WOMEN AND YOUTH OF WEKWEÈTÌ REVEAL THE IMPACTS OF THE DIAMOND MINES LOCATED IN THE TLICHO REGION

by

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Abstract

This qualitative study was conducted as an attempt to better understand how the diamond mines in the Northwest Territories impact the remote Native community of Wekweètì socially, economically, and culturally. A blended methodology using participatory action and narrative approaches was used to strengthen rapport and work collaboratively with the community. The research participants were male and female youth between the ages of 12 and 24 and women 25 and older. Five talking circles, seven personal interviews, and the author's reflective journaling were three methods of collecting data. A thematic analysis identified nine main themes:

Social impacts - Alcohol and Drugs, Parenting, and Jealousy;

Cultural impacts – Traditions Still Occurring, Traditions Occurring Less, and Loss of Language;

Economic impacts - Debt, Education/Training, and Standard of Living.

The findings will be used to help the community advocate for social, economic, and cultural services and supports from the diamond mines and various levels of government.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Thesis Outline

The main body of the thesis is structured in the following manner: Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Literature Review, Chapter 3: Methodology, Chapter 4: Research Findings, and Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implication of the Research.

The introduction begins with a memoir of why this research is of personal interest to me and then a discussion follows as to why there is a need for this research. The purpose of the research is outlined; then a brief overview of the community is profiled. The literature review provides insight into the extent that non-renewable resource development impacts indigenous communities. It also reviews how colonialism and patriarchy continue to impact women and youth. This chapter also examines the historical evolution of socio-economic assessments that help reduce the impacts of economic development.

The methodology chapter explains how the data was collected using a blended Participatory and Narrative approach. The culturally sensitive approach details how talking circles and personal interviews were used to gather rich qualitative data designed to better understand the views of youth and women. It also reveals how a thematic analysis was used to deconstruct the data.

The research findings chapter defines the outcome of the study and provides examples of the participants' views by using short and long quotations. Specific attention is paid to the individual themes that developed as a result of distilling the research data from the four research questions asked. The final chapter concludes the thesis by discussing implications of the research and the researcher's view on conducting respectful social work research in aboriginal communities.

A short narrative is written into my thesis introduction to help put into perspective why it is important for me to conduct this research in the manner I have. Upon reflecting about dramatic dimensions of human experience my thoughts drifted back into childhood memories of growing up with my native friends.

Inspiration: My Personal Memoir

It is important that as a woman of European descent I understand what compelled me to undertake this thesis project with First Nations people who reside in an isolated northern Canadian community. I know that the research component was required to fulfill my obligations to obtain a graduate degree in social work. However, I could have chosen to conduct the research in a southern non-Aboriginal community. I had to reflect back to my childhood and then move into the present to be able to identify the reasons why I felt that this collaborative research was important enough for me to conduct in a small remote community with First Nations women and youth.

My journey began as a child on the north side of the Shuswap Lake in the small unincorporated rural community of Scotch Creek, in the southern interior of British Columbia. The community was situated near a small reservation located a few miles away at Lee Creek. A number of native children from that reserve became my closest friends. My parents' best friends also lived on the same reserve and together they participated in a number of subsistence and social activities, so it was inevitable that the lives of our families became closely entwined. At school I was teased and called "squaw" by other white children and wondered if it was because I had very long dark brown hair and brown tanned skin. I remember how rampant racism was back then and I disliked the White kids who would tease and avoid being near me and my native friends.

As I grew into adulthood, I dreamt that the clash between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal worldviews would disappear. Since my early childhood I have aspired to appreciate Aboriginal culture and being embraced by nature. In 2004, I went north to work with the Tlicho First Nations as a community social worker. It was there, surrounded by nature, amidst the wildlife, and living among the Tlicho people that I felt at peace. However, I soon realized that the peace that I felt was not present in many of the Tlicho people. I realized that I was living amidst the aftermath of over one hundred years of colonization and witnessed how it continued to detrimentally impact several generations of people. As a privileged White woman I recognized that I have choices of where and how I live. Many of the First Nations women in the Tlicho communities are impacted by the past and present forms of colonization and do not have that same freedom. It was through the many stories told by the local women, that I recognized their stories were similar to my own, as women who have struggled and survived living under the constraints of a patriarchal society.

I also understood the profound differences. My family and I were not swept to the margins of society and treated as inferior human beings. My sister and I were not taken by the RCMP and/or other government officials and sent off to residential school far from our home, to be beaten for using our own language. I was not forcefully separated from my family for years, constantly told that my family did not love me, and that I was not wanted back home. I was not pressured to quit school at fifteen years of age and given the choice of losing my status if I chose not to.

Moreover, when I visited the five Tlicho communities through my work as a community social worker and a mental health and addictions counselor, I heard many stories of how the diamond mines were impacting families. Some people felt that their children and

grandchildren would be the losers in the diamond rush as the development was rapidly changing cultural values. The concerns were usually voiced by those women with children who remained in the community to care for their families. It is because of these past and present horrific injustices inflicted upon Aboriginal people that I was inspired to conduct this research in the smallest of the Tlicho communities.

In the Canadian Northwest Territories (NT), the destruction of traditional Aboriginal ways of life continues today under a new guise of colonialism, called diamond mining. Currently in the NT, there are three active diamond mines in operation and one under construction. It is likely that the fourth mine will also hire employees from small remote Dene communities when production begins. Some may call the ongoing diamond mining development progress, but with all of its economic hype, do the benefits promote or hinder the overall quality of life for Aboriginal people?

Need for the Study

Women have rarely been included in large non-renewable resource development meetings and those who have spoken have not had their voices taken seriously. Just as important are the voices of youth, who have not been included in any of the NT Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) or Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (SEIAs). Youth will be the future leaders of their communities, and it is they who will have to live with the consequences of the decisions currently made on their behalf.

Aboriginal women and youth have been silenced for too long. James Wah-shee, a Dene elder, remembers an old saying, "Just because an Indian is quiet doesn't mean he [or she] doesn't know anything." (1984, p. 126) Sinclair (2003) also speaks to the silence and refers to Paulo Freire's concept of *conscientization*. She writes that the concept "combats the

culture of silence where the oppressed are not heard in society, and where a lack of knowledge creates high risk for the perpetuation of racism, discrimination, and the ethic of blaming the victim" (p. 2).

To date, no collaborative research has been conducted in this community with women and youth that has specifically looked at the positive and negative social, cultural, and economic impacts of the diamond mines. Eliminating women and youth from decision-making processes within their communities will ultimately affect the future of their existence. Therefore, all people should respectively acknowledge the destructive systemic initiatives that were and continue to be involuntarily forced upon Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal people. Three examples are implementation of reservations, forced relocation, and mandated residential school attendance. The reason to acknowledge the destruction is so that positive measures can be employed to help reverse the devastation that colonialist social dependence has created. Aboriginal people are able to make decisions on how best to enhance the well-being of their people through preserving their culture and participating in capitalist endeavors if they collectively choose to.

Historically, the systemic initiatives of colonialism, no matter where they were imposed, were designed "to break up communities and families and to destroy the sense of nationhood and the spirit of cooperation among the colonized" (Maracle, 1996, p. 93). The effects of colonialist initiatives that were designed to annihilate all aspects of Aboriginal culture have been and continue to be extremely profound. Stout and Kipling (2003) equate the damage to when "a pebble [is] dropped in a pond, the effects of trauma tend to ripple outwards from victims to touch all those who surround them" (p. 33). The ripple effect continued to be evident in my work as a mental health/addiction counselor. Many of those

who attended residential school have been severely traumatized. They find it difficult to function in their day to day lives affected by their past experiences. Their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren also feel the effects, but many do not understand the causes. It is obvious that the injustices experienced by being forced to participate in what is deemed foreign colonialist regimes have multi-generationally impacted the lives of Aboriginal people.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to provide youth and women with an opportunity to break their silence and express their views on how the diamond mines are impacting their community. It was also designed to depict how the development has changed the social, cultural, and economic dynamics of their community. The participants will create a heightened awareness by telling their stories and demonstrate that colonialism has not been relegated to the history books, but that it still continues to impose its Eurocentric values on Aboriginal people today under the guise of diamond mining.

The intent of this research is to help empower all aboriginal youth and women in the future to have their voices heard and for the stakeholders to acknowledge that they are important in the future preservation of the traditional values of their community. It is hoped that all levels of government and the CEOs/Board of Directors of the diamond mines will help provide infrastructure that is deemed necessary to enhance the traditional social functioning of Wekweètì as determined by the women and youth and in the best interests of the community. Also, it is hoped that the findings will invoke positive changes for the people of Wekweètì.

Not only will the research be informative to the residents of Wekweètì and the four other Tlicho communities, but also to other researchers, interested non-Aboriginal people, and other Aboriginal communities that may be in the midst of negotiating policy for large economic non-renewable resource development projects.

Finally, the research will promote social work values and enhance the use and credibility of qualitative research in aboriginal communities.

Research Question

After listening to many sad stories of how the Tlicho people were being impacted by the diamond mines I wondered if the Tlicho women located in Wekweètì would be interested in participating in a research project. The response was overwhelming. It was through a meeting held in the community that the research question was developed. It was revealed that the social, cultural, and economic impacts of the three active diamond mine projects located inside the Tlicho region have yet to be fully understood from the perspective of Wekweètì women and youth. It was during this meeting that the research question was developed and narrowed to ask: What are the views of youth and women on how the diamond mines socially, culturally, and economically impact the remote Tlicho community of Wekweètì? Within the context of this question four other questions were refined to specifically address components of the research question. They are as follows:

1. Can you tell me if you have noticed any social changes in this community since people began working at the diamond mines? Please explain.

    Social Changes: Are there more or less people employed being educated (including women and youth), experiencing family violence, drinking, using drugs, family breakups, and families leaving to live in Yellowknife.

2. Do you feel that the diamond mines have financially helped or hurt your family and/or the community as a whole?

    If helped please explain.

    If you feel that the mines have made some things worse please explain.

3. Are there just as many people participating in cultural and traditional activities since people have been working at the mines?
   For the Tlicho
   For the Métis
   Just as much hunting? Making dry meat? Setting the nets? Making dry fish? Sewing? Berry picking? Use of Native language?

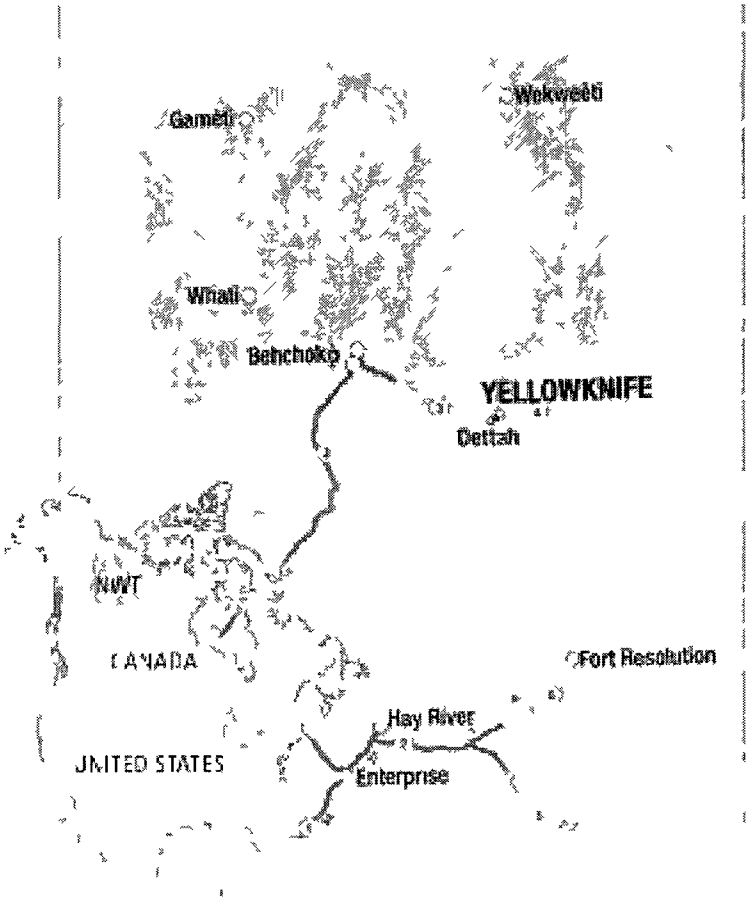
4. How do you think the diamond mines or the governments could help improve peoples' lives of those who live in this community?
   What services or supports would you like them see help provided for the community? For the mineworkers, for families?

The Community of Wekweètì

It is important to understand the historical context of Wekweètì and its Dene people. The Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics (2005) notes that this native community, formerly known as Snare Lake, was not established until 1962. It was founded when a Tlicho elder, Alexis Arrowmaker, brought several families from Behchokö in an attempt to resist the rigid rules of colonialism and to maintain their traditional lifestyles. Prior to that time the site was known as an outpost hunting camp that was visited regularly due to an abundance of natural food sources that could sustain their people for as long as the elders can remember. Today hunting, trapping, and fishing are its main economic activities. Today the community sits on the migration path of the Bathurst Caribou and continues to provide the community with an important traditional food source. (Tlicho Government, n.d.)

It is the smallest and most remote of the five Tlicho communities and the 2007 Census reports that its population has grown to 143 residents from 138 in 2005. The community is located 195 air kilometres almost directly north of Yellowknife, and takes about 45 minutes to access by plane from the capital city. It is also located closest to the three diamond mine sites. (Edzo is the 5th community and it is the white dot just below Behchokö on the map.

Figure 1 Tlicho lands map



Wekweeti is governed by a male Chief and two elected male councillors Its infrastructure includes a pre-school, but no daycare The Alexis Arrowmaker School enrols students from kindergarten to grade nine, but the students from grade ten to twelve are flown out to attend school in either Whati or Behchoko The community also has an employment resource centre with a few computers to assist people in trying to locate and secure jobs The community is visited by a nurse regularly, usually once every two months, by a counsellor about two or three times a year, a child protection worker, whenever a call is serious enough

to warrant an investigation; and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) fly into the community whenever they deem an issue is serious enough to attend.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Non-renewable resource development has altered and continues to alter the social fabric of Indigenous and Aboriginal societies around the world. However, for decades much of the attention has been paid to environmental destruction of eco-systems which impacts not only those societies but all global societies. As a result, policies have been created and mandated to help prevent multi-nationals and large organizations from conducting irresponsible development practices. In spite of this, shareholder-driven capitalism around the world has neglected to adequately examine social, economic, and cultural impacts on the people whose traditional lands they are determined to exploit.

Ballard and Banks (2003) were interested in Asia-Pacific mining impacts and reported that global interest in analyzing social impacts "has followed in the wake of the 1980s mineral boom and has provided a point of access of entry to a very wide range of consultants" (p. 11). The consultants provide a means by which shareholder behaviours can be monitored to help prevent careless cultural destruction of indigenous societies. The authors revealed that the Asia-Pacific hard rock mining development projects were primarily located within "frontier zones, among relatively remote indigenous communities" (p. 11) which is of particular interest to consultants.

Mitrofankin (2006) was raised in the Noglikskii District of Russia and reports that oil and gas developments in that area have significantly impacted the indigenous people socially and culturally. He reports that the most significant impacts have been primarily related to both domestic and wild reindeer. Some changes he noted were that wild reindeer populations decreased by 70 to 80 percent in 2004 -2005, migratory patterns moved farther out, calving grounds were decimated, and suitable pasture sizes reduced. In addition, the Tallymen Cree

of James Bay, Canada identified that economic development has created social division within communities between those who work for the corporations and those who do not, an increase in crime rates, and made wild places accessible which has increased poaching of wild deer and salmon (Whiteman, 2004).

Hilson (2004) also reports that large-scale mining projects located in Ghana have marginalized an excessive number of subsistence farmers. As with their ancestors, they are a people who have depended upon natural resources that are produced from the land for their survival. Many societies in this country have been drastically altered since thousands of indigenous people have been dislocated by being forcibly relocated so that mining corporations can move in to exploit their traditional lands for capitalist gains. Hilson also acknowledges that communities have been negatively impacted by economic development as prostitution and drug use have increased. The impacts are detrimental to the social structure of indigenous communities creating family disorganization and eroding cultural identities.

Traditionally, communalism in native societies was the basis of native nationhood. According to Guerrero (2003) native nationhood was "premised on matrilineal lines of kinship and descent for most if not all Native peoples prior to colonialism and patriarchy." (p. 63) Portman and Herring (2001) report that Native societies "focused on women but were not entirely ruled by women" (p. 2). They also note that women typically lived many years longer than men and were prestiged as the keepers of cultural knowledge and many female elders were referred to as clan mothers. LaRocque (2002) identifies that prior to the Whites arriving "Aboriginal women enjoyed comparative honour, equality and even political power in a way European woman did not at the same time in history" (p. 148). She makes it clear that the disparity of power between First Nations men and women is not to be defined as a

cultural issue, but an issue of patriarchal power and control that has developed out of the impacts of colonialism. The patriarchal domination has evolved in First Nations communities by men mirroring non-Aboriginal men's controlling behaviour; but also through residential school children mirroring the inappropriate behaviour of their Christian caregivers.

Patriarchy is a dominant ideology that has been imposed upon many Aboriginal people in the North since contact with Europeans. Today it is strengthened by economic development within aboriginal communities as it plays an active role in cultural erosion. The imposition of patriarchy upon First Nations communities has far exceeded its oppressive limits upon women.

The patriarchal processes of colonization that have minimized the importance of Aboriginal women's role in their communities and limited their voices to private spaces are the same processes that are responsible for diminishing the importance of youth and their traditional roles. It is not that youth are deemed unimportant, but the cultural gap between the youth and elders, as with men and women, has increased through the processes of colonization, therefore changing the social fabric of Aboriginal communities. For example, many youth and elders are unable to communicate with each other because they do not speak a common language.

Canada is not immune to altering the social, economic, and cultural fabric of many Aboriginal communities as a result of exploitive mining development projects. Brody (1988), a non-Aboriginal researcher, identifies the intent of colonialism clearly by stating, the "objective of the war has always been to deprive indigenous inhabitants of their resources: territory, water, wildlife, fish, language, religion, and even their children" (p. x). The intent of colonialism from the time of its imposition has not significantly changed. More recently, it

is the covert subtleness of the diamond mining initiatives that colonialism continues to negatively impact Aboriginal societies in the Northwest Territories (NT). To make matters worse, very little attention and/or respect has been given to Wekweètì women and youth who want to talk about diamond mining impacts.

The Canadian and Territorial governments have approved the imposition of large economic development projects on traditional lands of the Aboriginal people in the NT for decades with little thought given to the long-term social, cultural, and economic effects. Canada's first environmental assessment occurred in the NT in 1974 to project the impacts of the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline development (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999). Thomas Berger was commissioned by the Trudeau government in 1974 "to conduct an inquiry into the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline" (Berger, 1988, p. 1). It was the first Canadian report of its kind to seriously consider what Aboriginal and northern peoples had to say about economic development in or near their traditional territory. Berger heard over 1000 testimonials as he travelled throughout the Mackenzie Valley and Western Arctic Region listening to stories of how the pipeline would impact people's lives. The findings, published in 1977, "found the environmental losses irreparable, social impacts devastating and economic benefits limited" (Archibald & Crnkovich, p. 22) primarily because land claims had not been settled (Berger). His recommendations were to delay the project for at least 10 years. The revelation was a unique "Canadian experience . . . by which the nation examined the future of the North and its peoples." The 1977 Berger inquiry titled *Northern Frontiers Northern Homeland: The Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry* set precedence in the creation of mandated economic development impact assessments in the NT.

Since 1974, several studies have been conducted in northern communities to project the social, economic, and environmental impacts of non-renewable resource development; more specifically, with the three diamond mine projects in 1995, 1999, 2001 and the Mackenzie Gas Project in 2006. As a direct result of Berger's report there have been some significant changes to the impact assessment process and over time, the comprehensiveness of the assessments has grown. Currently, more attention is being paid to the social and cultural impacts as the government has mandated that within the Environment Impact Assessments (EIA) that a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) be conducted. However, little attention is placed on community members' views of the possible cultural impacts. Even more disturbing is that little research has examined how non-renewable resource development projects actually impact the communities socially, economically, and culturally during and after production.

Economic Development Impact Assessments in the Northwest Territories

An EIA is the first step and primary means in collecting information from within communities that are likely to be affected by resource development. The information is obtained by holding public meetings, focus groups, and individual interviews. The Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) are compiled to report the findings of community impacts to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB). It is this government body that grants permission to move to the second step of the process. It is during this second stage that the government will seek independent researchers to review the impact statements, such as the Status of Women in the Northwest Territories (SWNWT).

EIAs were made mandatory for large development projects by the territorial government as a means to protect the socio-cultural and economic interests of Aboriginal

communities. Around the world they play an integral role in demonstrating to governments that large and/or small multi-national corporations are planning to implement collaborative and culturally sensitive economic development projects on traditional and sacred lands of Aboriginal people. According to the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) (1997) guidelines, an EIA should ensure early public community participation prior to beginning development, consider traditional knowledge, and include an accurate assessment of "all potential environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts, especially impacts on the traditional uses of resources and livelihoods of indigenous people" (p. 6). The key to addressing fairness and balance in the final decision is to "identify, communicate, predict, and interpret the information related to potential impacts of development . . . upon humans" (p. 7). Without identifying and addressing the impacts it is not possible to create a fair and equitable agreement between the developer and the indigenous people.

All non-renewable resource development projects located within the NT are currently subject to the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (1998). However, in spite of the *Act*'s mandate, the only mining corporation that conducted an EIA in Wekweètì was De Beers. The other two diamond mining corporations, Diavik and Broken Hillside Proprietary (BHP) did not visit Wekweètì, but had Tlicho leadership representation meet elsewhere to speak on behalf of their community members. All reports with the exception of the *Gender analysis of the effects of the Mackenzie Gas Project* (2006) indicate that there has not been a focus on hearing womens' voices and no invitations were made to even consider the voices of youth (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1999; Brockman & Argue, 1995; Collins, 2002; SWCNWT, 1999, 2004, 2006).

Shapcott (1989) states that EIAs have been criticized for being "too scientific and technical" (p. 58). Many of the Aboriginal people who attend the EIA public meetings are not familiar with the technical and scientific language used in the presentations and question periods. Often the translators, if they are used, find that there are no words in their native tongue to translate the scientific and technical language into terms clearly understood by their people. Shapcott also states, "the language [of the EIA] reflects the view of the industrialized society"; (p. 58) not that of Aboriginal people. There is a disparity between colonialist points of view and that of Aboriginal people; one to cultivate wealth vs. nurture nature.

It is also important to mention that Wekweètì is grossly under supported by the Federal Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), and the large diamond mining corporations which all have the financial means to assist the community in building capacity. However, in 2006, the review board acknowledged that the communities that face the greatest impacts, because of large-scale development projects, are those who have the lowest supportive resource capacity. Therefore, according to the review board's acknowledgement, Wekweètì would fall into this category.

Socio-Economic Impact Assessments

Over the years, EIAs in the NT have become more comprehensive due to an awareness created by past Aboriginal resistance to the Mackenzie Gas Project and the Status of Women Council in the Northwest Territories (SWCNWT). The assertive agenda and consultation process helps provide an opportunity for women to advocate for social, political, and economic equality. The awareness created by Aboriginal resistance and such organizations as the Status of Women Council allowed the review board to recognize that the

EIAs process of collecting information pertinent to the social, economic, and cultural impacts of non-resource development was not working well. As a result, a plan was implemented to incorporate a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) as part of the EIA process. Within the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, the project developers are mandated to conduct a SEIA whereby the process "shall be carried out in a timely and expeditious manner" (S.5.1.1.). The purpose is to regard "the protection of social, cultural, and economic well-being of residents and communities" (S.5.1.1.(b)).

In 2001, DeBeers Mining contracted researchers to conduct an SEIA of the proposed Snap Lake development, in Wekweètì. The report revealed that there were no face-to-face interviews conducted with women, who were not professionals, or who did not have husbands working at the mine sites (Collins, 2002). In addition, no youth were interviewed.

In response to BHP and Diavik diamond mines' EISs, independent researchers were hired by the Status of Women Council to gather information from women in several Aboriginal communities on the socio-economic and environmental effects of the diamond mines located in the Tlicho Region (Brockman & Argue, 1995; SWCNWT, 1999). Although there was extensive mention of environmental issues and a brief note in regards to the possibilities of sustainable development being initiated in communities within these reports, there was little concern evidenced for the socio-economic impacts of development or exacerbation of existing social issues and cultural erosion.

In 2005, the review board was responsible for holding "over 50 meetings with approximately 550 people [which] took place in 13 different communities" (p. 5) to hear from the people who dealt with the negative "social, economic, and cultural impacts everyday". These included hearing from social workers, nurses, and elders. However, in

2005, Wekweètì was not one of the communities visited by the review board. In April 2007 during the preliminary visit to Wekweètì I stopped by the review board office located in Yellowknife and questioned why Wekweètì was not visited in 2005 to learn about the everyday impacts of economic development. A staff member stated that there were representatives from that community who attended meetings in one of the other Tlicho communities.

In 2006, the review board reported that SEIA needed to take further steps to effectively fill in the gaps of protecting communities from detrimental effects of large development projects. It was noted that in the SEIA's current form, the "economic issues tend to overshadow the social issues" (p. 11). It was suggested that the social and economic be de-hyphenated, so that all impacts are explored separately to prevent overshadowing of one impact upon the other based on the importance of one over the other by the corporate elite who are engaged in development projects.

In spite of the review board's efforts to enhance the comprehensiveness of the EISs by implementing the SEIA, it is primarily the social and cultural impacts which are still not being thoroughly addressed or accurately being expressed. There are two possible reasons why the SEIAs have not been deemed successful. Local lay people were not invited to participate in any of the 50 review board meetings described above and at that time there were no guidelines for implementing SEIA. However, in March 2007 guidelines for implementing SEIA were released. Hopefully, the guidelines will ensure that there is a more equitable process to examine the impacts of future large scale development projects upon the Aboriginal traditional way of life.

In conclusion, the literature review reveals that only one of the EIAs and SEIAs conducted in the NWT occurred in Wekweètì. All of the other EIAs related to diamond mining were conducted in other NT communities, most outside of the Tlicho region, even though the mines are located in the Tlicho region. This is a critical point as this remote community is located closest to all three of the active diamond mine sites. It is also the smallest of the Aboriginal communities in the region with few resources and government supports. Furthermore, none of these EIAs or SEIAs specifically attempt to include the voices of women and youth.

Why the Voices of Women and Youth are so Important

In Sayers and MacDonald's (2001) *A strong and meaningful role for First Nation's women in governance,* John Borrows argues:

> First Nations women have too long been excluded from the circle of decision-making. This has lead to the male bias and has perpetuated the disintegration of harmony between male and female in Aboriginal societies. Such conduct is unconscionable. While colonialism is at the root of our learned disrespect for women, we cannot blame colonialism for our informed actions today. (p. 11)

Therefore, if this generation of First Nations leaders do not support the inclusion of women in important decision making processes that affect the social, economic, and cultural well being of their communities the loss of culture, language, and traditions of their societies will continue to progress rapidly. Balance and harmony has always been important and if it is not re-established soon the destructive nature of patriarchy and colonialism will continue to erode First Nations societies.

During an Environmental Assessment (EA) review of the Mackenzie Gas Project, women informed the Status of Women Council (2004) that EA public hearings are intimidating and not a friendly place "for community members to express their views and

concerns about the project." Therefore, when women are invited to participate in non-renewable development meetings, they must be made to feel welcome, their feedback taken seriously, and the importance of what they say must be considered. According to the SWCNWT (2004), that is when women will finally begin to speak out about the harmful effects of non-renewable resource development upon their communities.

In the NT, Brockman and Argue conducted the first review of a diamond mine impact study in 1995. Even today, it seems to be the most comprehensive report, which disclosed many impacts missed by the BHP Diamond Mine's EIA. The most significant change since the earlier EIAs has been that women's voices are being listened to more often. In 2006, the Imperial Oil Resources Ventures Limited (IORVL) conducted a gender analysis of the Mackenzie Gas Project. The process involved informal one-to-one information sessions with women during public consultations in the communities. However, a more equitable gender approach would have "involved separate meetings and workshops . . . specifically for women in [various] communities, to enable them to come together to share perspectives and experiences" (SWCNWT, Apr. 2006, p. 3). The Status of Women Council commented that in spite of Imperial Oil's efforts in listening to women's' voices it was unable to determine if women's' concerns have actually been considered and have made a difference in recent project development and decision-making.

There are a number of issues and concerns that Imperial Oil did recognize in the 2006 gender analysis report. It acknowledged that the Status of Women Council has created an awareness of why women were not participating in public meetings pertaining to development projects. The report revealed that women were disadvantaged because of the lack of time due to double duty of domestic and productive responsibilities, such as taking

care of elders and working outside the home. It revealed that many Aboriginal women lack the confidence to speak out and take leadership positions due to the imposition of Eurocentric patriarchal values and traditions. One example reported was, "women are not invited to, nor expected to participate in the informal gatherings" (p. 2) whereby their lack of participation will ultimately impact communities for decades to come. It was also noted that there is inadequate childcare support to provide women with the opportunity to attend important public meetings.

In Labrador, the Tongamiut Inuit Annait Ad Hoc Committee on Aboriginal Women and Mining exposed a number of concerns that women had in regards to the impacts of mining development (Sumi & Thomsen, 2001). Women in that region also identified that there is a "need for gender-specific research" (p. 16) when conducting EIAs as women see and experience things differently from men. However, these women also felt that their points of view, in spite of being voiced, were not respected enough to be heard, and therefore not considered in the EIA process.

In 2004, the Status of Women Council conducted an EIA review of the Mackenzie Gas Project. It discovered that the concerns women had voiced had not been heard therefore, were not addressed. The women expressed their frustration in that corporate stakeholders and government bodies invited certain Aboriginal individuals and/or organizations to represent their communities' interests. They also felt that those invited to meetings were not able to provide a true representation as those people invited were considered important and /or professionals. It was revealed that the people who were receiving income support or disability, youth, stay at home moms, blue-collar workers, and those who could not understand or speak English were not invited to the meetings to voice their concerns.

Furthermore, youth who provide their communities with a voice will help their people to have a better quality of life in the future. If they are encouraged to voice their concerns about their future they have the potential to be good leaders with the guidance of their elders. According to the *Foresight Youth Report* published by the Department of Science and Technology of South Africa (DSTSA) when youth are not included in foresight planning of socio-economic development initiatives they will feel the consequences of the decisions made for them in the future. The report identifies that quality of life is very "much influenced by the economy of the country" (Gqaleni, n.d., p. 1). If youth are not able to voice their concerns and ideas in regards to economic development initiatives many will continue their oppressive journey feeling the negative effects of the "new colonialism". Therefore, it is crucial that indigenous youth are given a voice that ensures their involvement in all aspects of future development enhances their quality of live and provides them the same opportunity to thrive as non indigenous youth.

The Arctic Indigenous Youth Alliance (AIYA), formerly known as the Dene Youth Alliance, was founded in 2003 to combat the lack of respect and support of non-renewable economic development in protecting the heritage, health, and land. The northern Indigenous youth stated that they have been taught by their parents, teachers, and elders not to engage in "high risk" relationships, "yet many of our leaders are pushing our people to participate in very risky relationships with people who have a history of abuse towards Indigenous people" (AIYA, 2006, p. 2). The youth argue that the stance is confusing as "healthy relationships are balanced and respectful, and so far the relationship between the proponents and the youth has not been this way" (p. 2). The AIYA insist that the planning of economic development

projects need to be conceived and led by northern people as they have taken care of themselves, their culture, health, and land since time immemorial.

In a report titled *Youth and Elder Feedback*, which emerged from the 2004 Dene Youth Alliance Summit, youth stated that when it came to economic development, one of the things they wanted in "resisting cultural genocide" . . . was a voice, "to be listened to, and to have a say in every aspect of the project" (AIYA, attachment #2, pp. 1, 2). Therefore, the AIYA states that an integral part of the Joint Review Panel's responsibility was to remain objective when determining the facts of EIA and SEIA reports and "work towards a vision of respect for the future of the youth" (p. 1).

The National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group (2004-2005) is comprised of youth between the ages of 18-24 who are chosen from diverse communities from across Australia based upon their leadership skills. They argue that in spite of their people now being a minority in their country "through hard work and determination, we can still express our issues, improve current situations and benefit the lives of our people" (p. 1).

However, the promotion of Indigenous youth leadership skills in small remote communities located within the NT is either non-existent or still in its infancy. Therefore, it is critical that those youth are provided the opportunity and encouragement to have a voice in research. The promotion of having the voices of youth heard and considered will inform the public and all levels of government of their perspectives. It is important that they be empowered to express their concerns so that the impacts of non-renewable resource development in their region arrest the erosion of their cultures and improve their traditional quality of life into the future.

To slow the process of cultural erosion there is a need to study the social, cultural, and economic impacts of diamond mining in the Tlicho Region. In one study, women voiced that they felt that social problems exacerbated by development would not be addressed, as they had not been in the past in spite of promises being made. Smith (1999) notes, "Indigenous people know and understand what it means for agreements to be dishonoured. The continued faith in the process of negotiating is about retaining faith in the humanity of indigenous beliefs, values and customary practices" (p. 160). Why, after many years of boom and bust development in the North, have sufficient resources not been implemented in rural and remote communities to counter balance the negative impacts upon traditions and values of Aboriginal culture?

The small remote First Nations community of Wekweètì especially needs to have the voices of its women and youth heard. These women have been excluded from participating in all previous impact studies but one. The youth have yet to be given an opportunity to be heard. In addition, only one major non-renewable development corporations in the NT made an intentional effort to include women in their EIS public meetings to hear their points of view, however, it was not a mining corporation. In addition, considering that youth have not been given the opportunity to express their views, whether positive or negative, in relation to how the diamond mines effect them and their community, this project will allow them to have their voices heard.

Therefore, to reiterate, the purpose of this collaborative research project guided by Wekweètì women and youth will help us to better understand the social, economic, and cultural impacts of the three diamond mine projects. The only mining impact studies that have been completed to date have been conducted by either the Status of Women Council, or

the corporations themselves and have not been truly conducted as PAR projects. Therefore, it was important to make this research project collaborative at all stages, guided by the community, focused on hearing what women and youth had to say, and to promote skill development. It was also hoped that the research findings would enhance individual, community, and public knowledge, and would encourage the diamond mining stakeholders to contribute in enhancing and preserving the social functioning of this small remote community.

Social Impacts

Mining in the NWT began in the 1930s and with it came detrimental social change to Aboriginal communities (Paci & Villebrun, 2004). Previous research indicates that "NWT communities are familiar with the impacts of resource development" (SWCNWT, July 2006, p. 2) and that the residents are cognizant of how the projects have changed the fabric that binds their societies together. The wage economy produced by non-renewable resource development exacerbates existing social problems and creates new ones in Aboriginal communities. Under the new guise of colonization it continues to erode the social traditions of Aboriginal societies.

The following social problems existed in varying degrees prior to non-renewable resource development, but reports indicate that there is an obvious increase in substance abuse, family breakdown (Paci & Villebrun, 2004) spousal assaults, elder abuse, child abuse, sexual assaults, (SWCNWT, July 2006) STI's (sexually transmitted infections) and teen pregnancy (SWNWT, Apr. 2006) since the development began. The new social problems that have been directly linked to the development are reported as being increased drug use and drug trafficking, prostitution, mental health problems, suicide, youth crime, child

apprehensions, and gambling (SWCNWT, July 2006). In addition to the fore-mentioned social issues, no matter where women reside globally, they are disadvantaged when participating in the male dominated industrialized corporate labour market.

Ong (1991) stated that women employed by transnational corporations experience a pronounced division of labour due to their gender and culture. The diamond-mining corporations have not done a very good job at allowing aboriginal women and youth to express their concerns about the impacts of the disadvantages of participating in the male dominated labour market. Therefore, little corporate interest has been expressed in acknowledging women and youths' concerns about how to minimize and/or rectify the labour issues that have been revealed during public meetings held in northern Aboriginal communities.

Mullaly (1997) affirms that the role of the corporations is to ensure that steady increased investments will enhance productivity, guarantee economic growth, and increase the general populace's standard of living. Poor women often do not benefit from increased economic growth, as the majority of single moms and First Nations women from remote communities live substantially below the poverty line. An improved standard of living for some people in Aboriginal societies as a result of corporate development is evident, but what is also evident is that the gap between the wealthy and the poor increases.

The 1999 Diavik EIS Review conducted by the SWCNWT stated that women believed that the social issues would not improve with future development, and to date all reviews indicate that the issues have not improved. In 2004, the SWCNWT put forth a number of recommendations stating that women wanted the proponents of Mackenzie Gas Project to outline "how the socio-economics and benefits accruing to the communities will

improve the lives of women and families" (p. 5). The women who spoke during the 1999 Diavik Review proved to be right in stating that they felt that social issues would not improve with the development. Subsequently, five years later the women who participated in 2004 EIA review of Diavik were now demanding that the proponents address how the benefits of the development projects were going to improve the quality of their peoples' lives, in writing. This provides a clear example that in spite of what women had predicted nothing had changed in spite of them expressing their concerns.

Given this, it is obvious that women's voices were not heard as very little effort has been made by corporations or governments over the years to alleviate social issues that are directly related to non-renewable resource development in Aboriginal communities.

Another important social issue created by development is that instability of family structures is created by employment migration, which dramatically decreases a community's ability to function traditionally. Statistics Canada (2006) data reveals that in 2001, 71% of Inuit who live in the Arctic have never considered leaving their communities to obtain work, and 64% of the adults had lived in the same community since birth. The Inuit stated that their primary reason for not seeking employment elsewhere was that they wanted to "stay close to family members" (p. 16) even though unemployment was reported as the biggest problem in their communities.

However, with new employment opportunities in the NT and a growing dependence upon a wage labour economy, many First Nations people do leave home to work at the diamond mines, in spite of having close family ties. The dependency upon material goods produced by wage labour has forced Aboriginal people to obtain work outside their communities, which has socially impacted communities. In 2006, the United Nation's

Platform for Action Committee (UNPAC) of Manitoba notes that Aboriginal people are the largest segment of the Canadian population that is asked to leave home to participate in the diamond mine economy. Leaving home to work at the mines has a direct effect on the mental wellbeing of men, women, children, and their extended families. Sumi and Thomsen (2001) of *Mining Watch Canada* report that both physical and mental health issues related to family members working two-week rotations at the mine sites have increased. Being separated from family and friends and the inability to leave the work site has increased stress related injuries. The entire community is often impacted by these kinds of issues.

SWCNWT (1999) reported that cultural erosion due to migration would socially devastate the smaller Aboriginal communities, like Wekweètì, as the number of individuals and families leave to live in the larger cities such as Yellowknife, Hay River, and Fort Smith. The migration usually occurs either to attend training programs and/or after employment is secured at one of the diamond mines. Relocations have a direct negative impact on family structure, "preservation of language, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices" (SWCNWT, p. 7).

Cultural Impacts

The introduction of the wage economy within Aboriginal culture has created an erosion of traditional values and beliefs. UNPAC (2006) reveals that Ardyth Wilson of Manitoba's Mother of Red Nations believes that the White people's ways of doing work is difficult for most Aboriginal people. She states that "You have to subordinate your own value system in order to be a player" (para. 13). Wilson stresses that if Aboriginal people want to participate in the wage economy of major development projects, such as diamond mining, then they must give up a part of their culture. People are often enticed by the benefits

of a wage, and initially, do not realize that their culture is being negatively impacted. The people who remain in the community soon notice the impacts as the men and women who actively participated in traditional activities are not engaging as often due to diamond mine workers' absences.

Many important issues need to be addressed when multi-national corporations move into Aboriginal territory. The first consideration should be discussion with the people who will be most affected on how to minimize cultural erosion. Even though previous research has claimed to examine the social, economic, and environmental impacts it has neglected to include hindsight and/or foresight into how development has changed, or will change the face of Aboriginal culture. When asked, Aboriginal people would reveal the cultural impacts by non-renewable resource development through stories passed down by their ancestors and personal experience. Given this, it is surprising that the EISs have never focused on culture, deeming it less important than the social, economic, and environmental issues. Because these impacts are more familiar and have been included in the EISs it makes them easier for the corporate elite to define and overlook the importance of culture.

The legacy of colonizing knowledge has been reborn under the guise of non-renewable resource development, therefore continuing to "disconnect Aboriginal peoples from traditional teachings, spirituality, land, family, [language, and] community" (Absolon & Willett, 2004, p. 9). Cultural impacts have not been clearly defined in any of the research studies that were examined. It is believed that the cultural impacts have been ignored because "contemporary colonialists violently resist . . . changing their social and governmental constructs . . . to accommodate Indigenous knowledge" (Henderson, 2000a, p. 31). It is crucial to the integrity of Aboriginal people that the corporate elite make an effort to

acknowledge and minimize cultural impacts and listen to the voices of Aboriginal women and youth so the respect for how these people define themselves is not lost to development.

Sumi and Thomsen (2001) who write articles for *Mining Watch Canada* report that cultural impacts of mining development projects are often ignored because the focus is placed "on what is good for the economy" (p. 14). This article offers no further comment on cultural impacts, which has become the norm in the EIS and EIA literature. However, the MVEIRB (2006) SEIA report notes that in spite of the wage economy being relatively new, the cultural impacts are clearly visible within Aboriginal communities, as the people have had to adjust and modify their traditional ways according to the corporate economy.

In 1999, Archibald and Crnovich reported that TK was considered a new concept, which explains up to that time why cultural impacts were not explored, and why there was no federal policy to include Aboriginal knowledge into environmental impacts. Outside of Aboriginal people not being consulted on the cultural impacts, another reason for not addressing them is that culture itself is difficult to define, as it is intricately entwined with the social, economic, spiritual, and ecological ways in which First Nations Peoples define themselves.

Nevertheless, federal, provincial, and territorial EIS policies have made little attempt to have non-renewable resource development corporations specifically address cultural impacts. M. Judas of Wekweètì provides one example of a very significant cultural impact upon her community. She stated that when the caribou are migrating past her home and the men are working at the mine site, on their two-week rotation, fewer families are provided with meat and hides which are needed to maintain their way of life (personal communication, February 4, 2007). The SWCNWT (Apr. 2006) also noted that the Imperial Oil Resources

Ventures Limited (IORVL) report (2006) does not clearly define cultural impacts, and therefore, neglects to discuss "women's production of fine traditional clothing, which is an important part of cultural maintenance and traditional knowledge" (p. 5) that is directly affected by the wage labour of large development projects.

In 1995, when Brockman and Argue presented Aboriginal women with the opportunity to have a voice in regards to diamond mining development, they noted that the women were worried about the corporate elite undermining their "culture, identity and language" (p. 14). At that time, they expressed that wage labour would compromise the integrity of their culture. The women in the study also suggested that Aboriginal culture could be promoted at the mine site by providing cultural activities such as sweats and inviting elders out to the camps. In addition, they expressed that their people are used to eating traditional foods and it should be offered to the Aboriginal people working at the camps. However, there is no literature to date that indicates that any of these supportive cultural practices have been implemented at any of the three mining sites.

In Cape Town, South Africa at the International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD) conference held in October 2002, it was recognized that there was a need to find a mechanism in which to clearly define "the cultural impacts of development projects . . . in much the same way in which environmental impacts are reviewed" (para. 2). To date the literature in Canada does not reveal that such a process is in place to define cultural impacts, but it has been clearly demonstrated that there is a need (Brockman & Argue, 1995; INCD, 2002; SWCNWT, April 2006; July 2006).

Economic Impacts

There are positive and negative economic impacts produced from mining

development in First Nation communities. Often a positive economic impact for communities is "the creation of social infrastructure such as . . . employment opportunities, training programs and out sourcing contracts for service" (Hooge, 2000, p. 12). When men and women are employed at the mines, they are able to put more money down on household debts, which in turn reduces poverty and stress (SWCNWT, 1999). As long as people have the ability to work long term at the mines, many of them are able to rise from poverty to experience a better standard of living. Their increased standard of living puts them in a better position to provide for their immediate and extended families.

However, mining has always engaged in boom and bust cycles and at the end of the cycle comes negative economic impacts. The MVEIRB (2005) notes that communities are fearful of experiencing the boom and bust cycles. The report states that people "want a stable pace of development" (p. 15) that respects the community's needs for subsistence lifestyles. There is plenty of work when the mines are operating, but when they close, high rates of unemployment are created, which causes community disorientation and unsustainability, particularly in rural and remote communities that have become wage dependent (Hooge, 2000; Paci & Villebrun, 2004). In one report, the people expressed that because there is a lack of money management education provided to Aboriginal people who work in non-renewable resource development projects, they are not adequately prepared to financially manage the boom and bust cycles. They claim that the "boom" creates significant hardships on many families as a result of some people's inability to budget their earnings (MVEIRB, 2005). For many remote communities in the NT the use of money to obtain goods and services is a relatively new concept. Even newer is the concept of obtaining goods on credit either by using credit cards or a bank loan.

Men and women begin to work at the diamond mines and for most it is the first time that they have been paid so well. Many of the mine workers have never had a bank account, let alone a bank card. They acquire credit cards and loans soon after they begin working without a clear understanding of how to use credit responsibly. Some people get into serious financial trouble and rely on their grandparents, parents, siblings, children, and other extended family members to help them meet their basic needs. In a small community like Wekweètì many people are related so they feel the ripple effect of financial burden as it resonates through the community.

The Jericho Diamond Mine is owned by Tahera Diamond Corporation (2006). At the time this research was conducted it was the second newest mine to begin production in Canada. The mining corporation began operation in January 2006, was Nunavut's first diamond mine, and is located in the Kitikmeot region. The next mine to begin production in Canada was the Snap Lake mine. In the June 2007 edition of *Opportunities North*, John Curran reported that DeBeers Canada was currently constructing its first diamond mine at Snap Lake in the Tlicho region. Curran also reported it to be the third diamond mine to begin development in the NT and is the first underground mine. The Snap Lake mine started producing diamonds in September 2007. Mining exploration will likely continue to be relentless as the price of metals increase. With the enhanced interest in the North's mining economy, it is not likely that the boom will end anytime soon.

Traditional Economy

When considering the economic impacts of diamond mining it is also important to consider the negative and positive impacts upon the traditional economy. In hunting societies, unlike dominant society, obtaining material wealth is not the primary purpose in

attaining personal satisfaction but rather, collectively meeting the needs of the community (Durst, 1992, p. 197). Whiteman (2004) reported that Aboriginal men believed that there are negative impacts to the traditional economy when infrastructure in the form of roads open up the landscape making it vulnerable to poachers and hunters from outside their territory. On the other hand, Brockman and Argue (1995) discovered that Aboriginal women felt that a positive economic impact could occur if the mining corporations allowed them to sell their dry meat and fish at the mine site. They believed that it is important for their people to have access to traditional foods while away from home. The women also felt that when they are left at home with the kids while the men are working their two-week rotations the money earned from selling their dry meat and fish would alleviate worries about not taking care of the kids good. They agreed that earning their own money would provide them a means to pay bills and feed the family if the men stayed in Yellowknife partying and did not send money or groceries home after working their rotation.

In March 2007, the MVEIRB released a set of comprehensive guidelines for conducting a SEIA. The guidelines consider the impacts of resource development upon the traditional economy. In characterizing and predicting impacts on the traditional economy, SEIA will now explore the "valued components of the traditional economy [and] how the proposed development will impact the traditional economies" (p. 36). Oral and written evidence expressing the importance of harvesting activities will now be valued as traditional knowledge. The guidelines also note that mitigation measures by the developer will be implemented to reduce the impacts upon the traditional economy.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Narrative Research methods were blended to give texture and meaning to the research and to gain a more intimate understanding of how the community of Wekweètì is being impacted as a result of diamond mines operating in their traditional territory. A PAR framework was used to produce "a critical understanding of [youth and] women's multiple perspectives", and to promote inclusive "participation, action, and social change" (Reid, 2004, p. 7). The narrative methods were used to honour youth and women's stories as true description of experience. Patton (2002) reports that it is important to use these methods to acknowledge the connections between societal dimensions. Narrative methods were used to better understand the dramatic human experiences between the social, cultural, and economic dimensions and the diamond mines impacts.

Reflexive journaling helped me process, manage, and overcome stressful situations that occurred throughout the field project. It helped me stay focused and move forward accepting that I was powerless to change certain situations. For example, the day the ice road opened and the community emptied, I was one of about 10 people left in the community. I had to be patient and continue to manage my time wisely by not losing sight of the date on which I was to fly out of the community.

A key component that influenced my research method was that I was able to develop a solid rapport with many of the participants. Two of the participants are my friends and many are acquaintances with whom I was familiar, as a result of an earlier professional commitment that I had with the community, which began in 2004. These relationships provided me with a privileged access to this community and its experiences.

Participatory Action Research

Within this qualitative research project, oral traditions were embraced within a feminist PAR methodology. It was implemented to better understand the social, economic, and cultural implications of diamond mining upon the First Nations community of Wekweètì. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (2001) define the PAR approach as:

> a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview . . .. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

The intention of using PAR with women and youth "is to produce knowledge and action . . . "through research, education, and socio political action" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 269) that is meaningful to the community. Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) report that PAR is a "social process of collaborative [and reciprocal] learning . . . of people who join together in changing . . .. practices in the here and now" (pp. 564 -565).

In an on-line article, *PAR and Aboriginal epistemology: A really good fit*, Tobias defines PAR as a 'commitment to working with those women . . . whose voices are not heard' (Sinclair, 2003, para. 6). Sinclair states that PAR is "a culturally relevant and empowering method" (para. 3) used in qualitative research and that it is ethically structured, inclusive, and respectful of Aboriginal people. She supports that it "deconstructs the western positivist research paradigm" giving "a voice to the oppressed and marginalized" (para. 3). In the process of deconstructing the positivist paradigm this thesis project's use of PAR's integrated approach from the beginning to the end continued to involve the participation of the Chief and Council, elders, interested community members, and one local research assistant. Culture is valued within the PAR methodology. It allows communities to explore

their social reality, build community capacity and skills, "for the purpose of increasing community autonomy" (Hoare, Levy, & Robinson, 1993, p. 51).

Realizing the above views and knowing that this research project is required to complete my thesis I need to clarify my role in the PAR project. My primary research role was to be that of a collaborative partner who guided the women and youth through the research process which also includes keeping the community apprised of research findings, and help determine what should result from the findings.

Narrative Inquiry

Atkinson (1997) states that it is critical when using a narrative methodology to "do justice to . . . muted groups . . . to the personal experiences of the narrating subjects, [and] contrast between narrative subjectivity and other modes of constructing experience." (p. 327) The methodology can be viewed through a critical perspective to give the marginalized groups a voice, a method of putting personal meanings, such as ways of knowing, into context, and that the composition of the final work can be derived from several approaches that do justice for the respondent/s.

Hoare et al. (1993) insist that conducting research in First Nations communities and not including indigenous knowledge is irresponsible. They believe that if researchers do not include indigenous knowledge they continue to be "contributors of legacy social pathologies which continue to plague many First Nations communities" (p. 54). The authors also state that giving people a chance to share their stories helps with the healing of past trauma by demonstrating that the community's oral tradition, language, history, and culture is valued.

Therefore, it is critical in Aboriginal research to acknowledge the importance of oral traditions. Little Bear (2006) states that a strong tradition was used by elders to educate

children through the use of storytelling. Youngblood Henderson (2000b) reports that teachings were told in a natural context versus an "artificial context of Eurocentric thought" (p. 260). He explains, "Aboriginal consciousness and language are structured according to Aboriginal people's understanding of the . . . particular ecosystems in which they live" (p. 263). With this said, it was crucial for me as a researcher to promote respect, try to understand, and to gain knowledge of Aboriginal worldviews and epistemologies by paying particular attention to the verbal accounts of their experiences throughout the research.

Mary-Ellen Kelm (1998) also suggests that in gaining knowledge as to what causes cultural change it is important to use oral sources in addition to documented records. It is a well known fact that oral traditions within Aboriginal culture have far surpassed those of written ones.

In spite of this, oral traditions still remain less credible within the realm of academia. Smith (1999) affirms that indigenous knowledge systems have been ignored in the past and are still being ignored by some researchers. She states that feminist researchers have been critiqued from "within the field of critical theory . . .. [due to their inability] to deliver emancipation for oppressed groups" (p. 166). Furthermore, she suggests that since feminist researchers have moved into academia they have paved the way in legitimizing feminist methodologies within the realm of postmodern feminism.

Boyd (2004) states that methodology "privileges specific ways of knowing [and it] informs how we view and choose to investigate the social world we live in" (para. 2). People who have a stake in the development of diamond mines have their own views regarding the impacts upon Aboriginal people and so do the people of Wekweètì. Little Bear (2000) speaks to peoples' perspectives by stating that every "individual's worldview has its root in

culture . . . society's shared philosophy, [language], values and customs" (p. 77). As an outsider to the community and a non-Aboriginal woman, there are many cultural aspects of Tlicho people I do not understand; however, the research project and the outcomes are very important to me.

Given this, it was crucial that I implement a culturally appropriate methodology when I began engaging in the research process with the women and youth of Wekweètì. The process had to be culturally sensitive, respectful, and to have the capacity for me to be able to understand and appreciate the importance of indigenous knowledge. For me it was about being genuinely interested in learning about the community's history, language, culture, and traditions, but also about the people who volunteered to be research participants. I determined that the most effective way to do this was to hear what the people had to say, face-to-face. I traveled to Wekweètì and with the help of a number of community members provided youth and women the opportunity to share their stories and present their personal views of the impacts and issues that are created by the diamond mines.

Data collection: implementing the PAR approach.

Pre-phase one.

This research design has two phases. The pre-phase one process occurred prior to the first community meeting held in Wekweètì which occurred in April 2007. The first phase was the preliminary stage which determined the proposed research design by collaboratively working with the community. Phase two began in March 2008 when I returned to the community to implement the research plan and conduct the research. After I had obtained my research permit from the Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik, NT and was approved by the University of Northern British Columbia Ethics Board I was able to begin my research.

My last visit to the community prior to phase one was in a professional capacity which occurred in July 2006. After a three-month absence, in October 2006, I reconnected with a number of women via email messaging and phone calls to determine if the community would be interested in collaboratively conducting this research project. After speaking with a number of women it was determined that there was enough interest and they believed that the Chief and Council would support the proposed thesis research.

After connecting with the Chief I explained that the project idea was stimulated as a result of numerous stories told to me when I worked as a Child Protection Worker and later as a Mental Health and Addiction Counselor in the Tlicho region for nearly 3 three years. He was informed that most of the stories were told by Tlicho men and women who revealed that the diamond mines were helping but also hurting their families. The Chief told me that he thought that research conducted with youth and women was a really good idea; he approved. After writing a letter to the Wekweètì Chief and Council, permission was granted to conduct the research.

Phase one.

Phase one began on April 21, 2007, and lasted 4 days at which time a consensus was reached on the research plan. The purpose of the trip was to try to identify the research assistants, a trauma support group, a place where the research assistants and I would be able to work on the project, where the talking circles would be conducted, the data stored, where I would stay when I returned to the community for approximately six weeks, and to confirm, refine, and rework data collection methods.

During this phase, three meetings were held. The first one was held on Sunday, April 22, 2007. I introduced myself, explained the purpose of my visit, and informed the twenty or

so people including approximately six youth, three elders, the Chief and both council members, that I was there to work collaboratively with the community in planning who would participate in the project and how it would evolve. It was during this meeting that the majority of the community members, including the Chief, agreed that women should be the primary focus of this research project.

The second meeting was held on Monday, April 23, 2007 with six interested women and youth in attendance. We discussed the project and then determined that the data would be collected through interviews and talking circles, by using audio tapes and taking notes. The interviews would be conducted wherever women and youth were located in the community, and the data would be stored in a locked space in the Health Centre.

The meeting generated a lot of dialogue between the women as they processed who the participants would be and what methods of collecting data would be used. The group decided that women and youth be included in the study. They also determined that for the purposes of this research project women would be 25 years and older and youth participants would be both male and female between the ages of 12 and 24. The group was asked if they wanted men over 25 years old to participate in the research and they all agreed that they did not, but welcomed their involvement in planning community events, volunteering, and performing ceremonies throughout the duration of the project.

The participants also decided that the data collection strategies were to include:

1) Two circles, one inside the other. The women and youth would be situated on the inside, as participants of the talking circle while the rest of community would sit on the outside, in a circle around the women and youth and listen to what the participants shared. (This did not occur as no community members attended).

They agreed that the open talking circles would be held weekly for the six-week duration, totaling six circles. The circles would begin by talking about the social impacts, then the economic impacts, and end with the cultural impacts. They agreed that they would move to a new impact only after the information being collected was beginning to be repeated or exhausted.

2) The participants felt that in order to provide youth guidance, support, and to help make them feel more comfortable sharing in the circle that a number of women participants, perhaps two or three would sit in and lead by example in one of the two youth talking circles. The process would be to help show the youth what would be expected of them during the next youth-only circle.
3) The participants also said that they wanted to have two "only women" talking circles to be held at some point in the six-week period.
4) The participants agreed that it would be good if eight face-to-face interviews were held with women and youth who work or have worked at a diamond mine, or who have or had a close family member work at the mine. This included a spouse, parent, sibling, an aunt or uncle, cousin, and/or a grandfather or grandmother. They also felt that it was important to acquire three interviews from youth and five from women for a total of eight interviews.
5) The participants agreed that the talking circles and interviews would be audio-taped, transcribed, and then destroyed after the research was compiled into the thesis and accepted by UNBC.

6) All research participants agreed to sign informed consent forms prior to voluntarily participating in the project. A parent/guardian of underage youth between 12 and 18 years of age and the youth will sign informed consents.
7) There will be translators available at all times during the talking circles and personal interviews to translate English to Tlicho and Tlicho to English for transcribing, validation, discussion, and to report presenting processes.
8) It was decided that at least one of the three research assistants who were planning to be hired should be a youth between the ages of 18 and 24. However, if a 17 year old applied and had the skills required to fill the position they would be considered.
9) The group decided that the research assistants were to be determined at the start of the six-week project as they could not predict who would be in the community at that time.

The third, phase one meeting was held on Tuesday, April 24, 2007. It was held to inform the community of the decisions that were made by the women and youth as to how phase two of the research would be conducted. It involved informing those who attended the meeting of everything included in steps 1 through 9 outlined in the above paragraph. Also disclosed at that meeting was that phase two would last about six weeks and that I would be living in the community for the duration of the fieldwork.

Phase two.

The second phase of the research began as I planned my itinerary from the community of Fort Providence, NT where I resided and was employed as a Mental Health and Addictions Counselor. It was confirmed that I would be living with the same Tlicho

family with which I had stayed during my phase one visit and that my flight reservations were in order. In Yellowknife, I shopped for draw items including four large cans of Tim Horton's coffee, 10 and 20 dollar phone cards, large boxes of laundry soap, four cases of toilet paper and paper towels, three MP3 players, and several DVDs. I had also purchased two tanned beaver pelts from Dene Fur Cloud in Fort Providence to give away to participants after the talking circles. I took eight, fifty dollar gratuities, for the persons who were to participate in the face-to-face interviews. I also had to shop for groceries for myself and the family I would be living with bearing in mind that the foods I chose to eat were very different than theirs.

On March 2, 2008 I departed from Yellowknife on a scheduled Air Tindi flight. I had 45 minutes during the flight to Wekweètì to reflect on my academic journey thus far and mentally prepare for the experience of my life. I was excited to be going back to Wekweètì; not only to begin conducting the research but because I felt privileged that I was granted permission to conduct this research with women who had become my friends. However, the PAR project took a very telling turn after I arrived in the community after almost a one year absence. I had not been in Wekweètì since April 2007 after meeting with the community whereby a collaborative research plan was developed with the women and youth.

As I began to settle into my temporary home to begin my six week research project, which turned into seven weeks, I soon realized that that the dynamics of the community had changed dramatically since my previous visit. There was no longer a strong will within the community to take the lead in the project and as a result I felt I was controlling the project. I yearned for the project to be more collaboratively driven, but I soon learned that I must stay focused and continue to work at stimulating interest in the project and developing rapport.

Another influence that helped to create a lack of interest in the project was that the ice-road was about to open for approximately two weeks. Most of the people were preparing to leave the community to shop for supplies to last another year. The ice-road allowed people to travel south by truck for a very short time before the ice began to melt. Some men traveled day and night bringing in new appliances and furniture and returning for another load while their families stayed in Yellowknife or one of the other Tlicho communities. Some families traveled much farther south to Edmonton; to shop, play bingo, and gamble at the casinos. This was a very exciting time for the families who had a vehicle and could afford to travel.

A number of techniques were used to stimulate interest in the thesis project and to encourage people to participate. Soon after arriving in Wekweètì, a dialogue ensued with the principal about the project, whereby he gave me permission to explain the project to the youth during class time. They were informed that if they were twelve years old and older and had their parents' permission they were able to be included in the project by participating in talking circles and personal interviews. The enthusiasm in the room was astounding; the kids could barely contain themselves. However, I soon learned that the excitement was stimulated by the mention of draw items such as MP3 players and the fifty dollar honoraria.

Also, after consulting with a community member, two different notices were posted at various high foot traffic areas such as the store, band, and post offices. One notice indicated that the community was seeking paid research assistants and the other seeking volunteer participants for the project outlining the honorariums and draw items. The information was also spread by word of mouth from one community member to another as the interest in phase two of the project grew.

Writing and posting the notices were tasks that I would have asked the research assistants to do; however, no interest had been expressed at this time and I continuously had to shift my "power position" through the course of the project to keep within my allotted research time frame. Examining my power position throughout the project was critical as it promoted awareness in trying to control for the power imbalances as the PAR methodology morphed into a distorted version of the original vision. Blaufuss (2007) states that "qualitative methods are generally able to address such power imbalances [and ethical dilemmas] better than other methodologies" (p. 21) by for example, imposing a reflective vigilance that helps to navigate through the research process with a heightened moral attunement. She also indicated that it is not unusual for a researcher to continuously adjust their power position while actively engaging in numerous relationships and settings, such as with friends and those in "expert elitist" environs. I was constantly shifting my position and roles throughout the duration of the project. My many roles included being a woman, researcher, teacher, student, friend, stranger, outsider, cook, child minder, counsellor, elder caretaker, house sitter, and I was often referred to as kwet'ii (white person).

Many community members felt comfortable with me living in their community and participating in various activities; so comfortable in fact that I was asked to cook lunch at the hotel for a small team of men and women who had been out flying in a helicopter tracking and counting caribou. The hotel cook had not returned to the community and with so few community members left in town there was no one to cook for the team. One of the men who had hired my daughter last year to cook for the crew building the ice road had seen me in town. I had met him last year on the ice road when visiting my daughter at the camp and he had overheard me giving my daughter a few cooking tips. Word soon got out that I could

cook and I was located by a local Tlicho woman and asked if I would cook the crew lunch to which I replied yes.

I also took care of two children for several days after a mom was medi-vaced to Yellowknife and her spouse was away working at the mine. I house sat a three weeks for a family who traveled eight hours on the ice road to the main highway and then on to Yellowknife and later south to Grand Prairie to purchase supplies for the coming year. The elder I stayed with taught me to speak some words in the Tlicho language and we watched hours of old drum dance videos from the 1980s and 90s. He also told me stories of when he was a young man and how he worked hard in the bush with his dog team hunting and trapping to provide food and furs for his family. There were many more experiences that made me feel welcomed; at home, and a contributing member of their society, but they are too numerous to mention. These experiences provided me a means with which to continue to develop and build rapport with the community by helping to neutralize any preconceived notions that I as a white woman and a researcher would exhibit disrespectful "power over" behaviour.

Fee and Russell (2007) stress the importance of building rapport with any story teller whereby the first process includes introductions that are necessary for a story to develop. This process is evolutionary and began before the inception of the research project and will likely continue until at least the research findings are revealed to the stakeholders. The process involved trying to get from "power over" to "power with" the people. There are two parallels of "power over" that run through this research project. The first "power over" parallel is me being viewed as a "white outsider" researcher and the other is the corporate elite/stakeholders.

My connection with the people has provided me privileged access to Wekweètì. My relationship with the community has been more intimate than that of the stakeholders. The connection has helped with the transformation of getting closer to "power with" the people. I believe that it was the level of trust that was allotted to me as I curiously demonstrated a genuine interest in their culture, language, and traditions. However, in the end, because of the injustices that the colonizers have imposed upon the Tlicho people and their ancestors some people remained skeptical.

The idea of building rapport is put into context through clearly depicting the evolution of white "power over" between the colonizers and the colonized and how to take a stand against the inequitable behaviour, which is precisely what occurred at the start of the project during phase one. However, during phase two the perceived inequities created by the diamond mine development were addressed more intimately when the participants answered and discussed research question number four. The question provoked thought as to how the project would help the women take a stand against unfair and insensitive behaviour that the diamond mines exhibited clearly impacting their people.

Fee and Russell (2007) also suggest that "whiteness" studies have revealed how "self-acclaimed anti-racists" often do not delve into trying to understand the disparity between themselves and the disempowered. In not doing so they claim that the researcher never attempts to disentangle themselves from the colonial process. However, as a student and Social Work researcher, I believe that some professors help students get to that place of awareness that creates an understanding to combat the lack of sensitivity by academically challenging them to enhance their consciousness about the impacts of the colonial process

when working with Aboriginal people. The process is also enhanced through academia by ethical standards that regulate research with human subjects.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the research protocol was obtained from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik, NT. The North Slave Métis Alliance granted conditional support requesting that an equal level of recognition and respect be provided to both the Dene and Métis by providing an opportunity for people to self-identify as Métis. (See appendix D). The research standards, protocols, and cultural norms were meticulously adhered to with the utmost respect paid to the people of Wekweètì through the research design.

The consent forms that I designed for both the youth and women were also approved to use in the research. All of the women and youth who participated in the study gave their informed consent, providing permission to be audio-recorded and either interviewed or participate in talking circles. They were informed that the thesis may contain their anonymous quotations and expressed that they understood that information gained from the study would likely be published, but that they would not be identified in the research. They were also told that the community would be provided with a copy of the thesis and that it would be made available after completion of the study.

Each participant, including the youth and one of their parents/guardians reviewed an information sheet and signed an informed consent form prior to participating in the research project. At the beginning of each the talking circle/interview the participant information sheet (PIS) and the informed consent form (ICF) was read out loud to the group/individual in English. Both were translated into Tlicho for those who did not understand English or

preferred to hear it spoken in their native language. A woman participant who was fluent in both English and Tlicho volunteered to translate the PIS and ICF to the talking circle participants and a female family member translated for interview participants. Throughout the talking circles and interview sessions, the participants were reminded that a copy of the thesis, including the research findings will be returned to the community, as without the community's help the research would not be possible.

Two female translators and one female research assistant were paid $15 an hour, women and youth were provided an opportunity to have a voice using a sensitive cultural approach to gain respect by following the community's code of conduct, and a feast was well attended by the majority of the community followed by hand games played for fun by the youth. The event was held to celebrate the research project, thank all the community members, and put closure to the process.

Data Collection

The intention of this thesis project was to provide Wekweètì women over the age of 25 and youth (male and female) between the ages of 12 and 24 an opportunity to speak about how the diamond mines have socially, culturally, and economically impacted them and their community. They were also provided with the opportunity to express what resources and services would enhance and preserve the social functioning and well being of their community. Women's and youth's voices have been quelled for too long and this research allowed them to reveal their points of view.

Three narrative methods of collecting data were used in this study; talking circles, semi-structured interviews, and field notes in the form of reflexive journaling. Talking circles were chosen as a means by which to generate data because the women felt that it

would provide a familiar and comfortable setting for all participants. The intent of using the circle was to allow women and youth to share their "authentic personal reactions and feelings . . . and [that they be] acknowledged by others, without judgment or condemnation" (Umbreit, 2003, para. 3). There were no guarantees that there would not be differing views, but the process in which the information was disclosed remained respectful.

Many Indigenous tribes have used talking circles as an oral tradition for centuries. Abram (2002) affirms that the circle is a symbol "that helps us to understand that every issue . . . can be viewed from the inside and outside and [that] everything is connected" (p. 3). She notes that circles can accommodate large or small groups that come together face-to-face encompassing a process that promotes equality and respect. The talking circle provide a safe and non-confrontational means for the participants to express themselves. Umbreit states that it is a very different style of communication from the European tradition in that it does not tolerate aggressive debates and challenging behaviours. The circle "establishes a safe non-hierarchal place in which all present [within the circle] have the opportunity to speak without interruption" (Umbreit, para. 1).

There were a total of five talking circles held rather than the six originally planned. The numbers of talking circles held were determined by the repetitiveness of the information being gathered. The circles took place in the evening so the women who worked were able to attend. For some women the circles were an inconvenience as they disrupted their routine of working on caribou hides and making dry meat, but others took the project more seriously and participated because they understood its importance.

Talking circles (women-only).

It is within the framework of PAR that the talking circles demonstrated collaboration

and mutual respect. Time was taken before each talking circle to thank the participants for attending and to explain the details of the project and express its importance not only for me as a student researcher but in hopes that their community would experience some positive changes as a result.

The number of women who participated in the talking circles varied from between five and eleven. A couple of dedicated women attended all of the talking circles, a couple attended one time but the majority attended more than once. The circles began with an opening prayer and concluded with a closing prayer that was spoken in the Tlicho language by one of the participant woman who felt comfortable praying to the creator in front of the group, and in her native tongue. At that time there was concern about having the prayer audio-taped. I confirmed that prayers would not be recorded as the information contained within the prayers was not pertinent to revealing the impacts of the diamond mines.

The first question was asked after one of the women volunteered to be the circle keeper. The circle keeper was responsible for maintaining the circle rules; that is no cross-talking and keeping the participants focused on the topic. She spoke holding a rock in her hand and then she passed it clockwise to the next person who indicated that they wanted to speak. There were four questions in total asked, but only one question was asked during each talking circle as it was determined during the first circle that just answering one question was very time consuming, lasting approximately two and half hours. The final talking circle clearly indicated that the women had developed an enhanced understanding of how other women perceive the issues that plague their community, what role the diamond mines play in impacting their community, and how the project could benefit their community.

Talking circle (women and youth).

One "women and youth-only" talking circle was attended by five women and three youth. The same procedure was followed that was used in the "women only talking circles". Although the youth did not give lengthy narratives they made the process interesting and there was lots of laughter during the evening.

Talking circle (youth-only).

Nine youth participated in the "youth-only" talking circle which was held during school hours in the gym. If a research assistant had been recruited she would have been there to assist me in keeping the kids focused. But I was alone and disappointed that a couple of the youth removed themselves repeatedly from the circle to bounce a ball which disrupted the group. In addition, a few youth were not willing to engage, and said that they there only to obtain a draw item. In spite of this, every youth who attended the circle received a draw item. Some of the youth did not remember who I was from previous visits to the community; therefore, only a superficial rapport was established. The space echoed and proved to be too large of an area to keep all of the youth focused on the information gathering process. Therefore, the time spent with the youth turned out to be a very challenging activity. Unfortunately, the data gathered during this talking circle was lost due to it being inaudible.

The circles generated many interesting and telling stories of women and youths' perceptions and experiences. The rounds continued from between one and three times until no one had anything further to say about the topic. There is no doubt that the talking circles generated rich contextualized data.

Face- to-face interviews.

The second method of generating data was through the use of semi-structured face-to-

face interviews. The plan was to have five women and three youth participate in one personal interview to be held in the location of their choice. However, only two youth were interviewed, creating a shortfall in the projected number of interviews, by one. A third youth had agreed to be interviewed but had to leave the community to hunt caribou with his father. The personal interviews provided very rich stories that were contextualized by the participants as they revealed personal and intimate information about how the diamond mines have affected their lives.

The interview process was a combined approach that consisted of an informal conversational strategy and the use of an interview guide. During the interviewing process the informal strategy was beneficial, as questions emerged from the unstructured conversation that flowed naturally. Patton (2002) reports that unstructured conversation increases the saliency and relevance of the questions posed and can be customized to individuals and their experiences.

The use of the interview guide provided a semi-structured approach by asking four questions related to the social, economic, and cultural issues imposed by the diamond mines. The four questions asked during the interviews and talking circles had been previously determined collaboratively with various community members. The semi-structured questioning allowed for flexibility throughout both the talking circles and the face-to-face interviews. The strategy of semi-structured questioning offered more "flexibility in probing and in determining when it is appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth" (Patton, p. 347). It ensured that I consistently addressed the same issues throughout the course of both the talking circles and the interviews. It is also a narrative inquiry method that

embraces a culturally sensitive approach and allows for the Aboriginal tradition of storytelling to occur.

The face-to-face interviews began after a number of the talking circle sessions had occurred so that the interview participants who participated in the circles were able to take more time to understand my role and the purpose of the project. Delaying the interviews also gave me some time to develop a rapport with the participants with whom I was not previously acquainted, but also gave them more time to feel comfortable with the project and the process.

Reflexive journaling.

Finally, field notes in the form of reflexive journaling were used as the third means of assisting me in generating data. The journal notes helped me reflect and process the issues or problems that transpired during the research period. Kirby, Greaves, and Reid (2006) claim that by keeping field notes it provides the researcher the opportunity to address their position within the research. The authors state that field notes "record your struggles about representing the experiences of others, reflect on the data gathering process, ensure[s] that your voice does not dominate the research", (p. 81) and records details of the project. It is the process of journaling that helped provide me with a neutral stance whereby avoiding "to prove a particular perspective or manipulate data to arrive at predisposed truths" (Patton, p. 51).

The journaling was dated which provided me with an accurate account of where I was at trying to resolve and work through feelings of excitement, fears of failing, gratitude, and other uncomfortable and comfortable moments that occurred throughout the research project. My journaling was used as a mechanism to help me academically process

interesting, unexpected situations and experiences, and stay focused during the research project.

For example, shortly after I arrived I quickly realized that my timing to conduct this research was far from impeccable. My first journal entry recorded on March 2, 2008 reveals that I was worried about how many people were absent from the community which I initially viewed as a lack interest in the project. I wrote:

> Spoke with a few others at the house about the research. I was disappointed to learn that some women were still out at the hand game tournament in Behchokö. Anyhow I needed some rest and some time to process what needed to be done. Still no research assistants identified and no one has come forward to participate in the face-to-face interviews. Feeling like the participatory piece of the research is diminishing due to the lack of community interest. However, I am intent on stimulating the interest and connecting with the curious.

By acknowledging my concerns and then processing my thoughts during and after I wrote in the journal, my anxiety decreased. The journaling proved to be an asset in not only decreasing my anxiety but it also enhanced my motivation to promote interest in the project out of sheer fear of failure. As the days passed I realized I accepted that I was powerless over the lack of people left in the community. Some people were not returning after the hand game tournament ended in Behchokö as the ice road was about to open any day and people who had remained in the community were preparing to leave as the ice road was just a short distance from reaching the community. In addition, in a few days the school was about to close for spring break which provided another incentive for some families to travel.

I realized that since many of the women were out of the community I needed to focus on trying to promote the project to youth. I was made aware that I only had two days left to do so due to the spring break closure. I promptly set up a meeting with the principal at the school. That meeting proved to be successful and I was granted half an hour to spend with the youth 12 and older informing them of the project. I also spoke to a couple of women at

the school and they sounded very positive about the project. I journaled about the process on March 3, 2008. One woman:

> said that she would like to be an interview participant. We decided that her interview would be near the end of the project as she will be away for about 2 – 3 weeks. So the three of us determined that we will have the first talking circle for youth and women tomorrow night at 7 p.m. Just need to confirm where. My confidence waned but feel much more optimistic now after spending more time with those 2 women.

However, my feelings of anxiety ebbed and flowed throughout the project. The fluctuation was directly related to whether it was still feasible to gather the data required for this project within the allotted time frame. Referring back to my journaling dated March 27, 2008 it was obvious then that I was still questioning if I would be able to stay on track with the PAR project:

> There has been and continues to be many obstacles primarily due to the lack of interest in the project as it has changed considerably [since phase one]. There has not been one research assistant obtained to help; although, there have been a few people come forward to help with organizing, making telephone calls, and translating. Secondly, the spring break had some affect on the number of people left in the community but did not pose a huge problem as there was still people to interview but [there was] not enough to have an effective talking circle.

Given this, I was aware that my optimism was eroding as I wondered if this research project could be a success. I felt this way because of the number of challenges I continuously faced due to the lack of people in the community during the length of my stay. Another blow came when I was informed that after spring break the principal and teacher were leaving the community for a week to attend a conference. Therefore, I realized that:

> this project will be very back end loaded. The last 2 weeks will be very hectic. Looking forward to getting the data as I can always transcribe later. Little hope of acquiring a research assistant at this point. But it is critical that I find a translator.

I continued to process my challenges through to the end of the project. My last journal entry was written on April 9, 2008 and I expressed the difficulty I had with gathering

information during the youth talking circle. Some youth did not want to participate but were keen to win the draw items. Other "youth spoke very well and provided some good info." I had drawn the conclusion that "Overall the youth interviews proved to be more useful for the purpose of this project" over the youth talking circle.

The reflexive journaling proved to beneficial in helping me work through difficult situations while in the field. I was able to process the perceived dilemmas and keep pushing forward in trying to overcome the data gathering challenges. It was also a significant mechanism that helped me to regulate my emotions and stay passionate about my research.

In spite of the research design not being the truest form of PAR, the intentions were genuine. The project still invoked a continuous and reciprocal exchange of knowledge between me, as the researcher, and many members of the community. Not only did the collaborative process build trust within the community through using a reciprocal approach to learning, gaining knowledge, and skill building, it also was inclusive of all community members who wanted to participate in the project.

Data Analysis

Triangulating data collection methods were used in this study to promote data analysis accuracy. Two main strategies of triangulation were used to analyse the data. The first method is referred to as "Methods Triangulation". Patton (2002) states that methods triangulation is the process of "checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods" (p. 556). The second method of triangulation used is called "Perspective Triangulation", which encompasses "Using multiple perspectives . . . to interpret the data" (Patton, p. 556). The use of multiple perspectives was gained in this study

through the participation of Wekweètì research participants, a local research assistant, and interpreters.

In addition, the following actions allowed for achieving a more accurate interpretation of the data. First, all participants were provided with the opportunity to make revisions throughout the data collection and analysis process. To determine if there were any discrepancies the interviews answered in Tlicho were translated twice by two different interpreters into English.

Baydala, Placsko, Hampton, Bourassa, and McKay-McNabb (2006) state that narrative analysis is a method used to interpret the meaning of research data that allows people to "give meaning to their experience" (p. 52) But giving meaning to their experience is dependent upon if the research questions are meaningful to the respondent. I found that if the questions asked were clearly understood, asking about something that interested the participant, and if the participant was knowledgeable about the topic the data collected could be very rich. It was also discovered that when the participants went off on story-telling tangents talking freely and openly about their earlier life experiences the words were contextualized to yield a descriptive and interesting narrative that usually ended in humour. For example, a participant expressed that some people don't work at the mine for very long and that in the past when she had a job the money she earned was given to her parents so they could buy "tea and sugar and all of the important things they needed [so] they could go back into the bush hunting, trapping, and sewing." She ended the story by saying, "If I worked at the mine I would have worked until my hair turned." Everyone present laughed at how she expressed her point.

It is important to note that when a person talks about an experience in their own language it does not mean that the person listening to what is being said is going to completely understand what is trying to be expressed, especially if the individual hails from a different cultural background, as I do. I felt that it was of the utmost importance that I did not make assumptions in regards to what the research participants were conveying to the interpreter. Therefore, the words that were spoken in the Tlicho language during the interviews and talking circles were reviewed by two different translators to decrease any misunderstandings. For example, in the example above, the second translator who reviewed the recordings reported that the woman said "Now that there is a mine I would have worked until my white hair came." Assumptions could have been made that the woman would have worked until her hair turned white, grey, or curly. Therefore, by having the words translated twice it provided a much clearer understanding of what the woman was trying to portray. The woman was speaking about work ethics. Otherwise, if she had been given the opportunity she would have worked at the mines much longer than many of the people who quit their jobs today after working for a short time.

Atkinson (1997) recognizes the complexity of narratives and that others portray the personal experiences as being made transparent through probing during the interview. Here I provide an example of trying to make what this youth is saying transparent.

Youth: My grama and my mom and going berry picking with my grama is off the hook.

Researcher: What do you mean off the hook?

Youth: Like it's fun.

Atkinson emphasizes that research is still being conducted that assumes that narratives can be made transparent. He describes this blunder as "vulgar realism". I agree that no matter

how hard researchers try to understand narratives that they can never truly be understood, especially when the research is conducted cross culturally. There will always be a certain amount of meaning lost or added, perhaps innocently, through assumptions made by researchers.

Determining what information to use to construct the methodology chapter of the thesis was a very painful process. Painful because after reading numerous articles and bits about narrative analysis I was overwhelmed with all of the information and I still did not feel that I had a clear understanding of how to proceed. In my mind I went back to my research question and identified what it was I wanted to find out as a result of the research. It was important to identify the social, cultural, and economic impacts throughout the data. But how could I produce a well written and interesting abridged version from the transcribed data?

I was aware that the thematic coding method existed and would help me identify various themes and sub-themes within the data. I mulled the concept over and decided to review the research data once again. As I read through the transcribed data I began to identify the most compelling diamond mine issues that the women and youth reported as impacting their community. In order to keep track of the re-occurring themes and sub-themes imbedded within the participants' responses, pertinent to the four questions asked, I designed a colour coding system. First, I reviewed the transcripts from the personal interviews as they addressed all four research questions in one sitting unlike the talking circles which addressed only one question per circle. In the second line of the very first interview I realized that a social impact was revealed in the transcript when the woman stated, "Some men and ladies they work but if they don't make it to their hometown they go to Yellowknife and blow all of their money drinking and doing drugs." This statement was

coloured with a blue pencil crayon and coded : "substance abuse". Within this statement it was recognized that the woman was also expressing that some people were not budgeting their money.

Another transcript revealed that that children and youth are being economically impacted as:

> there are kids whose families are working at the mines and they are making more money than the ones who aren't working at the mines and they are saying that I have this, like you don't have this, so it probably makes them feel down.

I coloured this statement black and coded it "obvious that the diamond mine workers make more money" noting the disparity in status due to monetary family incomes. A third example provided from a subsequent interview was coloured orange and noted as a "positive monetary impact". In spite of the negative monetary impacts revealed by this person, overall she felt that:

> a lot of people, because of the mines they got things that they never had before, like skidoos to go hunting, boats and kickers that they can go out in the summer, they have a vehicle in Yellowknife [to use when they fly out of the community and/or] to go on holidays.

And finally, another woman revealed "that when the people work at the diamond mines . . . some have credit cards and they get stuck and they make more bills and that hurts the families." The issue was identified as credit card debt and was colour coded blue-green and noted a "negative monetary impact". Without contextualizing "credit card debt" the reader may depend on their frame of reference to try to understand its meaning and therefore naively minimize the effect that it has on the First Nation families in this remote fly-in community of 143 persons.

Atkinson (1997) criticizes A.W. Frank who wrote *The Wounded Storyteller*, by identifying that Frank engages in narratives but neglects to contextualize the interviews,

therefore, "the voices echo in an . . . empty world" (p. 339). He draws a valid conclusion as the meaning of the narratives cannot be understood if the social context is stripped away. It also depersonalizes the individual/group's experience and inhibits autonomy and independence thereby promoting insensitive and unethical practices on behalf of the researcher. Clandinin also emphasizes the importance of objectivity and the need to understand the perspective of others within research. She states that people must present their stories in their lived context not in the context of the researcher's and therefore it is important not to impose our frames of references onto the story of others.

Atkinson (1997) gives credence to the power of revelatory experiences gained by constructing, conducting, and analyzing narratives. In gaining this knowledge it enhances a researcher's ability to pay attention to the words spoken and to treat them as social facts. Narratives should be treated as a "privileged kind of data" that distil into "self revelations that are as conventional and artful as any other mode of [qualitative] representation" (p. 341).

As the data distilled into themes it became easier to identify the extent of the impacts created by the influence of the diamond mines. All of the themes and sub-themes were identified and counted in each interview and talking circle. Then the totals of each were placed under the respective headings; social, cultural, and economic impacts. When the data was reviewed two more times further distillation occurred, whereby the sub-themes were condensed by combining similar sub-themes. For example, sub-themes that identify drug and alcohol related issues such as bootlegging and smuggling were coded "Alcohol and Drugs" under "Social Impacts". The three most significant sub-themes were identified by how many times they spoke about in each data gathering method. The top three themes were identified

through this qualitative process and have been documented as the most significant issues that have impacted the community.

Published reports of qualitative studies necessarily focus heavily on the findings because the power of the study is usually descriptive and exploratory, rather than statistical. The findings, especially when verbatim quotes are used, are most effective in communicating the true meaning of the study. Therefore, in the next chapter examples of text from the research will help the reader put meaning to the words by contextualizing the issues that are important to the individuals telling their stories. It was at this stage of writing the thesis that I became unsure of my ability to write the findings in a meaningful way that was truly representative of the participants' points of view.

Clandinin (2006) reveals that the researchers will experience tension at this stage of the process primarily because they will be concerned about how the research will be perceived by their audience, and some "about our participants; still others by issues of form" (p. 48). Reading about "tensions" provoked a sense of relief from within me. Since gathering and transcribing the data obtained from my own research I have struggled with these same issues. The sense of relief that this author provides me is comforting in knowing that the tension that I am experiencing is a natural process of conducting research but perhaps enhanced when using a narrative inquiry.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings from the data collected from seven face-to-face interviews and five talking circles conducted with women and youth who live in Wekweètì. The purpose was for women and youth to identify both positive and negative social, cultural, and economic impacts upon their community, related to men and women working at any one of the three diamond mines.

Overall, the findings reveal that the participants reported that there have been significant changes to their family and community structure due to social impacts. They reported that issues related to alcohol and drugs were number one, parenting second, and jealousy third. The three most significant cultural impact findings are that a) that the diamond mine workers still participate in cultural and traditional practices when home from camp, b) cultural and traditional practices are occurring less and c) there is a decrease in the use of their Tlicho language. The most significant findings related to economic impacts were reported to be standards of living first, education/training second, and debt third.

Under social, culture, and economic issues three tables are used to easily identify the three most significant research findings and also denote the total number of times the issues were mentioned throughout the data collection methods.

Social Impacts

The social impacts related to the community changing from a subsistence economy to a wage economy have been significant. The participants in this research project identified that the most significant changes due to the diamond mines have impacted family functioning.

Table 1

Significant family functioning impacts

Family Related Issues	Total # of Times Mentioned
Alcohol and Drugs	40
Parenting	15
Jealousy	6

Alcohol and drugs, parenting, and jealousy were the three most significant social issues that were reported.

Alcohol and drugs.

The participants talked a lot about an increase of substance misuse issues in their dry community since people started working at the diamond mines. Many of the issues they spoke about related to how the community was being impacted by bootlegging, smuggling, drinking, and drugging.

One woman said:

> there are some single guys who work at the mine, they don't have kids, too. They just bring drugs and alcohol in and they share with their friends. Before it wasn't like that. Like we hardly see people drinking or doing drugs because it's a dry community. But today if we look at it there is more alcohol and drugs in town. Maybe that is caused by the mine. You can't say it's caused by the mine but they get more money from there.

One concerned mother was saddened that the kids were witness to so many people using drugs and alcohol in her community:

> I know that there is drinking and using drugs around here. And the youth, like we said before, there is youth and they are seeing it. I don't like it. I don't like them seeing people drinking and using drugs. I know they know. I can see it. I don't like it and I can't tell my kids you can't see it. You know, I can't keep them away; no matter what I do they are still going to see it anyways. So like there is nothing I can do to help. Like I tried to help trying to do little odd activities around my house.

One youth spoke about how the diamond mine workers disrupt the community's cohesiveness when alcohol and drugs are brought home. First, "People are flying out all of the time . . . they go to Yellowknife and they come back here. They go around and people are drinking. People go crazy." Crazy was described as "they drink with people like with kids inside their house. [The kids] get scared and they cry but they can't go nowhere because they get trapped in their room."

Another woman stated:

> I have noticed that there is more since . . . spouses that are working at the mine that there is more drug use and alcohol around here. There's more drinking. Like every time they come back I have noticed that there is more and more.

She also noted that one way in which the drugs and alcohol are arriving into the community "are by mail I know that. So it's more and more now these days."

The mines employ people to work on a two-week rotation and a woman reported that she sees drinking more frequently now, "Like every other weekend. It wasn't like that before, it was calm. It's not like that anymore. It's just more and more drinking, I've noticed."

One woman reported that the diamond mine workers make good money but that they neglect to take good care of their families as:

> Some men and ladies they work but they don't make it to their hometown. They go to Yellowknife and they blow all of their money drinking and doing drugs. And when they do go home they treat their families awful.

Various issues related to alcohol and drugs were reported as extremely significant in how the substances impact this small "dry" community. There are too many detrimental sub-theme issues that fracture the social structure of this community to report in this paper which have evolved as a result of the monetary influx, such as bootlegging and smuggling.

Parenting.

It was reported that a number of parenting issues arise when more money is brought into the community from diamond mine wages. More parents are flying in and out of the community and are not always providing good supervision for their children. Diamond mine workers share and lend their money creating a trickledown effect that provides a means for their friends and family to temporarily leave the community who could not otherwise afford to leave. It was reported that the absences also include diamond workers and their spouses.

One woman stated that "When some families, you know, come back from the mine they go out and they leave their kids behind. . . . like when they come home they take off and leave their kids home alone." After being asked "what happens to those kids when they are left home alone?" she replied:

> They don't listen to the parents after; we see that here. They take off and they leave their kids behind and they get into, while they are still young, they get into drugs and alcohol. I see that but, you know, they have family we can't interfere, you know, we can't do this or we could but some parents they believe their kids even though they do stuff they say they don't do. They believe their kids. And they go on their kid's side so we can't say your kids do this but they won't listen to us. We just see; look, we don't say nothing to them.

Another woman expressed a similar concern stating that times have changed when it comes to providing a healthy and safe environment for their kids:

> in the olden days kids listened . . .they get woods, feed the dogs, go get water, everything like that and then since the mine came there is too much money they go to the bar, they drink, and once they are in a drunk mood they pass out, they get into violence, kill themselves, children are not taken care of good, they can even sleep outside.

It was also noted that parents trying to support their children by working at the diamond mines often make poor choices with whom they leave their children as there is a lack responsible people who can "take care of kids good." Many families have no room to

accommodate extra children, are poor, have issues with alcohol and drugs, or don't want to feel like they are going to be taken advantage of. Therefore, desperate attempts are often made in placing children in the care of others so they are able to maintain their jobs. As one woman reported, some women:

> have to leave their home to get a job there [at a diamond mine] and their kids are here. I feel that the kids one day are okay and the next day they are cranky and crying as the mothers are out there working.

Another woman indicated that the problem also exists when diamond mine workers and/or their spouses leave their kids in Wekweètì and travel out of the community. Even after making childcare arrangements she said that "they [can still] have difficulties with their sitters" like leaving them with young "girls that aren't really responsible." Women are the nurturers of families and it is no wonder that concerns have been expressed about neglect and poor parenting choices when it comes to caring for children.

Jealousy.

It was reported that there is more jealousy due to spouses/common-law partners being absent from the community. The spouse who works at the mine can be jealous because she/he does not know what may be going on at home and the partner left in the community can become jealous of the partner working at the mine because they may not return to the community in a timely fashion.

One woman reported that she notices that there are increased family problems because when one stays away from the community after their shift is over their spouse gets stressed by "thinking that they are fooling around on them . . . and when the spouse comes back, the woman or the guy . . . does payback." She described payback as: the spouse who remained in the community "would drink themselves . . . Or take off and not look after the

kids." These kinds of irresponsible behaviours were said to create an extra burden on the community as they all fear that social services will fly in and remove the family's children. With the threat of an apprehension looming neighbours and extended family often do their best to provide for the children but harbour resentments towards the parent(s) who contribute to the breakdown of the community's social structure.

A youth also expressed that jealousy was clearly visible in the community as a result of men working at the diamond mines. She said that she notices it:

> is just hard for the mother going through this and that. With the father, who knows what he might be doing? Like he might be fooling around with another girl and maybe his wife or girlfriend maybe struggling . . . and might be missing him . . . might be doing this and that. She might be crying at home, being hurt and he's having fun and God knows what's he's doing. Yah.

And when she was asked if she has "seen more jealousy?" She answered, "Yes, of course." She described jealousy as a:

> look and anger, that mean face, walking away, getting mad, and I don't know. When that happens, I think that the relationship, who knows, that when they get stressed out they may actually be drinking, smoking up, smoking cigarettes to calm themselves down, or going for a walk and yah.

It was interesting to hear that both women and youth recognized that there was an increase in disruptive behaviours that impacted family functioning that was rooted in jealousy.

It has been reported that these kinds of behaviours, such as jealousy, poor parenting, alcohol and drug misuse, can create all kinds of family problems, such as family violence, separations, criminal charges, and/or jail time. The research findings have determined that the issues created by alcohol and drugs have made the most significant impacts upon family functioning and the social structure of the community.

Cultural Impacts

The research findings reveal that the women and youth identified that cultural

traditions were still occurring. However, others believed that the diamond mines were impacting how often their people were participating in traditional cultural activities.

Table 2

Positive and negative findings of cultural impacts

Cultural traditions	Total # of times mentioned
Traditions Still Occurring	22
Traditions Occurring Less Often	10
Loss of Language	9

One of the positive findings is that not everyone believed that the diamond mines have hurt cultural and traditional activities. However, it is interesting to note that some of the women and all of the youth believed this to be true but the other women noticed that there have been significant negative impacts. The loss of language was acknowledged by all of the women but not by the youth.

Traditional cultural practices: positive findings.

Several participants revealed that culture had not significantly changed as a result of the men and women working at the diamond mines. One youth said that even though her dad has worked at the mine for many years, he has still found time to teach her skills that are important to her people. She acknowledged the importance of practicing her culture and revealed that:

> I have been learning and he's been teaching me this and that since I was a little girl. And you can't always be like a girl you know, cause you're going to do things that are harder and harder. When I was younger I thought I was so tough and didn't like it when he was home at times. But as I was growing up I was learning that my future, like the power might go high, the gas, the store might go high the prices and if I don't have enough money I can go trapping and shooting caribou and cutting wood and what not.

The message she was portraying was in spite of her father having worked at the mine for many years, he has been able to teach her how to survive subsistently by passing on his traditional knowledge. She acknowledged that it is hard work but that if she was ever unable to earn an income she would be able to survive off of the land. She believed that her father was not participating in hunting and getting wood as much compared to "before he started to work at the diamond mine [because] now he gets lots of back pains and he can't sleep that well . . . plus he's getting old."

One woman revealed that most of the men who trapped before they went to work at the mine continued "for awhile". But that she knew of a couple "boys even though they work at the mine they still go trapping . . . [as they] let their father check their traps for them" when they are working at the mine.

Another woman reported that "people from here who are working at the mines still participate in their culture; it's theirs so they can't give it up". Some policy makers from dominant society would likely say that "Their culture is alive and in constant change as any vibrant culture would be, and is not dying as some suggest" (Durst, 1992, p. 193). Other people like myself would tend to "argue that native people should preserve their traditional culture and lifestyle, resisting . . . assimilation" promoted by dominant society if they choose. It is interesting to note that this woman's perception of how the diamond mine is impacting her community was very different than the other women. Was it that she believed that their ancestors passed on traditional knowledge that safeguarded the demise of traditional ways of life for future generation, in spite of large diamond mine developments? It would have been an interesting question to explore.

Traditional cultural practices: negative findings.

Several participants reported that the diamond mine workers participate less in traditional activities e.g., one youth reported that they bring home caribou "when they are here, like in spring or something and when the caribou are walking on the ice then they go." But it was also reported that if they are not here when the caribou are migrating past their community:

> then their dad [grandfather] has to go or their father-in-law . . . people will like go hunting for them. Like they go hunting and they shoot about five caribou and they probably give two caribous or something [to the man's family].

One woman stated that in her case "when they [the men] are not here, no one can go hunting for us; they can't do nothing about it unless they come home". Another woman agreed with her stating:

> Ya, she's right. If there are caribou it is hard to find somebody to go hunting for us. If they come home from work that is when they go hunting for their spouse. That is when we can start to make dry meat. Until then there is nothing we can do.

The research revealed that the caribou hunters who do not work at the mine provide for some extended family members. However, it seems the men who are working at the mine and who are deemed very capable hunters are not provided with caribou for their family by the men who remain in the community. One woman confirmed this by stating that "I noticed that there are lots of people working at the mines they, like [the other] guys they don't shoot caribou for them." It is reported that diamond mine workers hunt upon returning to the community for their families but that they do not always have the same opportunity to shoot caribou as the men who remain in the community. Often the diamond mine workers who hunt have to travel greater distances to locate the caribou, particularly if the caribou have not yet reached or have passed by the community on their migration. This prevents the spouses of these men from "fixing the hides" and making enough dry meat to last until the next

successful hunt. The same woman laughs and adds so "dry meat still happens if there is caribou."

Loss of Tlicho language (also known in English as Dogrib).

There was significant difference in views as to whether the diamond mines were contributing to the loss of the Tlicho language particularly between youth and women. However, there were also differences between the views of women.

One youth believed that most of the Tlicho people in Wekweètì "100% understand, you know [the] Tlicho language", but that not everyone is able to speak it. She said "I really, really want to speak it but I'm learning slowly so that's nice, too. She said that when she speaks in Tlicho at home "they'd be like, what's that. What'd you say and I'd be like I don't know. I tried to say that and they be like oh, and they start laughing and I'd be like so embarrassing." It was noticed that the youth of some families who still have elders living in the family home seem to be more fluent in the Tlicho language even if a family member works at the diamond mine. It was also noticed that families who have one parent working at the mine, no elders living in the home, and who have children (not youth) are speaking less Tlicho in the home and watching more (English) television.

One woman expressed that she did not believe that the diamond mines were a contributing factor to the loss of language. She thought that it was linked to the lack of cultural programming within the school curriculum and expressed that there is a lack of consistency in teaching and promoting the use of Tlicho. She said:

> Like in the morning they used to do prayers in Dogrib and they used to do stuff in Dogrib in the mornings before when I was going to school and now they don't do that anymore. So it's like it's gone.

Another woman revealed that she sees the kids who have a parent working at the diamond mine spending less time interacting with their grandparents and more time with their friends. She said:

> All those young kids are playing video games; through the internet, too so they are playing together in there, ya. So I don't think that they are paying attention to all the elders [who are] getting older and older. They are probably going to pass away with, like having lost all those information that they gathered up all these years.

She recognizes that there is a potential risk that the stories of the elders will be lost if the kids are not listening and learning the Tlicho language.

Yet another woman said that she did not believe that the diamond mines were responsible for her people losing their ability to speak her language and she expressed it by saying:

> No, my kids don't speak Tlicho. Most of the kids, ya, they don't speak Tlicho, but they understand. They understand if you talk to them in Dogrib, they will respond to you. But they don't try to speak it. I know since I went to school like for me I am losing mine. Like some words. Like I wouldn't mind being home just talking straight Dogrib. Laughing. I know, like with my grandparents I would talk to them in Dogrib, but hardly now, since they are both gone. And I hardly see my [other] gramma.

Some people thought that because the diamond mine workers had more money to spend on electronic gadgets that it was influencing why the kids were not learning to speak their language. However, others believed that it was the school's responsibility to promote the Tlicho language but the school was neglecting this. And others believed that family was not spending as much time together to help teach the kids. But what the women had in common was that they all acknowledged that they were losing their language.

Economic Impacts

It was interesting to note that people were very cognizant of the differences in the standards of living between the people who lived in the community and those who lived in the community but worked at the diamond mines. The research findings indicate that the

participants believed that standards of living, education/training, and debt were the most significant economic issues created by the diamond mines. Yet varying view points were identified related to these three issues.

Table 3

Diamond mines impacts

Economic Issues	Total # of Times Mentioned
Standards of Living	21
Education/Training	18
Debt	18

Standards of living.

The women and youth had different views as to the whether it was obvious that the diamond mine workers had a higher standard of living compared to those who did not work for the mines. One youth denied that there were any differences, because it was reported that they share with each other. He said that he did not see that the kids of the diamond mine workers had more than the other kids. He said that "everybody is pretty even" and "If people don't have all that much stuff they share our stuff. Like we make them borrow it."

The majority of the women reported that it was obvious that the diamond mine workers have a higher standard of living. One woman said that:

> I have noticed that there are kids whose families are working at the mines and they are making more money than the ones that aren't working at the mines and they are saying that I have this, like you don't have this so it makes them feel, it probably makes them feel like down.

Another woman expressed that she felt the difference between her family income and the diamond mine workers by saying:

> to me well some of them are working out there in the mine and here the wife and they are all working so financially they all are doing really good compared to me. You know. I feel just like for me myself. . . . I am the only one working and sometimes I get way, way, way behind on bills but I try not to let it bother me, ya know. Sometimes I think of those other people that are working in the mine. I wonder if they are going through what I'm going through. But to me it is not like that, that's what I think you know.

Another woman recognized that people were becoming more materialistic and said:

> since people work at the mine I see some people, you know, they have more stuff, like new vehicle, and they have more good furniture, but it wasn't like that before. When people work around town here they don't get that much money. They live on pay check to pay check and right now since people started working at the mines I think that people have more stuff. So I think that it's good that they have people work at the mine.

Training/education.

A few women chose to speak about the training and education programs that have been offered to the local people in the community. They said in the past training was provided to assist community members in obtaining jobs at the mines. It was not clear who was financing the education/training expressing that it could be the Tlicho government and/or the diamond mines. One woman reported that "There are some people starting to come from the mines. They are starting to educate the people. The last six weeks they have been having the underground training for women and young men, they're taking it."

Another woman believed that even if the people take the training they are not being hired at the mines. She acknowledged that "sometimes they do training in town here. But most of them are here with odd jobs. They send their resumes out [to the mines] but they don't take them." When she was asked "Why do you think they don't take them?" She stated:

> I don't know. Maybe the community is small so they are looking at bigger communities, a bigger place like other community that is bigger than us. Or maybe whoever works at the office hiring people is looking at other communities instead of us. There is a lot of them here; they are without jobs. There have been quite a bit of trainings here in town but most of them they are not working at the mine.

One woman felt that at the time of the interview that driver training would help get more people jobs at the mine:

> Around here we need driving courses. Cause I notice that most of the people around here they don't have drivers license or, I don't know, or they don't know how to, they need their air brakes. They did that here before . . . I know that they were training for it.

Another woman made a very important point indicating that many of her people have not been school educated but are visual learners and have learned skills their whole lives by watching. She felt that on the job training provided in the community would be the most beneficial as it would teach younger people new skills and enhance those of the older people. She said:

> Well it's going to be good if they do that, like training on the job. They did here when they built one building. You know, they did training on the job and they finished the building. It was good. You know it was good to see them get more experience, because they're looking at it and they're working on it. . . . So they know what they're doing even though it is hard for them to read, you know. Some of them it is hard for them to read. Not only from here, other [Tlicho] community's people did the training on the job. They got people from Rae, Whatì and Gamètì, too. . . . Diavik did the training on the job here and they brought people from other communities. It was good, you know. It was like they were teaching each other cause some of them have no education. Just like they are teaching each other, they are helping each other. Like they see so that way they learn. So it was good you know. I think it would be good if they do training on the job.

Overall, the women did notice that over the years there was more education/training provided in their community but felt that more was required to help more men and women obtain employment at the mines.

Debt.

None of the youth spoke about people being in debt as they did not identify that it was a problem but a number of women reported that debt was a huge issue for many people who get hired at the diamond mines. They agreed that for some people the big money that the mines pay the workers can create problems. One woman said that:

> . . . they want to have new things. They ask for money [from a lender] and they don't know how long they are going to be working at the mines but they are getting all of these things and putting themselves way in debt. They don't know how to manage their money, you know, so they are putting themselves in debt and then they get fired. So it's like they always have to be working at the mine. They have to find a job somewhere so they don't get behind on bills and don't get a bad name.

She went onto say that:

> Some of, most of them don't know how to spend or budget or know how to save. Like they know they are going to fly [out of the community] that's what they save for but they forget to pay the bills. So they get behind on their bills.

Another woman stated that when people work at the diamond mines it can hurt the family. She revealed her own personal experience:

> I know that my kids were working there and they get into the hole and things like that and they turn around and ask me for help . . .. We think that they make good money and all that but it does hurt the families.

Living in a small community of 143 people makes it difficult to find work as employment opportunities are few and far between, "that is why some people leave the community to work at the diamond mines in the first place." Most are not happy about it but leave because they know they have a responsibility to "take care of their spouse and kids good."

It was positively reported that when there is a healthy person who does not misuse drugs and alcohol working at the mine they help out other family members. A woman said that "My sister still does that for my parents. She still helps out my mom and dad, too with bills. Like we help each other with money, so it goes around."

It was interesting to note that none of the youth expressed that there was any concern about diamond mine families being in financial trouble. What they saw was all positive, for example people could now afford new trucks, snowmobiles, televisions, computers, and MP3 players. Most women acknowledged concerns about people not learning how to manage their money and experiencing serious problems as a result of not paying their bills e.g. loans, rent.

Research Question Number 4

In concluding the findings chapter I would like to address question number four that was posed to the women and youth. In general, they were asked what changes would they like to see occur as a result of this research project and what could help make things better in their community by presenting the research findings to all three levels of government (Federal, Territorial, and Tlicho) and the diamond mine corporations. It was hoped that the abridged version of findings would provide more funding for community programming.

The question stimulated a lot of energy throughout the development of the wish list. The women and youth were very passionate about what they felt would help their remote community and who "always get everything last", like the ice road.

More specifically, the youth identified that they would like to see more structured activities. Some examples provided were an outdoor soccer field equipped with balls and nets, the opportunity to participate in sport camps outside of Wekweètì, an arcade and On the Land programs to preserve cultural traditions. Also requested was "a new school so grades 10 -12 students wouldn't have to leave home", "a bigger store so elders could sell their sewing/crafts and buy scarves, stockings and socks, RCMP to live here and search bags for alcohol and drugs", and a "Boot Camp [for high risk youth] so that they would learn respect", stop bullying, and being "a bad influence on kids", stop abusing alcohol and drugs and "doing B and Es".

The women agreed that their people should be paid fairly for resources on their land. If they were then they would have the ability to meet the needs of the community. They want "to see elders get paid for teaching kids their culture in culture camps in the spring, summer,

and fall times. The women reported that there have been no dollars to fund the bush camps and/or for elders.

The women also wanted to see a daycare/preschool and after school care programs for kids to help parents attend education programs and/or employment. They said that they used to have a daycare but the building was condemned. One parent supported the youths' request for soccer equipment and funding to send kids to sport camps. Other infrastructure deemed very important to the women included a RCMP building, for the members to use when they are called to the community on police business, to have both a member and a nurse living in the community, funding for on the land programs, Tlicho immersion, youth centre, and culturally sensitive counselors with more talking circles. They went on to say that staff housing is substandard and it makes it difficult for non-native people, such as teachers, who come from down south to work want to stay.

Two of the biggest fears noted by the women were that they want to be assured that there is enough money for mine clean up after the mining corporations leave their territory so that the caribou are impacted less and that if the diamond workers get sick as a result of working underground e.g. that there is sufficient money to compensate the workers and their families. For the most part this fourth question allowed the women to express or debrief their thoughts about non-renewable resource development. The process also gave them opportunity to express what they felt they could not otherwise say in front of the men. They hoped that the people who have changed their way of life become more sensitive to their needs to help preserve their culture. For the youth it was really a wish list as they had not yet realized the horrific impacts of colonization in the same way as those who experienced it, such as the residential school survivors.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Final Thoughts

Implications of the Research Findings

This research project was conducted to learn what Wekweètì women and youth had to say about how the diamond mines impacted their small remote community in social, cultural, and economic ways. Diamond mining has positively and negatively affected the Tlicho people since the early 1990s. It was hoped that the findings of this research would reveal that government regulation related to the non-renewable resource development in this region provided more protection to preserve the unique traditional practices of the Tlicho people.

However, the research findings have revealed that Wekweètì lack culturally sensitive support to enhance all levels of social, cultural, and economic functioning related to the diamond mine impacts. The findings do support many predicted impacts that aboriginal people revealed during preliminary community gatherings held to discuss the pros and cons of non-renewable resource development in their territory. What was revealed throughout the process of conducting this research is that in some instances decolonizing approaches that respect, preserve, and enhance the community's unique history have neglected to be implemented.

Even though the Tlicho people have settled their land claim issues and are quasi self governing the colonialists have eroded the true meaning of tribal independence. The Tlicho are still bound by patriarchal Federal and Territorial government policies which greatly influence non-renewable resource development in the region which continue to demonstrate a lack of respect for women and youth. The people of Wekweètì are controlled by insidious colonial mechanisms in the form of diamond mine employment.

It has also been reported that the stakeholders have not provided funding to develop grassroots programs to help the community thrive as their vision and that of the community's are in conflict. A brief summary follows which outlines what the women and youth identified that would maintain and enhance the community's wellbeing. They expressed that issues related to drugs and alcohol needed to be addressed. Both the women and youth stated that when people are flying into the community that Air Tindi should implement a policy that gives them the right to check passenger bags/freight. The reasoning was that it would help prevent smuggling of drugs and alcohol into the dry community, therefore reducing adult and underage substance abuse, child protection concerns, and family problems such as jealousy.

To enhance the economic functioning of the community the women stated that the most important thing the diamond mines should do is have financial people come into the community to teach mineworkers and other interested individuals how to manage their money. They believed that it was important for them to begin teaching how to obtain a bank card and how to use the bank machines. They felt that it was important that they learn how to budget, understand the process of obtaining a loan and the consequences of defaulting on payments, and how to use credit cards responsibly. They believed that prior to people being hired to work at the mines that the new hires be put through this training so that they fully understood the importance of budgeting and saving for things like vacations and lay-offs. The reasoning for implementing such a program would reduce mineworkers from overextending themselves financially, ruining their credit, and creating hardship not only on themselves and their immediate family, but their extended families, too.

The participants thought that the most important piece in promoting cultural values was to pay the elders to teach the children and youth about traditional practices by

implementing "on the land" programs in the form of culture camps. They felt that the elders should be paid for their teachings as they don't have much money and it is a lot of work. They also believed that culturally sensitive counseling should be offered "on the land" at the same time as the culture camps are being held. They felt that group work in the form of talking circles would help people work through and resolve their issues. Another very important issue was that they believed that the mines should be granted special leaves that allow the diamond workers to participate in traditional activities, such as handgames, hunting, and spiritual gatherings. Their reasoning supported the research findings that men and women who worked at the mine participated less in traditional activities. The women believed that most diamond mine workers did participate in traditional activities, like hunting, when they came from the mine. However, they also thought that they missed out on ceremonies and celebrations due to their absences from the community.

Given this, it is important for stakeholders to have independent agencies/researchers, such as the Status of Women Council to continue to participate in the impact assessment process, not only prior to development, but after production ends. Impact assessments should be reviewed at least every two years until the mine closes so that the impacts can be monitored and supports implemented to help aboriginal communities retain, regain, or enhance their overall social, economic, and cultural functioning. It is only when Aboriginal people are provided the opportunity to protect their interests, and have their voices heard will the EIA process protect traditional knowledge and reduce cultural erosion due to economic development in their territory. Aboriginal women must have their voices heard and considered in EIAs and EISs, as they are the caretakers of family and community. To help bridge the gap between this generation and the next, youth also need to have their voices

heard. They are the future leaders of their societies. If youth are not kept informed on all issues that currently affect their people, it will be hard for them to be effective leaders in the future.

Economic development should not be the cultural demise of societies. Mining corporations have the money and an obligation to provide program support to assist people to comfortably transition from a subsistence economy to a cash economy. But, the support is not there, and many people of Wekweètì are still learning the colonialists' ways by trial and error and some are self destructing; hurting themselves, their families, and impacting society. The women reported that the people of Wekweètì are being hired without being provided the proper skills to manage their earnings, bank accounts, credit cards, and loans. For some, it is the most money they have ever earned and they spend each paycheck without truly understanding the long and/or short term consequences of their actions. It occurs because they have never been taught how to spend responsibly or save money. It is the ignorance of people in power/corporations who assume and/or take for granted that people can read enough to know how to use a bank card/machine, understand loan documents, and manage money. More thought is required in this area when conducting impact assessments as understanding money management will help keep the community stable.

Creating an awareness of what the participants of this study voiced to be major concerns regarding the diamond mine impacts is very important for the future development of policy. People affected by economic development policy need to be heard and have their concerns recognized, including women and youth. This promotes good relations and allows people to feel the process is fair.

Limitations of the Research

There are a number of factors that limited this research project. First, many people in the native communities that I worked in the NT equate social workers to child protection workers and it was no different in Wekweètì. Therefore, it was a challenge for some people to accept that social workers had many roles that included child protection workers, counselors, and researchers. Some people remembered that I worked as a child protection years before and were afraid that I was still operating in that capacity in spite of being told that I was a student conducting research. They remained guarded and careful about what information they revealed. Some woman and youth were afraid to be honest about the negative impacts for fear that children may be apprehended by social services. Therefore, it is critical to promote social work values accurately and clearly defining social work roles prior to conducting the research as well as reiterating the roles throughout the project. Removing such barriers is important in acquiring accurate accounts of peoples experience and allowing them the freedom of expression without them feeling the threat of colonialist repercussions.

Another significant factor that parallels the previously mentioned limitation is that I am non-aboriginal, was born and raised outside the Tlicho territory, and do not speak the Tlicho language. I did not have the capacity to fully understand cultural traditions as I was innately void of thousands of years of history that was orally passed forward to the present generations. In spite of learning a lot from the women and youth through the data collection process and so much more from engaging with them and their families in between those times, I could not provide a better account than a Tlicho person conducting the same research.

Prior to conducting this research I clearly thought I held an advantage over other non-aboriginal researchers. I believed this to be true because of the friendships I made while living with the Tlicho and actively participating in cultural traditions within their traditional territory. This thought was born out of sheer ignorance. Building trust with a community takes longer than the time I put into living with the Tlicho. And perhaps I did have an advantage in the sense that it is who you know that helps but other than that I am no different than any other outsider when it comes to the research results. Friendships can be established and enhanced by working together on a project like this but to maintain meaning they need to be nurtured even after the research is over.

Other significant factors that influenced the outcome of the research were primarily due to the timing of the field work. I will briefly explain how the findings were limited by the lack of participation and identify the chain reaction of events that occurred due to environmental influences. The unanticipated complications began with my arrival into the community around the same time that Behchokö was hosting a Hand Games tournament. Native teams travel from small rural and remote communities as far south as Meander River, Alberta and as far north as Deline, NT to participate in this event with purse money totaling up to 50 thousand dollars. The games provide opportunity for family and friends to visit and participate in the feast and drum dances that occur during this competitive celebratory time. Therefore, a number of people including women and youth from Wekweètì had not returned home from attending the event when the research began.

Next, the ice road opened and the community had its yearly access to the south for approximately two weeks before the man made road began melting. At one point there were only 10 people left in Wekweètì and I was one of them. I witnessed people frantically

coming and going as they restocked supplies to last them for another year. And, overlapping with the completion of the ice road opening and the community emptying out was the school's spring break. It was a time which provided some families the opportunity to visit family in other parts of the NT and/or to shop in Edmonton or Grande Prairie. Again this contributed to low or no numbers of research participants during these times.

Another contributing factor that influenced the research findings was a few older women did not attend some talking circles because after working all day they said they had to either make dry meat or to work on their caribou hides. I could have conducted personal interviews at this time but none of these women agreed to be interviewed.

During the seven-weeks I was in the community there was one, two week period and two, one week periods where I did not conduct any research because there was not one participant to interview, let alone gather enough people for a talking circle. Much of the data was collected during the end of the field work. I was very conscious of my time constraint and worked hard to meet the criterion of the project as planned. In spite of this, I was one youth interview short due to the youth leaving with his father to hunt caribou.

There were so many people on the move and others preoccupied engaging in cultural activities during this time of the year it became very obvious to me that the research would have possibly been more productive if it had of been conducted during a less active time. Perhaps then, participant numbers may have increased and the research assistant position/s may have been filled.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are at least three diamond mines currently operating in varying capacities in the NT. The research literature has neglected to provide information about the impacts of the

boom and bust cycles that occur with non-renewable resource development in the Tlicho region. There is little written about NT mining impacts of boom and bust cycles that northerners have experienced in the past and/or what is anticipated to occur when the diamond mines close. The lack of immediate concern is likely due to significant new mineral discoveries currently being made in the NT. However, concerns were expressed by the women indicating that they were worried about what would happen to their land and people when the mines closed. They questioned if diamond mine workers and/or their families would have access to compensation funds for health related issues and expressed little faith in the corporations and governments restoring the mine sites to their natural states after the mines closed.

The MVEIRB (2006) SEIA report explains that many social problems have been overlooked in previous EIAs because they are not as easy to collect statistics and to quantify in relation to the economy, such as jobs and training. Therefore, many statistics collected do not give an accurate portrayal of the issues. Since this is the case, using qualitative and quantitative methodologies in similar research would likely provide a broader perspective from varying points of view. It would also be interesting to develop a longitudinal study that examines the impacts upon native communities that also utilizes a participatory approach.

Given this, more work is still needed to support women and youth to voice their concerns about non-renewable resource development. Women play an integral role in traditions and values of family, and community; if they are not heard the future of their children and grandchildren will be further at risk due to irreversible cultural erosion. Youth are the future leaders of their communities, and need to be actively involved in expressing their views about the negative and positive impacts of economic development. It is important

that First Nations people are heard and taken seriously so that the colonialists do not diminish the importance of their overall health and wellbeing, connectedness to the land, traditional knowledge, and cultural heritage.

Final Thoughts

There is no doubt that what I experienced while living with the Tlicho people has altered who I am as a person and as a social worker. The most profound personal change occurred as I began to re-connect with the land and rediscover all of the gifts it holds. The caribou hunting out on the barren land was an amazing experience. It was unlike the times I went hunting with my dad when I was a child. Although the purpose was the same the rituals were very different. I felt very blessed to have been provided the opportunity to participate in the 4 day hunt. We slept in canvas tents after carefully carpeting the floors with spruce boughs, ate caribou stew and fresh fried blueberry bannock, along with other traditional meals. My senses came alive as I became spiritually connected and I dreamed of staying on the land forever.

I believe because I had grown up in the bush as a child and shared my stories, including those of hunting and fishing, with the Tlicho people, it was easier for some of them to trust and accept me. My childhood experiences were similar in many cases, although hunting and fishing were looked upon as being more male dominated traditions. In my younger days I learned how to sew, cook wild meat and fish, listened to the stories of my elders, and had close family ties.

I embraced the community with a genuine interest and respected their cultural values and traditions. I made an effort to learn the Tlicho language, visit with elders, picked berries, learned to make dry meat, participated and volunteered to help organize community events,

such as drum dances, feasts, and handgames. Most importantly I never lost sight that I was a guest in their territory. Because I was willing to learn and participate along side of the Tlicho people I developed friendships and was given many experiential gifts. Some people were amazed that a white social worker from down south had such an adventurous spirit. I am not sure if the respect I experienced was partially because the Tlicho may have followed matrilineal lines and at one time highly regarded women, but what I do know is that I have been truly humbled.

I have changed since working and researching in the north and as a result I have a message for social workers and stakeholders in economic development. First, social workers must view the entire professional experience wholistically. This entails being informed about the community's history, including colonial contact, residential school experience, and economic development. It is important to learn the political, social, economic, ecological realms and how they tie into the culture. They must rid themselves of an "us and them" mentality, and not view the job just as a means to collect a paycheck. They need to be as objective as possible and relinquish pre-conceived notions and frames of references. It is crucial that they are visible outside work times and participate in traditional activities. If social workers are not willing to do this I believe that that they will have a more difficult time practicing social work in First Nations communities.

Economic development stakeholders will also have difficult and challenging times negotiating if they are not respectful and maintain a power-over mentality. They should have men, women, and youth from First Nations communities included in all levels of policy making. They also need to understand the communities' cultural traditions and make concessions in policy that enable the workers to continue to participate in their practices.

Those in attendance should be not only professionals or important people but community members who do not hold a power position in the community. The meetings need to be conveniently scheduled, inclusive, collaborative, and culturally sensitive with the use of translators; no exceptions. Stakeholders or representatives also should know the history of the people.

If social workers and stakeholders demonstrate their genuine interest in helping First Nations people both will garner more respect and experience less conflict. First Nations have been oppressed for too long. It is time they are listened to, actually heard, and changes made when it is reported that their people are being negatively impacted. The Tlicho people are a special people. They are still teaching those who are interested about their culture as they did during first contact. Non-Aboriginal people continue to exploit their land in a disrespectful manner and most social workers still lack a culturally sensitive approach out of sheer ignorance. We all need to work together respectively so that we are helping to slow cultural erosion not promoting it through the ongoing process of colonization.

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Appendix A

Research Support and Proposed Motion Letter

Victoria Cleveland
2475 Carle Dr.
Prince George, BC
250 563 7072
vfcleveland@shaw.ca

October 16, 2006

Charlie Football
Chief of Wekweeti
867 713 2010

RE: Research Support (Proposed Motion Attached)

Dear Charlie and Council members,

I am currently enrolled as a Social Work graduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in Prince George and am writing this letter to seek your approval to conduct research in Wekweeti. I am applying for funding through Indian and Northern Affairs as they are seeking interested students to conduct research North of 60. An ethical part of the application request is to get the approval of the Chief and Council prior to conducting the research.

My research will be looking to see if the diamond mines have impacted women socially, economically and culturally, and if so how. I plan to conduct the research in conjunction with Tlicho women. I would like to have one or two interested women to be community representatives and help guide me in my research by making community connections, assisting with organizing forums and the distribution of questionnaires. I will also be seeking interpreters and anyone else who would like to participate in assisting me throughout the project.

The purpose of doing such a study was stimulated by the knowledge that I gained living and talking with the Tlicho women for just over two years. What I hope to gain from this study is to have various levels of government better understand the impacts of the mines upon Tlicho women and Wekweeti, whether they are positive or negative. In doing so perhaps policies will need to be adjusted to better meet the needs of women and to improve their quality of life. Some examples of what may be determined from what the women say is that they want to see more effort to preserve language, traditions and culture, increased numbers of day care spaces, reduce family violence, develop a community-based relapse prevention program, develop social programs that bring elders and youth together. The women who give their voice will determine the outcomes of the research.

And finally, the research will be given back to the community to be used to build upon for other projects or policy development. Thank you for taking the time to consider my request.

Please fax the signed support motion to Judy Hughes, UNBC research supervisor at 250 960 5536. If you require additional information, I can be reached via email vfcleveland@shaw.ca or by phone 250 563 7072.

Feel free to use the motion form that is attached and/or make any applicable adjustments to suit the purpose of the Chief and Council.

Sincerely,
Victoria Cleveland (MSW grad student)

Proposed Research Motion
Wekweeti Chief and Council- Resolution

Motion:

The Wekweeti Chief and Council hereby support Victoria Cleveland's research proposal and her plans to do research in Wekweeti. It understands that she is seeking funding from an Indian and Northern Affairs initiative, Northern Scientific Training Program.

It also understands that her study will focus on how the diamond mines impact the lives of Tlicho women and Wekweeti socially, economically and culturally.

Charlie Football Chief	November 3, 2006 Date Signed
Joseph Dryneck Council Member	November 2, 2006 Date Signed
William Quitte Council Member	November 2, 2006 Date Signed

Signatures were removed to respect the chief and council members.

Appendix B

NORTH SLA VE MÉTIS ALLIANCE

PO Box 2301 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

April 3rd 2007

Karen Heikkila
Manager, Scientific Services
Aurora Research Institute
PO Box 1450 Inuvik, NT XOE OTO
Email: kheikkila@auroracollege.nt.ca
Fax: (867) 777-4264

Re: Aurora Research Licence Application #480.

The North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA) has reviewed, and provides conditional support, as detailed below, for the research licence application submitted by Ms. Victoria Cleveland, for a study on *The Voices of Wekweètì Women Reveal the Impacts of the Diamond Mines in the Tlicho Region".*

The NSMA represents the interests of the indigenous Métis People that have Aboriginal Rights and Title, and Treaty Rights in the North Slave region. NSMA's territory (the North Slave region) completely overlaps the Tlicho territory. Approximately 75 Métis families were involved in the signing of Treaty 11, in 1921, including Old Man Germain as head man of the Detchilaotte, Barren Land or Snare Lake Sand (now known as Wekweètì). However, the Tlicho agreement, and the Tlicho territory do not affect the Aboriginal rights of NSMA members, because they have not been included in that agreement or been consulted with regards to its implementation.

NSMA members have a direct interest in research on the social, cultural and economical impacts of the diamond mines. Approximately one third of the population of the Northwest Territories self identifies as Métis on the federal census, and there are a number of NSMA members in Wekweètì. It is therefore very likely that Ms. Cleveland will interview Métis, and possibly NSMA members during her research.

NSMA therefore requires, as a condition of our support for her research, that Ms. Cleveland:

- Provide an equal level of recognition and respect to both Aboriginal cultures, Dene and Métis, existing in her study area, by providing an opportunity in the talking circles and in the face-to-face interviews where women can be open about their culture and can self-identify themselves as Métis.
- include information and discussion in her analyses that addresses similarities and differences between Dene and Métis experiences of diamond mine impacts.

NORTH SLA VE MÉTIS ALLIANCE

PO Box 2301 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

- provide NSMA an electronic copy of her thesis at the completion of her work.

ı Fumealeau, 1944. As Long as This Land Shall Last.

NSMA appreciates that Ms. Cleveland has created a research proposal that is very passionate and understanding of a northern culture, however we'd like to remind her that there are cultural differences between Dene and Métis, and that it can be damaging to a culture to ignore its existence, and unique experiences and perspectives.

Please contact the undersigned by email if you have any questions or require further clarification regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Sent by email on April 10, 2007

Sheryl Grieve
Manager, Lands and Resources
lands@nsma.net

CC: Victoria Cleveland (vfcleveland@shaw.ca)

Appendix C

Response Letter to the North Slave Métis Alliance

April 17, 2007

Sheryl Grieve
Manager, Lands and Resources
North Slave Métis Alliance
PO Box 2301
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7
Email: lands@nsma.net
Ph: 867 873 6762

Re: Aurora Research Licence Application #480.

Dear Ms. Grieve and the North Slave Métis Alliance,

I would like to thank you for carefully reviewing my research application #480 and providing me with conditional support. I appreciate you informing me of your interests in my proposed research and bringing to my attention the importance of recognizing the Métis. I would also like to thank you for acknowledging my passion and understanding of northern culture.

To enhance the respectability of my thesis research and to garner your full support I shall meet the conditions outlined in your letter dated April 3rd, 2007 as follows:

- During the data collection methods all participant will have the opportunity to self-identify their indigenous heritage. This includes not only Tlicho Dene and Métis, but also others such as North Slavey Dene and Inuit. All research participants whether participating in the talking circles or in the face-to- face interviews will be gently guided to reveal a brief account of their ancestry so that the composition of the community is better understood and knowledge gained can be addressed within the thesis paper. I acknowledge that by not providing a fair representation of the population "can be damaging to a culture to ignore its existence, and unique experiences and perspectives." (S. Grieve, email communication, April 10, 2007)
- The research findings will include a discussion of the differences and similarities between the Dene and Métis experiences of the impacts caused by the diamond mines.
- Upon completion of my thesis I will provide an electronic copy to the NSMA.

I thank you for providing me the opportunity to enhance my thesis research.

Sincerely,

Victoria Cleveland
MSW Student @ UNBC
vfcleveland@shaw.ca

Sent by email on April 18, 2007

Cc: Karen Heikkila
Aurora Research Institute

Judy Hughes
Thesis Supervisor, UNBC

Appendix D

Métis in the North

This addendum has been added to address the conditional support request made by the North Slave Métis Alliance (Appendix B). Aboriginal identity is very diverse in the north. It is not a matter of defining all natives as First Nations. Their identity varies from tribe to tribe, even within the Tlicho region. However, the Canadian government's implementation of the *Indian Act* uses the label of "Indian" which "has been an external descriptor meaningless to Indigenous peoples . . . prior to colonization." (Lawrence, 2003, p. 4) Lawrence indicates that the government imposed label perpetuated the notion that Indigenous populations had a common identity, often referred to as the "Indian" race. The imposition was particularly difficult for those of mixed blood. The majority of the NT Métis are "Descended from Métis, Europeans and Dehcho Dene" (Irlbacher-Fox & Fort Providence Métis Council, 2007, p. 6) and continue to assert that they are "culturally distinct and have different collective histories from Indian bands" (Lawrence, p. 10). According to Irlbacher-Fox et al. the "Métis and the Dene people used to live similar lifestyles" (p. 54) prior to the implementation of treaty. However, their relationship changed significantly as did the Métis relationship with the land, when they were denied "access to the land and resources" (p. 54). As a result of treaty, many Métis were treated as non-Indigenous people and lost their Indigenous rights to trap, hunt, and fish "under the rights guaranteed by treaty" (p. 54) to the Dene. It has been a constant battle with government for the Métis to regain their Indigenous rights and ties to the land and the resources. Currently, "there are approximately 3800 [self identified] Métis people" (p. 8) in the NT (Irlbacher et al.) and many are reported to live within the Tlicho region. Therefore, as a people who have been and continue to be oppressed

through colonization this research tried to identify any Métis who reside in Wekweètì as requested by the North Slave Métis Alliance. However, every person who participated in the research was asked if they identified themselves as Métis or Tlicho; not one self-identified themselves as Métis.

Appendix E

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT: INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

Researcher's name: Victoria Cleveland
Address: P.O. Box 283
Ft. Providence, NT
X0E 0L0

Supervisor: Dr. Judy Hughes
UNBC
3333 University Way,
Prince George, BC,
V2N 4Z9

Home: 867 699 4911 **Work**: 867 699 3421 **Email**: clevelav@unbc.ca

Title of project: Women and Youth of Wekweeti Women Reveal the Impacts of the Diamond Mines Located in the Tlicho Region

Type of project: Thesis for Master of Social Work

Purpose and goals of the research: The purpose of the research is to better understand the view of Wekweeti women and youth in how the diamond mines socially, economically, and culturally impact their Tlicho community. The goals of the research are to advance knowledge for other Aboriginal communities considering major economic development projects, to assist the community to identify the impacts so that they may be empowered to initiate changes, and to create a public awareness of the impacts that may be used to lobby all levels of government for increased community support.

How will the respondents be chosen: All women and youth will be invited to participate in face-to-face interviews. You decide if you want to participate. You have either been informed by the notices posted around town that explain what the project is about, phone calls made by research assistants, home visits, and/or by word of mouth. If you are interested, you will be informed of the specific criterion that needs to be met to be involved in the face-to-face interviews i.e. age, gender.

Potential benefits and risks: Benefits: To inform all community members of the impacts of the diamond mines by bringing the community together to discuss and listen to the issues. The findings of the research may help the community to seek changes to current policies and/or create new policies that will promote and enhance the social, economic, and cultural well-being of the people of Wekweeti.

Risks: Some bad memories of past oppressive treatment by non-native people may trigger some unpleasant responses for you. I.e. residential school and/or lack of participation in land claim negotiations. To address any potential harm caused by remembering past painful memories, you will have access to elders and/or me for counseling or debriefing sessions. There may be different views of what the impacts are and may create some stress between community members. The issues will be discussed and attempted to be worked out by the community in a means appropriate to your culture. Since there are only about 135 people who reside in this community there will also be some risk that you may be identified in the research. Also, when I begin to write the thesis/report some information collected during the

face-to-face interviews may be written it was said (quoted) either in Tlicho or English. It will be done so that the meaning is not lost. If this happens, then you and/or your underage youth will be asked if it is okay that the spoken words are used in the written report. You will determine if it is okay or not to be able to be identifiable in the research. All measures will be taken to protect the identity of each participant unless they say that it is okay to be identified.

What will the respondents be asked to do: You will be invited to participate separately in one taped face-to-face interview and to share your thoughts about how you see the changes in your life, that of your extended family and of the community since the diamond mines began hiring people form Wekweeti. The idea of having the face-to-face interviews will allow you to speak more openly about your personal feelings and experiences.

Who will have access to the respondents' responses: The only people that will know what you have talked about during the face-to-face interview are yourself, a support person if you'd like to bring one, the researcher, and one research assistant. However, the data will be analysed anonymously and confidentially and no one respondent's responses will be revealed unless prior permission has been obtained.

Voluntary participation: All participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time during the data collection process without giving a reason. You are also able to have any information that you may have wished that you did not say removed from the information collected during the interview.

Anonymity: In the written report anonymity will be addressed by not collecting your name for the purposes of the research, unless permission is previously granted. Also, any data that identifies you (unless your permission is granted to use the information) in the data collection process will also be eliminated prior to compiling the data. Research assistants will be informed of the importance that the identities and the identifying experiences of the interview participants remain strictly anonymous.

Confidentiality: The research assistants and I will sign oaths of confidentiality prior to working on the project (see appendix). Confidentiality will be addressed by containing the data collected in a locked space at the Health Centre when the research assistants and I are not working on the project. The research assistants and I will be the only persons who will have possession of the data during the project. After the community project has been completed the data will kept in locked container while I transport it back to my home community or the University of Northern British Columbia.

Storage of information: The data collected from the research will be offered to the community once it has been compiled and analysed. If they do not want the data it will be stored in a locked file cabinet within a security monitored residence for approximately one year and then destroyed by shredding.

What will happen to the recordings of the project? Once all of the audio recordings have been transcribed, analyzed, and the thesis has been accepted by UNBC the tapes will be destroyed by removing the tape. Shredding will also destroy all other manually recorded information.

If you have any questions about the project or require more information please contact Victoria Cleveland 867 699 4911, email clevelav@unbc.ca, or Dr. Judy Hughes 250 960 5510, or email jhughes0@unbc.ca

If you would like a copy of the research results when they are ready please contact Victoria Cleveland, or Dr. Judy Hughes, or request a copy in person from Wekweeti Community Government Office, or by email: bergen.graham2705@hotmail.com

Any complaints about the project should be directed to the Office of Research at 250 960-5820, or by email: reb@unbc.ca

Consent form follows on next page.

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research project? Yes ☐ No

Have you read or had the attached information sheet read to you? ☐Yes ☐ No

If you do not know English was the information translated into Tlicho? ☐Yes ☐ No

Do you know that the face-to-face interviews will be recorded? ☐ Yes ☐No

Do you understand the benefits and risks of the research project? ☐Yes ☐ No

Have you been able to ask questions and/or discuss the project? ☐Yes ☐ No

Do know that you are able to quit participating from the research project at any time, still receive your honorarium/gift, and that you do not have to give a reason? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has anonymity and confidentiality been explained to you? ☐Yes ☐No

Do you know who will have access to the information that you provide? ☐Yes ☐ No

The research project was explained to me by: _____ on
Print Name

_____, 2008.
Month Day

I_____ agree to take part in this research project:
Print Name

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

I believe that the person who signed this form understands what is involved in the research project and voluntarily agrees to participate.

_____ _____
Researcher/Research Assistant Date

Please ensure that the Information Sheet is attached to this Consent Form and give a copy to the research participant.

Appendix F

TALKING CIRCLE: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

Researcher's name: Victoria Cleveland
Address: P.O. Box 283
Ft. Providence, NT
X0E 0L0

Supervisor: Dr. Judy Hughes
UNBC
3333 University Way,
Prince George, BC,
V2N 4Z9

Home: 867 699 4911 **Work**: 867 699 3421 **Email**: clevelav@unbc.ca

Title of project: Women and Youth of Wekweeti Women Reveal the Impacts of the Diamond Mines Located in the Tlicho Region

Type of project: Thesis for Master of Social Work

Purpose and goals of the research: The purpose of the research is to better understand the view of Wekweeti women and youth in how the diamond mines socially, economically, and culturally impact their Tlicho community. The goals of the research are to advance knowledge for other Aboriginal communities considering major economic development projects, to assist the community to identify the impacts so that they may be empowered to initiate changes, and to create a public awareness of the impacts that may be used to lobby all levels of government for increased community support.

How will the respondents be chosen: All women and youth will be invited to participate in talking circles. Community members will also be invited to participate in one or two of the open talking circles at specific time. You decide if you want to participate. You have either been informed about the research project by the notices posted around town, phone calls made by research assistants, home visits, and/or by word of mouth. If you are interested in participating in the project, you will be told about the specific criterion that needs to be met to be involved in the talking circles i.e. age, gender.

Potential benefits and risks: Benefits: To inform all community members of the impacts of the diamond mines by bringing the community together to discuss and listen to the issues. The findings of the research may help the community to seek changes to current policies and/or create new policies that will promote and enhance the social, economic, and cultural well-being of the people of Wekweeti.

Risks: Some bad memories of past oppressive treatment by non-native people may trigger some unpleasant responses for you. i.e. residential school and/or lack of participation in land claim negotiations. To address any potential harm caused by remembering past painful memories, you will have access to elders and/or me for counselling or debriefing sessions. There may be different views of what the impacts are and may create some stress between community members. The issues will be discussed and attempted to be worked out by the community in a means appropriate to your culture. Since there are only about 135 people who reside in this community there will also be some risk that you may be identified in the

research. Also, when I begin to write the thesis some information collected during the talking circles may be written it was said (quoted) either in Tlicho or English. It will be done so that the meaning is not lost. If this happens, then you and/or your underage youth will be asked if it is okay that the spoken words are used in the written report. You will determine if it is okay or not to be able to be identifiable in the research. All measures will be taken to protect the identity of each participant unless they say that it is okay to be identified.

What will the respondents be asked to do: Once you agree to voluntarily participate in the talking circles, you will be asked to speak about the positive and negative social, economic, and cultural impacts of the mines that you have experienced or witnessed. You will also be asked to share in all of the talking circles that you are eligible to participate in based on the specifics of the criterion i.e. if you meet the age requirement.

Who will have access to the respondents' responses: Everyone present during the open talking circles will be privy of each your responses. Those present will include you, other circle participants, community members, the researcher, and research assistants. The words shared during the closed circles will only be privy to you, other participants, the researcher, and research assistants. All participants will have access to their information after the data is transcribed and will be able to make any changes. The researcher and the research assistants will be the only ones who will have additional access to the respondents' talking circle responses.

Voluntary participation: Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time during the data collection process without giving a reason. You are also able to have any information that you may have wished that you did not say removed from the information collected during the interview.

Anonymity: In the written report anonymity will be addressed by not collecting your name for the purposes of the research unless permission is previously granted. Also, any data that identifies you (unless your permission is granted to use the information) in the data collection process will also be eliminated prior to compiling the data. Research assistants will be informed of the importance that the identities and the identifying experiences of the interview participants remain strictly anonymous. To help protect your anonymity while participating in the closed talking circles, it will be asked of all the participants that what is said during the circle and who says it, is not shared outside with other community members.

Confidentiality: The research assistants and I will sign oaths of confidentiality prior to working on the project (see appendix). Confidentiality will be addressed by containing the data collected in a locked space at the Health Centre when the research assistants and I are not working on the project. The research assistants and I will be the only persons who will have possession of the data during the project. After the community project has been completed the data will kept in locked container while I transport it back to my home community or the University of Northern British Columbia.

Storage of information: The data collected from the research will be offered to the community once it has been compiled and analysed. If they do not want the data it will be stored in a locked file cabinet within a security monitored residence for approximately one year and then destroyed by shredding.

What will happen to the recordings of the project? Once all of the audio recordings have been transcribed, analyzed, and the thesis has been accepted by UNBC the tapes will be destroyed by removing the tape. Shredding will also destroy all other manually recorded information.

If you have any questions about the project or require more information please contact Victoria Cleveland 867 699 4911, email clevelav@unbc.ca, or Dr. Judy Hughes 250 960 5510, or email jhughes0@unbc.ca

If you would like a copy of the research results when they are ready please contact Victoria Cleveland, or Dr. Judy Hughes, or request a copy in person from Wekweeti Community Government Office, or by email: bergen.graham2705@hotmail.com

Any complaints about the project should be directed to the Office of Research at 250 960-5820, or by email: reb@unbc.ca

Consent form follows on next page.

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TALKING CIRCLE PARTICIPANTS

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research project? Yes ☐ No

Have you read or had the attached information sheet read to you? Yes ☐ No

If you do not know English was the information translated into Tlicho? ☐Yes ☐ No

Do you know that the talking circles will be audio recorded? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you understand the benefits and risks of the research project? Yes ☐ No

Have you been able to ask questions and/or discuss the project? Yes ☐ No

Do know that you are able to quit participating from the research project at any time, still receive your honorarium/gift, and that you do not have to give a reason? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has anonymity and confidentiality been explained to you? Yes ☐ No

Do you know who will have access to the information that you provide? ☐Yes ☐ No

The research project was explained to me by: _____ on
Print Name

_____, 2008.
Month Day

I_____ agree to take part in this research project:
Print Name

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

I believe that the person who signed this form understands what is involved in the research project and voluntarily agrees to participate.

_____ _____
Researcher/Research Assistant Date

Please ensure that the Information Sheet is attached to this Consent Form and give a copy to the research participant.

Appendix G

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Victoria Cleveland
CC: Judy Hughes

From: Greg Halseth, Chair
Research Ethics Board

Date: February 7, 2008

Re: **E2008.0124.020**
Women and youth of Wekweeti reveal the impacts of the diamond mines in the Tlicho Region

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Thank you for submitting the above-noted research proposal and requested amendments to the Research Ethics Board. Your proposal has been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for the above named study for a period of 12 months from the date of this letter. Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the Research Ethics Board.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Greg Halseth

Appendix H

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH LICENCE
Licence # 14284N
File # 12 410 814

ISSUED BY: **Aurora Research Institute· Aurora College**
Inuvik, Northwest Territories

ISSUED TO: Ms. Victoria Cleveland
P.O. Box 283
Fort Providence, NT XOE OLO
Tel: 867 699 4911

ON: 15-Feb-08

TEAM MEMBERS: Dr. Judy Hughes and three Community Research Assistants (TBD)

AFFILIATION: University of Northern British Columbia

FUNDING: Self/Private

TITLE· Women and Youth of Wekweeti Reveal the Impacts of the Diamond Mines in the Tlicho Region

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:
The purpose of this research is to better understand the view of Wekweeti women and youth in how the diamond mines socially, economically and culturally impact their community.

DATA COLLECTION IN THE NWT:
DATE(S): February 29th to December 31, 2008
LOCATION: Wekweeti, NWT

Licence# 14284 expires on December 31, 2008 Issued at the Town of Inuvik on February 15, 2008

Andrew Applejohn
Director, Aurora Research Institute