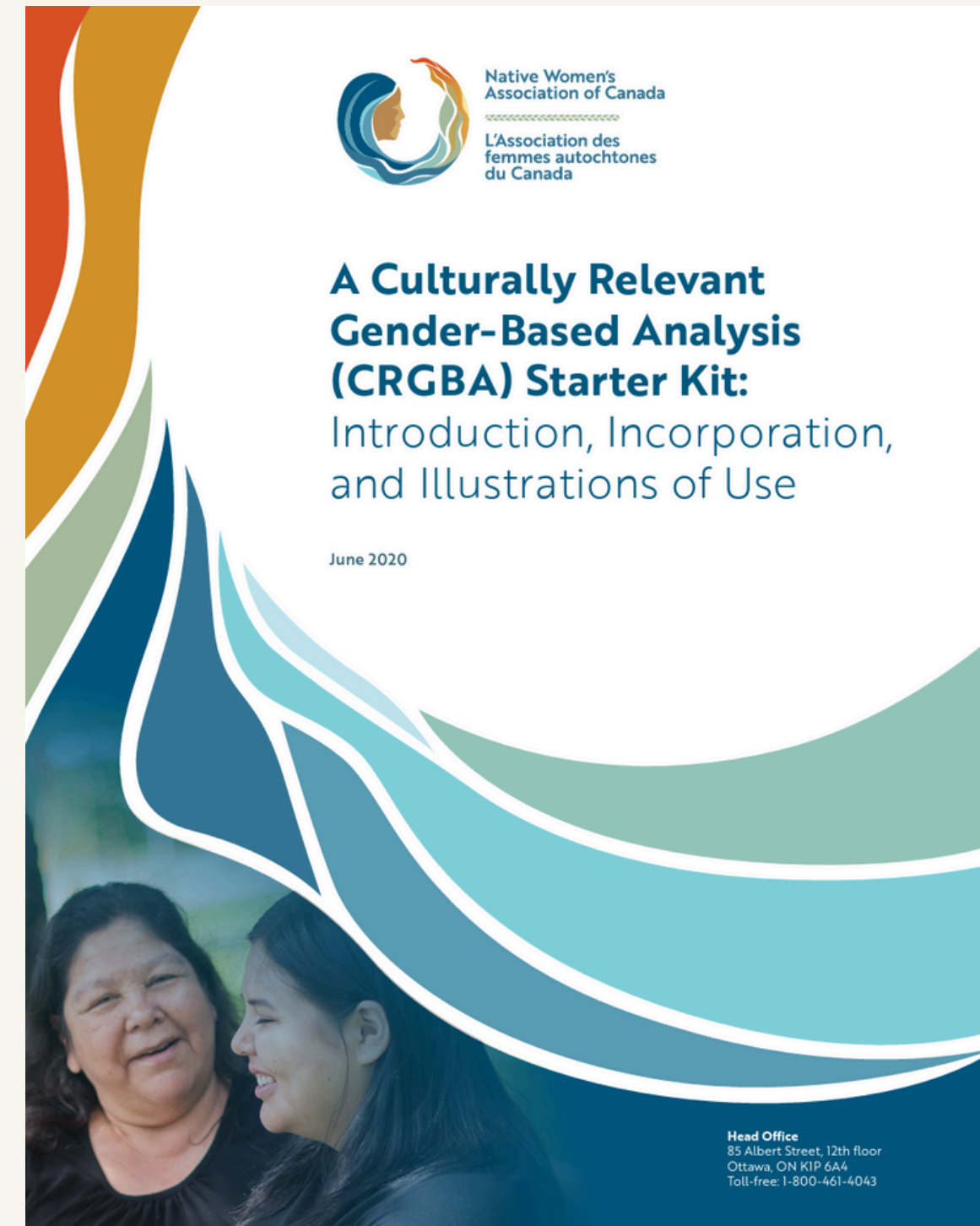
- 🏠 Title
- = Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 Background
- 🔗 Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 💖 Thanks/Questions

- 2019 - Subsection 22 (1) of the Impact Assessment Act mandates a GBA+
- Many critiques of GBA+ and how it has been used in IA, including:
 - Lack of practical work the “plus” section (intersectional piece)
 - Lack of queer representation
 - Lack of context on colonialism and Indigenous women’s specific experiences
 - Lack of community based standpoint
- Native Women’s Association of Canada has developed a Cultural Relevant Gender Based Analysis Framework and Toolkit

Methods (8)

- 🏠 Title
- = Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 Background
- ⊞ Backgorund
- 🔍 **Methods**
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 💖 Thanks/Questions

- Selected three published IAs related to oil sands development in Northern Alberta at three different points in time
- All assessment documents were searched for:
 - Gender, sex, female, wom*, girl*, Two-Spirit, men, male
- Documents and excerpts that contained gender content were then analyzed using CRGBA's guiding questions





1. Distinctions-based

Does the program or policy recognize and account for the distinct lived experiences between and among First Nations (both on-reserve and off-reserve, both status and non-status), Inuit (land claim beneficiary or not, living in Inuit Nunangat or not), and Métis (urban or rural) individuals?



2. Gender Diversity

Is the program or policy gender-inclusive and non-binary, recognizing that gender, sex, and sexuality are spectrums? For example, assigned sex includes male, female, or intersex; gender expression includes possibilities beyond masculine or feminine. While the following list is not exhaustive, gender identities include cisgender, transgender, gender fluid, or agender; and sexual orientations include Two-Spirit, queer, heterosexual, bisexual, or demisexual (i.e., attraction only to those with whom a deep emotional connection has been established).

3. Intersectionality

Does the program or policy account for intersecting identities as the foundation rather than as a matter of inclusion? Remember to consider:

- ◇ Cultural identity
- ◇ Race
- ◇ Class
- ◇ Ability
- ◇ Sex
- ◇ Gender identity
- ◇ Sexual Orientation
- ◇ Age
- ◇ Location
- ◇ Impact of colonization

These axes are simply a starting point. There are many more aspects that influence how someone experiences structural systems, and we must consider how all these intersecting identifies interact with one another and influence the amount of privilege and/or oppression one will experience.

4. Indigenous Knowledge

Does the program or policy place value on non-Western ways of knowing and transmitting knowledge, such as storytelling, ceremonies, sharing circles, or land-based learning?

Does the program or policy place value on Indigenous women's ways of knowing?



CRGBA Guiding Questions

Teck Resource Ltd. Frontier Oil Sands Mine EIA Report

Distinctions Based

Does the IA recognize and account for the distinct lived experiences between and among First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals?

Multiple cultural impact assessments were conducted with Fort McKay Métis Nation, Fort McMurray Métis Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation, and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. Instead of amalgamating all impacted Indigenous communities, each were engaged distinctly. Yet, not included were the voices of urban Indigenous peoples living in affected areas, such as Fort McMurray.

Gender Diversity

Is the IA gender-inclusive?

Gender was positioned strictly as a concept with women and men as discrete categories. Specific impacts to Indigenous women regarding resource extraction and the subsequent disruption to community and family relations were highlighted extensively, as well as economic inequalities. Impacts related to queer, Two Spirit, and non-binary peoples were absent from all documents.

Intersection-ality

Does the IA account for intersecting identities as the foundation rather than as a matter of inclusion?

While cultural assessments continuously contextualized Indigenous women's experiences within colonization and cultural identity, they lacked mention of sexual orientation, class, and location. It is difficult to assess whether intersecting identities were the foundation, rather than a matter of inclusion, when not many axes of oppression were present besides gender and impacts of colonization.

Indigenous Knowledge

Does the IA value on non-Western ways of knowing and transmitting knowledge, such as storytelling, ceremonies, sharing circles, or land-based learning? Does the program or policy place value on Indigenous women's ways of knowing?

Indigenous knowledge was captured in each cultural impact assessment heavily, especially in terms of traditional land use. Yet, the specific knowledge of Indigenous women was overlooked.

Narrative of 3 IAs

- 🏠 Title
- ⊞ Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 Background
- 🔗 Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- 📝 Findings**
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 💖 Thanks/Questions



Imperial Kearl Oil Sands Project - Mine Development (2007)

- No mention of human sex or gender
- Analysis of non-human female animals



Teck Resources Ltd. Frontier Oil Sands Mine project (2016)

- Several cultural IAs
 - Distinctions-based
 - Indigenous knowledge
- Minimal intersectionality
- No gender diversity
- Approved by province but discontinued in 2016



Suncor Base Mine Extension Project (in progress)

- The first oil sands project to be reviewed under the new 2019 Act
- Gender details beyond other projects - **but prescriptive**
- Gender diversity and intersectionality mentioned
- Currently paused through assessment process

What does this mean?

13

- 🏠 Title
- ⊞ Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 Background
- 🔗 Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ☆ Future Research
- 📄 Thanks/Questions

- The cost of not including gender in IAs
- As scope or requirements become more inclusive and comprehensive and proponents have to meaningfully include **gender based-violence, economic disparities, and land based losses**, they will need to come up with appropriate **mitigation measures** to get project approval
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls

Future Research Possibilities

14

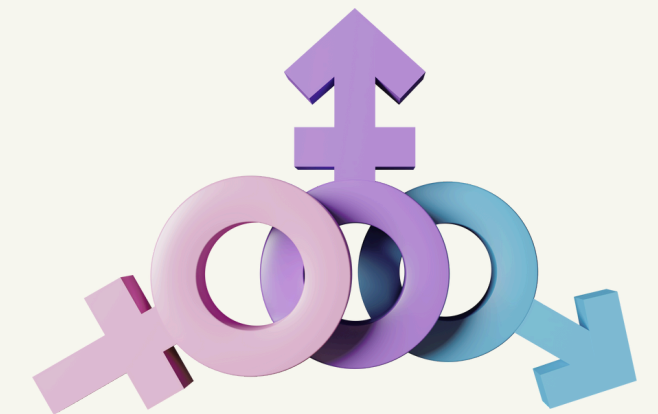
- 🏠 Title
- = Positionality
- 👁️ Research Question
- 📄 Background
- ⊞ Background
- 🔍 Methods
- 📺 Findings
- ✍️ Findings
- ✅ Meaning
- ★ Future Research
- 📄 Thanks/Questions



Continue monitoring
how gender is taken
up in IAs



Culturally-relevant
gender based
analysis



Ways to ensure
intersectionality and
gender diversity in IA

References

1. Westman, C. N., Joly, T. L., & Gross, L. (2019). *Extracting Home in the Oil Sands: Settler Colonialism and Environmental Change in Subarctic Canada*. Routledge.
2. Manning, S., Nash, P., Levac, L., Stienstra, D., & Stinson, J. (2018). *Strengthening Impact Assessments for Indigenous Women* (p. 77). Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.
3. Aalhus, M., Oke, B., & Fumerton, R. (2018). The social determinants of health impacts of resource extraction and development in rural and northern communities: A summary of impacts and promising practices for assessment and monitoring (1; p. 84). Northern Health - the northern way of caring.
https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/office-health-resource-development/documents/impacts-promising-practices-assessment-monitoring.pdf
4. MMIW. (2019). *Reclaiming power and place: The final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.
5. Lefroy, I., & Stacey, J. (2022). "Add Women and Stir": The Potential and Limits of GBA+ in Canadian Impact Assessment Law. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 34(2), 214–245. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjwl.34.2.02>

References

6. Hoogeveen, D., Williams, A., Hussey, A., Western, S., & Gislason, M. K. (2021). Sex, mines, and pipelines: Examining 'Gender-based Analysis Plus' in Canadian impact assessment resource extraction policy. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 8(3), 100921. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2021.100921>
7. Dempsey, J., Doebeli, A. G., Hoogeveen, D., Quinn, C., & Sosa-Aranda, I. (2023). Inconsistent, downplayed, and pathologized: How mining's gendered impacts are considered in BC environmental assessment. *Canadian Geographies / Géographies Canadiennes*, 67(3), 320–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12795>
8. NWAC. (2020a). A Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis (CRGBA) Starter Kit: Introduction, Incorporation, and Illustrations of Use. <https://www.nwac.ca/assets-knowledge-centre/A-Culturally-Relevant-Gender-Based-Analysis.pdf>